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ROMANISM, THE FOE OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS  
LIBERTY.

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LIBERTY is not lawlessness. On the contrary, it is free action under law, and in harmony therewith. The most complete liberty of a moral being, therefore, is the most willing and unreserved obedience to the most perfect law. Human liberty will thus be man's free action under the law of his nature or the law given by his Creator. This law, first revealed in nature, has been more clearly and fully revealed, as suited to man's special needs in his present condition in this world, in the Sacred Scriptures. True human liberty, therefore, must have this perfect Divine Law as a law of spotless justice for its rule. Human action, free from the restraints of this just law, would be as antagonistic to true liberty as compulsory action under the enforcement of unjust law.

God's perfect law for man, to be such, must be adequate to every requirement of human life; and as man is a political being, the institution of civil society or the State being bound up in his social nature, the perfect law of liberty for man includes law for civil relations and duties. Civil liberty, therefore, is free action in the sphere of the State under and in harmony with the Divine Law revealed for man's guidance in civil and national relations.

"Religious liberty" is an expression which needs careful definition. It may be and often is defined on the basis of a misleading distinction. "Religious liberty" is often understood in distinction from "civil liberty" in such a sense as to mean that there is no religious element in civil liberty. But the sphere of "the religious" is not to be marked off from that of "the civil," as if the latter had nothing whatever in common with the former. That is the shallow and utterly unphilosophical theory of Secularism—the most delusive and demoralizing theory of social and political life ever propounded, short of

absolute atheism. It *is* atheism in the sphere of the civil being, the State.

But in a special and peculiar sense the expression "religious liberty" is used in reference to man's conduct in the department of his life connected with his profession of faith in God. In some cases, in this special sense of the word, "religious," it must be, in a proper sense, religious liberty.

When the truism is admitted that man is a religious being, that admission, if it means anything, means that he is a religious being in every relation of life. Unless there be no God, he is, and must be, such, and therefore under the obligations of religion; or, bound by the ties which connect him with God, his Creator and Sovereign Lord, no matter in what department of his life on earth, he may at any time employ his powers of body or of mind. When he acts as a political being he acts according to the nature which God his Creator has given him, and under his obligations to his Maker and Lord; his political or civil action is therefore under the obligations of religion. And what he actually does politically must be either religious or irreligious in its character. Hence it follows that civil liberty, or free action in the political sphere in harmony with the law of man's Creator and Lord, is equivalent to "ecclesiastical." It refers to what is in the sphere of the Church. An establishment of religion is a common phrase for an ecclesiastical establishment, or an establishment of some Church by the civil power. In a similar and yet more widely-accepted sense, the word "religion" refers to any system of belief in God or mode of worship of God, even on the part of those who may not have connection with any Church, or who may be hostile to all Churches. And in this sense, "religious liberty" is understood to be liberty to worship God according to the dictates of the conscience of the worshipper, or to scoff at all worship as superstition. But once more must come in the limitation of just law and the rights of fellowmen under the Divine Law of social life. And in

this way religious liberty is but another aspect of civil liberty. So far as religious liberty may be strictly defined in distinction from civil liberty, it is freedom of action in the sphere of ecclesiastical life, or in the direct relation of individual men with God, under the perfect law of Him who is also Lord over the Church, and over the consciences of individual men, as well as over the State.

Taking, then, the full phrase, "civil and religious liberty," it evidently means freedom of human action in political and civil life on the one hand, and in ecclesiastical life on the other hand, inclusive, in each case, of individual and family relations; or in both these spheres of human conduct in all the relations of each to God and to mankind, under the perfect law of liberty given by Christ as Lord over both Church and State.

Let it be remembered still further that civil and religious liberty is the heritage of the collective social beings, the State and the Church, and not simply of the individual members of their organizations. The Church of Christ, as an organic unit, has her liberties under the law of her rightful Head. And the State, in its appropriate sphere of action, has its liberties also under the law of the King of kings. And no so-called liberty of any individual member of either of these social bodies can conflict with their true liberties. While neither the Church nor the State can have any right, on the one hand, to infringe upon the liberties, civil or religious, of individuals by any unjust enactment, the individual members, on the other hand, can have no better right to exercise a veto power over both Church and State by denying them liberty to the exercise of a just authority that may be in contravention of liberties which individuals claim for themselves.

