

into practical effect. The Syllabus stigmatizes pantheism, naturalism, and absolute rationalism, denouncing such opinions as that God is the world; that there is no God other than Nature; that theological matters must be treated in the same manner as philosophical ones; that the methods and principles by which the old scholastic doctors cultivated theology are no longer suitable to the demands of the age and the progress of science; that every man is free to embrace and profess the religion he may believe to be true, guided by the light of his reason; that it appertains to the civil power to define what are the rights and limits in which the Church may exercise authority; that the Church has not the right of availing herself of force or any direct or indirect temporal power; that the Church ought to be separated from the state and the state from the Church; that it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion shall be held as the only religion of the state, to the exclusion of all other modes of worship; that persons coming to reside in Catholic countries have a right to the public exercise of their own worship; that the Roman pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself to, and agree with, the progress of modern civilization. The Syllabus claims the right of the Church to control public schools, and denies the right of the state in that respect; it claims the control over marriage and divorce.

Such of these principles as the Council found expedient at present to formularize, were set forth by it in "The Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Faith." The essential points of this constitution, more especially as regards the relations of religion to science, we have now to examine. It will be understood that the following does not present the entire document, but only an abstract of what appear to be its more important parts.

This definition opens with a severe review of the principles and consequences of the Protestant Reformation:

"The rejection of the divine authority of the Church to teach, and the subjection of all things belonging to religion to the judgment of each individual, have led to the production of many sects, and, as these differed and disputed with each other, all belief in Christ was overthrown in the minds of not a few, and the Holy Scriptures began to be counted as myths and fables. Christianity has been rejected, and the reign of mere Reason as they call it, or Nature, substituted; many falling into the abyss of pantheism, materialism, and atheism, and, repudiating the reasoning nature of man, and every rule of right and wrong, they are laboring to overthrow the very foundations of human society. As this impious heresy is spreading everywhere, not a few Catholics have been inveigled by it. They have confounded human science and divine faith.

"But the Church, the Mother and Mistress of nations, is ever ready to strengthen the weak, to take to her bosom those that return, and carry them on to better things. And, now the bishops of the whole world being gathered together in this Ecumenical Council, and the Holy Ghost sitting therein, and judging with us, we have determined to declare from this chair of St. Peter the saving doctrine of Christ, and proscribe and condemn the opposing errors.

"OF GOD, THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS.—The Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church believes that there is one true and living God, Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth, Almighty, Eternal, Immense, Incomprehensible, Infinite in understanding and will, and in all perfection. He is distinct from the world. Of his own

most free counsel he made alike out of nothing two created creatures, a spiritual and a temporal, angelic and earthly. Afterward he made the human nature, composed of both. Moreover, God by his providence protects and governs all things, reaching from end to end mightily, and ordering all things harmoniously. Every thing is open to his eyes, even things that come to pass by the free action of his creatures."

"OF REVELATION.—The Holy Mother Church holds that God can be known with certainty by the natural light of human reason, but that it has also pleased him to reveal himself and the eternal decrees of his will in a supernatural way. This supernatural revelation, as declared by the Holy Council of Trent, is contained in the books of the Old and New Testament, as enumerated in the decrees of that Council, and as are to be had in the old Vulgate Latin edition. These are sacred because they were written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. They have God for their author, and as such have been delivered to the Church.

"And, in order to restrain restless spirits, who may give erroneous explanations, it is decreed—renewing the decision of the Council of Trent—that no one may interpret the sacred Scriptures contrary to the sense in which they are interpreted by Holy Mother Church, to whom such interpretation belongs."

"OF FAITH.—Inasmuch as man depends on God as his Lord, and created reason is wholly subject to uncreated truth, he is bound when God makes a revelation to obey it by faith. This faith is a supernatural virtue, and the beginning of man's salvation who believes revealed things to be true, not for their intrinsic truth as seen by the natural light of reason, but for the authority of God in revealing them. But, nevertheless,

that faith might be agreeable to reason, God willed to join miracles and prophecies, which, showing forth his omnipotence and knowledge, are proofs suited to the understanding of all. Such we have in Moses and the prophets, and above all in Christ. Now, all those things are to be believed which are written in the word of God, or handed down by tradition, which the Church by her teaching has proposed for belief.

"No one can be justified without this faith, nor shall any one, unless he persevere therein to the end, attain everlasting life. Hence God, through his only-begotten Son, has established the Church as the guardian and teacher of his revealed word. For only to the Catholic Church do all those signs belong which make evident the credibility of the Christian faith. Nay, more, the very Church herself, in view of her wonderful propagation, her eminent holiness, her exhaustless fruitfulness in all that is good, her Catholic unity, her unshaken stability, offers a great and evident claim to belief, and an undeniable proof of her divine mission. Thus the Church shows to her children that the faith they hold rests on a most solid foundation. Wherefore, totally unlike is the condition of those who, by the heavenly gift of faith, have embraced the Catholic truth, and of those who, led by human opinions, are following a false religion."

"OF FAITH AND REASON.—Moreover, the Catholic Church has ever held and now holds that there exists a twofold order of knowledge, each of which is distinct from the other, both as to its principle and its object. As to its principle, because in the one we know by natural reason, in the other by divine faith; as to the object, because, besides those things which our natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our belief mysteries

hidden in God, which, unless by him revealed, cannot come to our knowledge.

“Reason, indeed, enlightened by faith, and seeking, with diligence and godly sobriety, may, by God’s gift, come to some understanding, limited in degree, but most wholesome in its effects, of mysteries, both from the analogy of things which are naturally known and from the connection of the mysteries themselves with one another and with man’s last end. But never can reason be rendered capable of thoroughly understanding mysteries as it does those truths which form its proper object. For God’s mysteries, in their very nature, so far surpass the reach of created intellect, that, even when taught by revelation and received by faith, they remain covered by faith itself, as by a veil, and shrouded, as it were, in darkness as long as in this mortal life.

“But, although faith be above reason, there never can be a real disagreement between them, since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has given man’s soul the light of reason, and God cannot deny himself, nor can one truth ever contradict another. Wherefore the empty shadow of such contradiction arises chiefly from this, that either the doctrines of faith are not understood and set forth as the Church really holds them, or that the vain devices and opinions of men are mistaken for the dictates of reason. We therefore pronounce false every assertion which is contrary to the enlightened truth of faith. Moreover, the Church, which, together with her apostolic office of teaching, is charged also with the guardianship of the deposits of faith, holds likewise from God the right and the duty to condemn ‘knowledge, falsely so called;’ ‘lest any man be cheated by philosophy and vain deceit.’ Hence all the Christian faithful are not only forbidder

to defend, as legitimate conclusions of science, those opinions which are known to be contrary to the doctrine of faith, especially when condemned by the Church, but are rather absolutely bound to hold them for errors wearing the deceitful appearance of truth.

“Not only is it impossible for faith and reason ever to contradict each other, but they rather afford each other mutual assistance. For right reason establishes the foundation of faith, and, by the aid of its light, cultivates the science of divine things; and faith, on the other hand, frees and preserves reason from errors, and enriches it with knowledge of many kinds. So far, then, is the Church from opposing the culture of human arts and sciences, that she rather aids and promotes it in many ways. For she is not ignorant of nor does she despise the advantages which flow from them to the life of man; on the contrary, she acknowledges that, as they sprang from God, the Lord of knowledge, so, if they be rightly pursued, they will, through the aid of his grace, lead to God. Nor does she forbid any of those sciences the use of its own principles and its own method within its own proper sphere; but, recognizing this reasonable freedom, she takes care that they may not, by contradicting God’s teaching, fall into errors, or, overstepping the due limits, invade or throw into confusion the domain of faith.

“For the doctrine of faith revealed by God has not been proposed, like some philosophical discovery, to be made perfect by human ingenuity, but it has been delivered to the spouse of Christ as a divine deposit, to be faithfully guarded and unerringly set forth. Hence, all tenets of holy faith are to be explained always according to the sense and meaning of the Church; nor is it ever lawful to depart therefrom under pretense

or color of a more enlightened explanation. Therefore, as generations and centuries roll on, let the understanding, knowledge, and wisdom of each and every one, of individuals and of the whole Church, grow apace and increase exceedingly, yet only in its kind; that is to say retaining pure and inviolate the sense and meaning and belief of the same doctrine."

Among other canons the following were promulgated:

"Let him be anathema—

"Who denies the one true God, Creator and Lord of all things, visible and invisible.