The conflicts that continually arise in attempting to balance liberty and authority, or in efforts at the solution of the practical problems of civil and religious liberty, prove the necessity of a law higher than the utterances of a mere human authority. It must be a law of superhuman origin and Divine

sanctions in order to lay hold upon the conscience. And the civil authority, as well as the authority of the Church, must be seen to be derived from God, in order to have this binding power upon man's moral sense. It must be felt that the human legislator brings God's law to bear upon the subjects of government, or there can be no law of liberty. Earthly legislatures are not in the strict sense law-makers. The words that have come to us from the profound thought of the old Roman people who made law their special study are not "*legisfaction*" and "*legisfactor*"—from "*lex*" (law) and "*facere*" (to make)—but "*legislator*" and "*legislation*"—from "*lex*" (law) and "*latum*" from "*ferre*" (to bear). Man can do no more than discover what is the just application of God's already existing moral law to any given circumstances or exigencies of human life in either State or Church, and then by an act of legislation bring that Divine Law to bear upon the case. And when this is done wisely and well, the most fundamental of the conditions of civil and religious liberty on the part of human government are fulfilled.

This somewhat extended definition of civil and religious liberty is itself a demonstration of the hostility to human freedom of any system that degrades from its authoritative place the Word of God as supreme moral law; that exalts a finite being to the place which the Lord of the conscience alone can rightfully occupy; that inevitably debars practical morals by lowering the ultimate standard of morality; and that logically seeks to compel conformity to its decisions by intolerance and persecution.

In these four counts lies our arraignment of Romanism as the foe of civil and religious liberty. Are these counts true? An appeal to the acknowledged principles of the system gives no uncertain answer.

I.—*Romanism undermines civil and religious liberty by degrading from its authoritative place the Word of God as supreme moral law for human life.*

The practical necessity for human interpretation of Divine Law, in administering government in any social organization, must be admitted on all hands. Such interpretation in the administration of family, civil, or ecclesiastical government, in due acknowledgment of the Divine Lawgiver and His Law, so far from being a dishonour done to either of them, is the very honour which they require from men. Nor is it any blasphemous assumption of Divine prerogatives for human rulers to claim that their legitimate authority is derived from God, and therefore possesses a Divine sanction in all that is righteously enacted and enforced. This, too, is what the Supreme Ruler requires from all who, as human rulers, are ministers of God for good to men either in the Church or in the State.

It is also to be admitted that human interpretations of Divine Law may be sound and in every way in harmony with the law interpreted. But even when they are the best to which the human mind has ever attained, they are not to be put in the place of Divine Law. They are law in practical operation, but they must not claim to be ultimate, and in themselves infallible and finally authoritative. If they do not recognize a Divine standard above and behind them, to which the appeal may in due order be made for the correction of possible errors, they become subversive of true liberty.

For mortal and sinful men, individually or collectively, personally or officially, since the days of inspiration have ended, and the Canon of sacred Scripture has been completed, to claim for their deliverances or definitions or interpretations the place and authority of God's infallible and ultimately authoritative law, is "to speak great words against the Most High." Such assumptions could not possibly find a more accurate and faithful delineation than that contained in the Scripture revelation of "the man of sin and son of perdition who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of

God, shewing himself that he is God." By these assumptions, a sinful human being, and none the less such in any position of official responsibility, arrogates to himself, or permits to be ascribed to him, an attribute which belongs to God alone, and to his definitions and interpretations an irreformable and infallible character which God's Law alone can possess.

This is precisely what the system of Romanism does. It sets fallible man in the place of God by giving to a human interpretation of Divine Law the ultimate and irreformable or infallible character of that law itself. The oaths binding all officials of this system to observe, and to cause to be observed, by others all rules, decrees, and commands, as issued by the human interpreter, are a sworn surrender of intelligence and conscience, and thus of the highest elements of liberty to mere man in the place of God.

The authority of a majority, with an acknowledgment of God's Law as a final standard, and the confession, always implied if not expressed, of the liability of the best and wisest of men to err in the interpretation of that perfect law, is a bulwark and safeguard of enlightened liberty. An error of judgment and interpretation may soon be corrected. There is room for dissent and protest, and for the re-opening in due process of law and order of the most important questions. No decision is irreformable. Reformation is always in order, and liberty is conserved and promoted. To empower a bare majority in a great social organization, with as much piety and learning on the one side as the other, irreformably, and therefore infallibly and finally, to decide a question at issue among thoughtful men is as manifestly absurd as it is subversive of all liberty and progress.