"Who unblushingly affirms that, besides matter, nothing else exists.

"Who says that the substance or essence of God, and of all things, is one and the same.

"Who says that finite things, both corporeal and spiritual, or at least spiritual things, are emanations of the divine substance; or that the divine essence, by manifestation or development of itself, becomes all things.

"Who does not acknowledge that the world and all things which it contains were produced by God out of nothing.

"Who shall say that man can and ought to, of his own efforts, by means of constant progress, arrive, at last, at the possession of all truth and goodness.

"Who shall refuse to receive, for sacred and canonical, the books of Holy Scripture in their integrity, with all their parts, according as they were enumerated by the holy Council of Trent, or shall deny that they are inspired by God.

"Who shall say that human reason is in such wise independent, that faith cannot be demanded of it by God.

"Who shall say that divine revelation cannot be rendered credible by external evidences.

"Who shall say that no miracles can be wrought, or that they can never be known with certainty, and that the divine origin of Christianity cannot be proved by them.

"Who shall say that divine revelation includes no mysteries, but that all the dogmas of faith may be understood and demonstrated by reason duly cultivated.

"Who shall say that human sciences ought to be pursued in such a spirit of freedom that one may be allowed to hold as true their assertions, even when opposed to revealed doctrine.

"Who shall say that it may at any time come to pass, in the progress of science, that the doctrines set forth by the Church must be taken in another sense than that in which the Church has ever received and yet receives them."

The extraordinary and, indeed, it may be said, arrogant assumptions contained in these decisions were far from being received with satisfaction by educated Catholics. On the part of the German universities there was resistance; and, when, at the close of the year, the decrees of the Vatican Council were generally acquiesced in, it was not through conviction of their truth, but through a disciplinary sense of obedience.

By many of the most pious Catholics the entire movement and the results to which it had led were looked upon with the sincerest sorrow. Père Hyacinthe, in a letter to the superior of his order, says: "I protest against the divorce, as impious as it is insensate, sought to be effected between the Church, which is our eternal mother, and the society of the nineteenth cen-

ture, of which we are the temporal children, and toward which we have also duties and regards. It is my most profound conviction that, if France in particular, and the Latin race in general, are given up to social, moral, and religious anarchy, the principal cause undoubtedly is not Catholicism itself, but the manner in which Catholicism has for a long time been understood and practised."

Notwithstanding his infallibility, which implies omniscience, his Holiness did not foresee the issue of the Franco-Prussian War. Had the prophetic talent been vouchsafed to him, he would have detected the inopportune-ness of the acts of his Council. His request to the King of Prussia for military aid to support his temporal power was denied. The excommunicated King of Italy, as we have seen, took possession of Rome. A bitter papal encyclical, strangely contrasting with the courteous politeness of modern state-papers, was issued, November 1, 1870, denouncing the acts of the Piedmontese court, "which had followed the counsel of the sects of perdition." In this his Holiness declares that he is in captivity, and that he will have no agreement with Belial. He pronounces the greater excommunication, with censures and penalties, against his antagonists, and prays for "the intercession of the immaculate Virgin Mary, mother of God, and that of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul."

Of the various Protestant denominations, several had associated themselves, for the purposes of consultation, under the designation of the Evangelical Alliance. Their last meeting was held in New York, in the autumn of 1873. Though, in this meeting, were gathered together many pious representatives of the Reformed

Churches, European and American, it had not the prestige nor the authority of the Great Council that had just previously closed its sessions in St. Peter's, at Rome. It could not appeal to an unbroken ancestry of far more than a thousand years; it could not speak with the authority of an equal and, indeed, of a superior to emperors and kings. While profound intelligence and a statesmanlike, worldly wisdom gleamed in every thing that the Vatican Council had done, the Evangelical Alliance met without a clear and precise view of its objects, without any definitely-marked intentions. Its wish was to draw into closer union the various Protestant Churches, but it had no well-grounded hope of accomplishing that desirable result. It illustrated the necessary working of the principle on which those Churches originated. They were founded on dissent and exist by separation.

Yet in the action of the Evangelical Alliance may be discerned certain very impressive facts. It averted its eyes from its ancient antagonist—that antagonist which had so recently loaded the Reformation with contumely and denunciation—it fastened them, as the Vatican Council had done, on Science. Under that dreaded name there stood before it what seemed to be a spectre of uncertain form, of hourly-dilating proportions, of threatening aspect. Sometimes the Alliance addressed this stupendous apparition in words of courtesy, sometimes in tones of denunciation.

The Alliance failed to perceive that modern Science is the legitimate sister—indeed, it is the twin-sister—of the Reformation. They were begotten together and were born together. It failed to perceive that, though there is an impossibility of bringing into coalition the many conflicting sects, they may all find in science a point of connection; and that, not a distrustful attitude

toward it, but a cordial union with it, is their true policy.

It remains now to offer some reflections on this "Constitution of the Catholic Faith," as defined by the Vatican Council.

For objects to present themselves under identical relations to different persons, they must be seen from the same point of view. In the instance we are now considering, the religious man has his own especial station; the scientific man another, a very different one. It is not for either to demand that his coöbserver shall admit that the panorama of facts spread before them is actually such as it appears to him to be.

The Dogmatic Constitution insists on the admission of this postulate, that the Roman Church acts under a divine commission, specially and exclusively delivered to it. In virtue of that great authority, it requires of all men the surrender of their intellectual convictions, and of all nations the subordination of their civil power.

But a claim so imposing must be substantiated by the most decisive and unimpeachable credentials; proofs, not only of an implied and indirect kind, but clear, emphatic, and to the point; proofs that it would be impossible to call in question.

The Church, however, declares, that she will not submit her claim to the arbitrament of human reason; she demands that it shall be at once conceded as an article of faith.

If this be admitted, all her requirements must necessarily be assented to, no matter how exorbitant they may be.

With strange inconsistency the Dogmatic Constitution deprecates reason, affirming that it cannot deter

mine the points under consideration, and yet submits to it arguments for adjudication. In truth, it might be said that the whole composition is a passionate plea to Reason to stultify itself in favor of Roman Christianity.

With points of view so widely asunder, it is impossible that Religion and Science should accord in their representation of things. Nor can any conclusion in common be reached, except by an appeal to Reason as a supreme and final judge.

There are many religions in the world, some of them of more venerable antiquity, some having far more numerous adherents, than the Roman. How can a selection be made among them, except by such an appeal to Reason? Religion and Science must both submit their claims and their dissensions to its arbitrament.

Against this the Vatican Council protests. It exalts faith to a superiority over reason; it says that they constitute two separate orders of knowledge, having respectively for their objects mysteries and facts. Faith deals with mysteries, reason with facts. Asserting the dominating superiority of faith, it tries to satisfy the reluctant mind with miracles and prophecies.

On the other hand, Science turns away from the incomprehensible, and rests herself on the maxim of *Wiclif*: "God forceth not a man to believe that which he cannot understand." In the absence of an exhibition of satisfactory credentials on the part of her opponent, she considers whether there be in the history of the papacy, and in the biography of the popes, any thing that can adequately sustain a divine commission, any thing that can justify pontifical infallibility, or extort that unhesitating obedience which is due to the vice-God.

One of the most striking and yet contradictory feat-

ures of the Dogmatic Constitution is, the reluctant homage it pays to the intelligence of man. It presents a definition of the philosophical basis of Catholicism, but it veils from view the repulsive features of the vulgar faith. It sets forth the attributes of God, the Creator of all things, in words fitly designating its sublime conception, but it abstains from affirming that this most awful and eternal Being was born of an earthly mother, the wife of a Jewish carpenter, who has since become the queen of heaven. The God it depicts is not the God of the middle ages, seated on his golden throne, surrounded by choirs of angels, but the God of Philosophy. The Constitution has nothing to say about the Trinity, nothing of the worship due to the Virgin—on the contrary, that is by implication sternly condemned; nothing about transubstantiation, or the making of the flesh and blood of God by the priest; nothing of the invocation of the saints. It bears on its face subordination to the thought of the age, the impress of the intellectual progress of man.