Driven on by relentless logic, the system of Romanism passed beyond the original claim of the infallible authority of the collective body, the Church, or of her Œcumenical Councils, to the still more despotic claim of the infallible authority of one man, the individual official head of the organi-

zation, as formulated, with a strange inconsistency not in an infallible decree of this infallible head, but in the definition of the Council, which, by its own decree, possesses no infallibility. Since the promulgation of the Vatican decree of 1870, this exaltation of human interpretation to the place of Divine Law has found more constant and emphatic utterance than before, and specially from the one proclaimed to be infallible in all his *ex cathedra* deliverances. One of these is his Encyclical Letter "On the Chief Duties of Christians as Citizens," dated Jan. 10, 1890. In this he says: "To determine what are the doctrines Divinely handed down belongs to the teaching Church, to which God has committed the custody and interpretation of his own utterances. But the supreme teacher in the Church is the Roman Pontiff. Therefore, as harmony of minds requires perfect agreement in one faith, so it demands perfect subjection and obedience of wills to the Church and the Roman Pontiff, as to God.\*

Not perfect submission and obedience to God and His Law given in the Holy Scriptures, but to the Roman Pontiff as to God Himself, is this unequivocal demand. Over and over again the same assumption is made in this "infallible" document. All through it runs the idea of "the authority of Jesus Christ in the Supreme Pontiff"—"*auctoritatem Jesu Christi in Pontifice maximo.*" And to show that this claim covers the civil as well as the ecclesiastical sphere, it is further argued: "There is a difference between political prudence, which pertains to the public welfare, and that which pertains to the good of each individual. The latter is seen in private

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\*The original Latin reads as follows: "*Statuere vero quae sint doctrinae divinitus traditae, Ecclesiae docentis est, cui custodiam interpretationemque Deus eloquiorum suorum commisit. Summus autem est magister in Ecclesia Pontifex Romanus. Concordia igitur animorum sicut perfectum in una fide consensum requirit, ita voluntates postulat Ecclesiae Romanoque Pontifici perfecte subjectas atque obtemperantes, ut Deo.*"—(*Acta Sanctae Sedis, Fasciculus CCLIX.*, p. 394. Rome, 1890.)



individuals who are obedient to counsel and right reason in the government of themselves; but the former is seen in those who are placed over others, and especially in civil rulers, whose privilege it is to be endowed with authority: so that even the political prudence of private individuals may be seen wholly to consist in the faithful execution of the commands of legitimate authority. This disposition and this order ought by so much the more to prevail in a Christian republic as the political prudence of the Pontiff embraces manifold matters; for it belongs to him not only to rule the Church, but generally so to regulate the actions of Christian citizens that these may fittingly accord with their hope of attaining eternal salvation.”\*

To these recent official claims may be added that of the Pope's Encyclical, dated only three days ago, June 29, 1896, "On the Unity of the Church," in which it is held in the same unequivocal manner that to the Roman Pontiff belongs the "living, authoritative, and permanent magisterium," which means the only and supreme authority to interpret God's Law in the final resort, and that the teachings of this Supreme Magister Christ has "willed and ordered, under the gravest penalties," to be "received as if they were His own," and then follows the consistent claim: "As often, therefore, as it is declared on the authority of this teaching that this or that is contained in the deposit of Divine Revelation, it must be believed by every one as true." Let us notice carefully this

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\* "*Est autem quod differat inter prudentiam politicam, quae ad bonum commune, et eam quae ad bonum ejusque privatim pertinet. Haec enim cernitur in hominibus privatis, qui consilio rectaeque rationi obediunt in gubernatione sui. Illa vero in praepositis, maxime in principibus, quorum muneris est cum potestate praeesse: ita quidem ut politica privatorum prudentia in hoc videatur tota consistere, legitimae potestatis jussa fideliter exequi. Haec dispositio atque hic ordo tanto magis valere in Christiana republica debet, quanto Pontificis politica prudentia plura complectitur; ejus enim est non solum regere Ecclesiam, sed generatim civium Christianorum actiones ita ordinare, ut cum spe adipiscendae salutis aeternae apte congruant.*"—*Acts of the Holy See, Fasciculus CCLIX., p. 400.*)

assumption. What this authority declares to be Divine Law, and not God's Revelation of that law, "*must be* believed by every one as true." And in like manner the power of this system, which assumes to be "the power of making laws, of judging, and of punishing," is said to be "of such amplitude and force that God will ratify whatever is decreed by it."\*