Such being the exposition rendered to us respecting the attributes of God, it next instructs us as to his mode of government of the world. The Church asserts that she possesses a supernatural control over all material and moral events. The priesthood, in its various grades, can determine issues of the future, either by the exercise of its inherent attributes, or by its influential invocation of the celestial powers. To the sovereign pontiff it has been given to bind or loose at his pleasure. It is unlawful to appeal from his judgments to an Œcumenical Council, as if to an earthly arbiter superior to him. Powers such as these are consistent with arbitrary rule, but they are inconsistent with the government of the world by immutable law. Hence the Dogmatic Consti-

tution plants itself firmly in behalf of incessant providential interventions; it will not for a moment admit that in natural things there is an irresistible sequence of events, or in the affairs of men an unavoidable course of acts.

But has not the order of civilization in all parts of the world been the same? Does not the growth of society resemble individual growth? Do not both exhibit to us phases of youth, of maturity, of decrepitude? To a person who has carefully considered the progressive civilization of groups of men in regions of the earth far apart, who has observed the identical forms under which that advancing civilization has manifested itself, is it not clear that the procedure is determined by law? The religious ideas of the Incas of Peru and the emperors of Mexico, and the ceremonials of their court-life, were the same as those in Europe—the same as those in Asia. The current of thought had been the same. A swarm of bees carried to some distant land will build its combs and regulate its social institutions as other unknown swarms would do, and so with separated and disconnected swarms of men. So invariable is this sequence of thought and act, that there are philosophers who, transferring the past example offered by Asiatic history to the case of Europe, would not hesitate to sustain the proposition—given a bishop of Rome and some centuries, and you will have an infallible pope: given an infallible pope and a little more time, and you will have Llamaism—Llamaism to which Asia has long ago attained.

As to the origin of corporeal and spiritual things, the Dogmatic Constitution adds a solemn emphasis to its declarations, by anathematizing all those who hold the doctrine of emanation, or who believe that visible Nature

is only a manifestation of the Divine Essence. In this its authors had a task of no ordinary difficulty before them. They must encounter those formidable ideas, whether old or new, which in our times are so strongly forcing themselves on thoughtful men. The doctrine of the conservation and correlation of Force yields as its logical issue the time-worn Oriental emanation theory; the doctrines of Evolution and Development strike at that of successive creative acts. The former rests on the fundamental principle that the quantity of force in the universe is invariable. Though that quantity can neither be increased nor diminished, the forms under which Force expresses itself may be transmuted into each other. As yet this doctrine has not received complete scientific demonstration, but so numerous and so cogent are the arguments adduced in its behalf, that it stands in an imposing, almost in an authoritative attitude. Now, the Asiatic theory of emanation and absorption is seen to be in harmony with this grand idea. It does not hold that, at the conception of a human being, a soul is created by God out of nothing and given to it, but that a portion of the already existing, the divine, the universal intelligence, is imparted, and, when life is over, this returns to and is absorbed in the general source from which it originally came. The authors of the Constitution forbid these ideas to be held, under pain of eternal punishment.

In like manner they dispose of the doctrines of Evolution and Development, bluntly insisting that the Church believes in distinct creative acts. The doctrine that every living form is derived from some preceding form is scientifically in a much more advanced position than that concerning Force, and probably may be considered as established, whatever may become of

the additions with which it has recently been overlaid.

In her condemnation of the Reformation, the Church carries into effect her ideas of the subordination of reason to faith. In her eyes the Reformation is an impious heresy, leading to the abyss of pantheism, materialism, and atheism, and tending to overthrow the very foundations of human society. She therefore would restrain those "restless spirits" who, following Luther, have upheld the "right of every man to interpret the Scriptures for himself." She asserts that it is a wicked error to admit Protestants to equal political privileges with Catholics, and that to coerce them and suppress them is a sacred duty; that it is abominable to permit them to establish educational institutions. Gregory XVI. denounced freedom of conscience as an insane folly, and the freedom of the press a pestilent error, which cannot be sufficiently detested.

But how is it possible to recognize an inspired and infallible oracle on the Tiber, when it is remembered that again and again successive popes have contradicted each other; that popes have denounced councils, and councils have denounced popes; that the Bible of Sixtus V. had so many admitted errors—nearly two thousand—that its own authors had to recall it? How is it possible for the children of the Church to regard as "delusive errors" the globular form of the earth, her position as a planet in the solar system, her rotation on her axis, her movement round the sun? How can they deny that there are antipodes, and other worlds than ours? How can they believe that the world was made out of nothing, completed in a week, finished just as we see it now; that it has undergone no change, but that its parts have worked so indifferently as to require incessant interventions?