This Encyclical affords proof of the kind of infallibility which characterizes the *ex cathedra* utterances of Romanism, not to say anything in this connection of a debased standard of practical morals. It cites Augustine in support of the primacy and universal magisterium of the Roman Pontiff—(see p. 18). But the only Augustine who defends the primacy of the Roman Pontiff is Augustine Triumphus, who wrote near the close of the thirteenth century. The great Church Father and theological authority of the close of the fourth, and beginning of the fifth, century, bearing the name Augustine, never wrote a word in favour of the doctrine in support of which his authoritative name is cited.† Even as his language is quoted in this Encyclical, it is the primacy of the entire Church which he maintains: "To refuse to the Church the primacy is most impious and above measure arrogant." The Roman Pontiff, in quoting these words from this authority for his own personal claim of primacy, convicts himself of both arrogance and impiety. All through the writings of this honoured Father, the written Scriptures are cited as the ultimate law of God, which the Church, as a collective body, is to interpret for herself. And in his letter (numbered 43), in which the strongest expression that can be dictated in favour

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\* *Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII. on the Unity of the Church. Authorized Translation: Catholic Truth Society of Scotland, Glasgow. (See pages 17, 24.)* The newspaper report of this Encyclical was quoted at the Convention. It was substantially the same as the full document, soon afterwards published, from which the quotations are here given.

† See Appendix on Augustine and Romanism, too late for insertion here.

of the primacy of Rome is found, it is said, in maintaining the right of appeal from the judgments of the Bishops of Rome: "Should we think that those bishops who judged at Rome were not good judges, there was still remaining a plenary council of the universal Church, where a cause can be agitated even with those judges themselves, in order that if they were convicted of having rendered wrong judgment, their sentences might be made of no effect." And here is the original:

*"Putemus illos Episcopos qui Romae judicarent, non bonos judices fuisse, restabat adhuc plenarium Ecclesiae universae concilium, ubi etiam cum ipsis iudicibus causa posset agitari, ut si male judicasse convicti essent, eorum sententiae solverentur"*—(Migne's *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Opera Augustini*.—Tom. ii., p. 169.)

Here, then, is the ultimate law of Romanism. It rules God Himself out of the moral government of the human race. God speaks only to the Pontiff, and the Pontiff speaks as God to all other men. The Bible is not for mankind. Its law is a nullity, except as the Pontiff gives it effect.

It is not our purpose here and now to gather the abundant proofs of the hostility of Romanism, as a system, to the printing, circulation, and general reading of faithful versions of the Divine Law of the Word of God. These and many more kindred forms of antagonism to the free use of the sacred Scriptures, as ultimate law for men, are all the logical and practical outcome of the underlying principle of the substitution of a human interpretation of God's Law for that law itself. And this principle is shown in the history of Romanism, as well as by the logic of its operation, to be subversive of civil and religious liberty.

II.—*The assumption by Romanism of Lordship over the conscience is destructive of civil and religious liberty.*

Obedience is to be rendered to rightful human authority for conscience' sake. But even in such cases the conscience is toward God. It recognizes the ultimate Divine authority in all duties to man, as well as in all duties to God. It is to be

kept void of offence toward man as well as toward God, but its Lord is always and in all duty Divine.

The assumption by any human being or social body of the right to pronounce final and irreformable moral judgments, and to hold men to conscientious obedience to these definitions and interpretations as of ultimate authority, is to claim Divine lordship over the consciences of men. To regulate human life according to this assumption must beget and nourish the spirit of despotism. It cannot fail to repress the exercise of the intellectual faculties and dull the moral sense. It will ever stand as a wall of separation between God and man. It smothers discussion and investigation. It strangles liberty of thought and speech and conscience in their very cradle. It forces the free action of mind into the shackles of stereotyped impressions. It dwarfs and hinders the work of the Holy Spirit, repressing the longings of man's soul for the indwelling of the Divine Enlightener, and erecting a barrier in the way of the communion of the souls of men, individually and socially, with God as God by His Spirit speaking directly to them in His Word. It impedes the immediate shining into the human soul of the truth by which the conscience is made quick and tender.

God has given moral law to men in all the relations of human life in such form as to stimulate thought and quicken conscience. Every individual is to decide finally for himself, like Peter and the other Apostles, when he ought to obey God rather than man (Acts v. 29 ; comp. also iv. 19). And councils and officers of the Christian Church, as well as civil rulers, are included here in the word "men" no less than the Jewish Sanhedrim. And still, again, the other moral beings that God has made, the social moral beings—namely, the family, the Church and the State—are clothed with the responsibility of freely deciding for themselves the obedience that God's law requires of them as against any possible conflicting human command. And in all these relations men need the Holy Spirit to guide them into the correct knowledge of the Divine Law.

Whenever it is required of men to take the interpretation of God's Law, as given by any man or any body of men as infallible, and ultimately authoritative, and thus binding on the conscience, the mainspring of the study of God's Word, and of the investigation of the claims of Divine Law, and thus of all man's highest moral quickening, is weakened or, it may be, broken. Such a demand leaves no room for individual or social responsibility under the immediate obligations of Divine Law. Men become slavishly dependent upon the power that in any emergency of human life pronounces the infallible and irreformable decree to which, as with conscience toward God, all are bound to submit. This robs obedience to moral law of its highest sanction by making it obedience to man as if it were to God, and not to God Himself.

Reform and progress are terms that find no place in the vocabulary of such a system. The only liberty of which men can be possessed under this system is liberty to repeat a treadmill round within the boundaries of its paramount and unchangeable decrees. With despotic mien it stands at the doors of human reformation and progress locked and barred with irreformable definitions. And worse still, the intellects and consciences that submit to the fetters which this system imposes sooner or later lose their desire to enter these doors even when thrown wide open.

The system which has been described in an abstract way in these statements is, in the concrete, the system of Romanism. Its assumption of infallibility, of which fact there is no question, is in its very nature a claim of Divine lordship over the consciences of men. It is the claim by a great system, as well as by its official head, of the rightful authority of a mere mortal man, when speaking *ex cathedra*, or as the ultimate human mouthpiece of the ecclesiastical government, to give deliverances on all moral questions that are to bind the consciences of all other men as if these utterances were the very voice of God.

This system appeals to the decision of the Council at Jerusalem, of which we have the record in the 15th Chapter of the Acts, as a warrant for the imperative and absolute authority of its own official decrees. But it must be remembered that that Council or Synod at Jerusalem was Divinely inspired in doing what became a part of the infallible record of the Word of God. What it decreed was what seemed good to the Holy Ghost as well as to the Council itself. Its decrees thus became God's Revealed Law, with claims on the conscience which no uninspired record of ecclesiastical acts can ever possess. To put the decrees of later Councils or of supreme Pontiffs on the same high ground is to make them in effect a part of the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the determination of the system of Romanism to be possessed of an authority from which the consciences of men are allowed no release, that has driven it with irresistible logic to the promulgation of the blasphemous dogma of the Papal Infallibility. And in this assumption it has planted itself in the pathway of the attainment and development of the civil and religious liberties of our race. Nay, more; wherever and whenever it can assert its essential claims and develop its own inherent character, without the restraint of any controlling power, it throws its deadly blight over the fair tree of civil and religious liberty, and, however full of blossoms of promise or laden with ripened fruit, shrivels it to the root.

III.—*Romanism wars against civil and religious liberty by debasing the standard of practical morality.*

Civil and religious liberty, as already defined in these terms, has been seen to be free action in both Church and State in harmony with God's Moral Law. The degree of the development and of the security of civil and religious liberty will always be determined by the measure of conformity to that Divine standard of morals. Whatever lowers the standard of morality for mankind must, therefore, be an enemy of civil and religious liberty. An immoral people cannot remain or

become a free people. Liberty in conflict with Divine Law is always licentiousness in the broad sense of that word—and that is immorality.

To exalt human interpretations of Divine Law to the place of that law, and to make these interpretations binding upon the conscience as if they were the utterances of God himself, is to give mankind a fallible, conflicting, and degraded standard of morals. To claim for such a standard perfect consistency and irreformability is to make its practical operation still more disastrous. An error or a wrong is in this way perpetuated to the constantly-increasing demoralization of individuals and communities.

It has already been shown that Romanism, as a system, according to the Scripture delineation of it, has sought to change times and laws of Divine appointment by substituting its own decrees for the ultimate moral standard which God Himself has given to men. Let us now examine the effect of this on practical morals. The Divine standard of moral law prescribes one day in seven to be kept as peculiarly a day of rest and worship, holy to the Lord. Romanism multiplies its holy days, and clothes some of them with a sanctity more sacred and scrupulous than that of the Sabbath. The Divine Law for man proclaims that God has created meats to be received with thanksgiving, and Romanism commands to abstain from meats, not as an extraordinary service of fasting, but as an arbitrary and constantly-recurring regulation of human life. The law of the Creator, who instituted the family, declares that "marriage is honourable in all," and Romanism tramples this Divine declaration under-foot by "forbidding to marry." These are Scriptural illustrations of this aspect of a system which supplants the Divine standard of morality with a standard of human opinion that defies all reasonable rules of Scripture interpretation.

Without waiting to gather the manifold instances in which the so-called supreme and infallible law which Romanism

exalts to the place of God's Word has contradicted that Word, and even repeatedly contradicted itself in its conflicting deliverances as to various doctrines and practices, we simply, at this time, call attention to the necessary effect of the substitution of a human for a Divine standard of morals upon practical morality. The subjects of moral law are led in this way to the tribunals of men as if they were of God, and not to that of God Himself. Auricular confession springs naturally out of this system, and thus even if the Divine standard of morals were retained unimpaired, obedience being required to human authority as to God and not to God Himself, forgiveness will be sought from man rather than from God, and penalty for broken law becomes human infliction of penance rather than the expression of Divine displeasure. And when the Divine standard is not maintained unimpaired, the degradation of practical morals becomes still more general and deplorable. The Divine Law of the pure marriage relation cannot be practically abrogated within a large domain of human life without producing in that domain a harvest of impurity. And the Confessional cannot fail to extend this corruption to other circles of society. We are so unwilling to defile our columns with the detailed proof of these grave charges that we only refer to such standard and authorized treatises as those of Liguori and Bouvier on the conduct of auricular confession in the Roman Catholic Church in all parts of the world. For ecclesiastical officials to follow out the practical directions of these treatises is to steep themselves and the unfortunate penitents who come to the Confessional in an atmosphere of reeking moral pollution. In like manner the Divine Law of the nourishment of the human body, when denied its natural and properly-ordered operation, will work out a corresponding punishment. Gross indulgence of the appetite will follow in most cases as an inevitable consequence upon unnatural abstinence from wholesome food. And the entire history of Romanism is incontestible proof that these outworkings of the



Divine Law of human nature have followed its "forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats,"

The same principle is seen in operation in the doctrine of mental reservation, the evasion of the force of an oath, whether on the part of a witness, a juror, a civil ruler, or the subject of civil authority, and, in a word, the entire code of morals, which has the names of Gury, Liguori, and other standard Roman Catholic teachers of practical morality, a reproach in Christian civilization and enlightened jurisprudence.

The same principle is seen in operation in the doctrine of countries where Romanism has had or still has control, as seen in the lives of many of the supreme Pontiffs, in multitudes of the lower officers of all grades, and in the masses of the people which has the names of Gury, Liguori, and other standard that description which the Holy Spirit has given in the Scriptures of "that great city which spiritually is called Sodom," and of that wicked one "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness."

It is this effect of the substitution in the room of God's perfect law of a poor fallible, inconsistent standard of morals, notwithstanding, or rather because of all its blasphemous claims of infallibility and perfection, that is to be specially feared in the future of both Great Britain and America. Its legitimate operation is to justify protestations of oaths of loyalty to that which the system in self-defence must seek to overthrow. The human standard held to be final, and ultimately authoritative, can make, as it has made, anything and everything to be first and supreme duty which helps the system to its triumph. Its supremacy is for all men *summa lex*—highest and ultimate law. This is the moral standard exalted to the seat of authority from which Romanism has degraded the Divine Law; and by this substitution a deadly blow has been struck at pure morality of life in all official and

individual relations, and the very foundations of civil and religious liberty have been assailed.

IV.—*The intolerance and persecutions of Romanism stamp it as one of the deadliest of all enemies of civil and religious liberty.*

It needs no argument to prove that a system which, by its inherent character and essential principles, is intolerant and persecuting must be one of the worst foes to civil and religious liberty. There are social systems that have been guilty of intolerance and persecution, but in antagonism to their own avowed principles. Their conduct for the time has been hostile to civil and religious liberty, while the fundamental principles of the systems themselves have been the strongest condemnation of their conduct. It is our deliberate charge against Romanism, as a system, that, while its conduct in certain circumstances has not been inimical, and while certain of its individual members have even been eminent in their friendliness, the system itself is, by the logic of its most distinguishing, formative, and inherent principles, in their free and unrestrained development, a most dangerous opponent to both the civil and religious liberties of mankind.

“The mystery of iniquity,” of which Paul speaks in 2 Thess. ii. 7, is in contrast with the “mystery of godliness,” of which the same writer speaks in 1 Tim. iii. 16. The latter is “God manifest in the flesh”—the Christ of God, the true Revealer and Interpreter of the Divine Will, the rightful Ruler of men in all the relations of life. The former is another manifestation of a kind of divinity in the flesh—a mystery of an unholy conjunction of man with God; a false interpreter and usurping and oppressive ruler, called, therefore, “the son of perdition,” doomed to destruction as the anti-Christ by the brightness of the coming of the rightful Christ, when He shall take to Himself His great power, and reign as the acknowledged Head of the Church and King of nations.

This “mystery of iniquity” was already working in Paul’s

day against powerful hindrances towards its development and manifestation. The despotism of pagan civil government hindered the assertion of a kindred despotism in the early Christian Church; but the germ and spirit of it were already there, gaining gradual headway, until at length the formidable hindrance was taken out of the way, in the waning and breaking-up of the power of the Roman empire, and the system, "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," was revealed in its blasphemous assumption of Divine prerogatives, with its human head, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

The chief steps of the progress of this development may be briefly indicated. First of all, the unwarranted assumption of authority appears in connection with the formulation of doctrinal creeds. It is a proper and dutiful exercise of authority for the Church to formulate her attainments in the knowledge of the teachings of the Divine Word. Nor is she to halt at the simple principles of the doctrine of Christ, but she is to go on unto perfection (Heb. vi. 1). Holding fast the forms of sound words already wrought out in symbols of faith, and giving diligent heed to the injunction: "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing," she is still to reach forth unto those things which are before; and as fuller and clearer light breaks from the Divine Word, every successive attainment made is to be bound up and sealed as a part of her progressive testimony.

This right the Church of the first centuries of the Christian era properly exercised in the formulation of her creeds. But she took a further step that was utterly unwarranted. She added to some of her creeds, including the Nicene and the Athanasian—or the "Symbolum Quicumque,"—the presumptuous schismatical, and tyrannical damnatory clauses which

mark the progress of the development of "the mystery of iniquity."

The first two of these damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed or the "Symbolum Quicumque" are in a comparatively mild form. The first is, "Whosoever will be saved it is necessary that he hold," etc. (*Quicumque vult salvus esse, opus est ut teneat,*" etc.). The second is, "Let him therefore who will be saved so think" ("*Qui vult ergo salvus esse ita sentiat*"). But the third approaches more closely to the intolerance of the anathema: "Unless a man faithfully and firmly believe [the doctrine taught] he cannot be saved" ("*Nisi quisque fideliter firmiterque crediderit, salvus esse non poterit*"). A mild form of the anathema had appeared shortly before this in one form of the Nicene Creed: "These the Catholic Church anathematizes."

From that time anathemas multiply and intensify. The ecclesiastical heavens become lurid with their fulminations, as fourteen of them reverberate in the decrees of the fifth Œcumenical Council held at Constantinople in 553. And in 610 the fulminations of Boniface IV. flash upon the political heavens the demand upon Ethelbert, king of Kent, to observe all the decrees of the Roman Pontiff and his council, with the assumption of Divine lordship over that distant monarch and all his royal successors in Great Britain, by the Roman Pontiff and all his successors under bonds of the same intolerant and blasphemous anathema. The exact language of this letter of Boniface IV. to Ethelbert, the authenticity of which has been maintained by Romanists themselves, and as we think on good grounds, is as follows: "If any of your successors, whether kings or bishops, clergy or laity, should attempt to make void these Our decrees, let him be subjected by the prince of Apostles, Peter, and by all his successors to the bond of the anathema."\*

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\* "*Quae Nostra decreta, si quis successorum vestrorum sive regum sive episcoporum, clericorum sive laicorum, irrita jacere tentaverit, a*

And so these fulminations blaze and reverberate against all who dare to interpret God's law for themselves, either in the sphere of civil or of religious liberty, with the portentous clouds of despotism gathering more threatening blackness, until the Council of Trent, with each of its multiplied canons ending with the words: "Anathema sit;" and, with its closing scene, when the Cardinal leading the service, said: "Anathema cunctis hereticis," and all the Fathers present responded in a mighty chorus: "Anathema, anathema." And to crown this story of the seating of the spirit of intolerant denunciation and anti-Christian hate in the temple of Him who has given to the world His gospel of peace and love, and His law of liberty, we come to the promulgation of the dogma of the papal infallibility at the Vatican Council in 1870, which capstone of despotic and blasphemous decrees ends with the words: "If any one presume to contradict this Our definition, which may God avert, let him be anathema."\*

An attempt has been made to justify these anathemas of Romanism by the example of the Apostle Paul, when he said: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha" (1 Cor. xvi. 16, 22). And again: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you let him be accursed [or anathema]. As we said before, so say I now again: If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed [or anathema]" (Gal. i. 8, 9).

But let it be noted here that it is the Holy Spirit, the author

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*principi apostolorum Petro et a cunctis successoribus suis, anathemati, vinculo subjaceat.*" (See Sir Henry Spelman's *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, Edited by Haddan and Stubbs: Oxford, 1869-1873. Vol. iii., p. 65; see also *Venerabilis Bedae Opera Historica Minora*. Ad Fidem Codicum Manuscriptorum recensuit Josephus Stevenson: London, 1841. Appendix, pp. 255, 256.)

\* \* *Si quis autem huic Nostrae definitioni contradicere, quod Deus avertat, praesumpserit, anathema sit.*"—*Acta et Decreta Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani*: Rome, 1872, p. 172.

of the Word of Inspiration, who speaks by Paul. Just as in the Council of Jerusalem, the decision reached was a part of the Inspired Word given for the Church's infallible rule, so Paul's words in his Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians are a part of the same infallible rule given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. No Pontiff or Council uttering anathemas can claim their inspiration. And to dare to plead such example for the use of such authority is a further blasphemous and tyrannical assumption that develops naturally into the stake and fires of the Inquisition.

But still further. The inspired Apostle pronounced an anathema only on those who did not love the Lord Jesus, and on those who preach some other gospel than the gospel of Christ. The feeblest Christian, with the love of the Saviour in his heart, and the erring follower of the one Lord and Mediator, who, amidst all his errors, nevertheless builds on the foundation of the gospel, come under no anathema pronounced by the inspired Apostle. But Romanism hurls its flaming maledictions and burning thunderbolts of vengeance on all who deny any one of its Tridentine canons, or on any who dare to contradict a mere definition of doctrine on matters of minor importance, and in whose heart the love of Christ reigns, and whose faith yet rests on the firm foundation of the essential truths of the one and only Gospel of salvation.

Whatever his character and conduct otherwise, for any man to go contrary to statute, decree, mandate, precept, or even definition or announcement of the system, is to incur its wrath and curse. "If any man dare to attempt this, let him know that he will incur the indignation of Almighty God and of His blessed Apostles Peter and Paul."\*

Of such a system, when free to act itself out, intolerance even

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\* "*Si quis autem hoc attentare praesumpserit, indignationem omnipotentis Dei ac beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum ejus se noverit incursum.*"  
(Call by Pius IX. for Vatican Council, See *Acts and Decrees of Vatican Council*: Rome, 1872, p. 8.)

to persecution is the legitimate fruit. Its test of loyalty is for its supporters to register the following vow: "What is handed down, defined, and declared I unhesitatingly receive and profess. All things contrary, and heresies of whatsoever kind, damned, rejected, and anathematized by the Church, I equally damn, reject, and anathematize."\*

We need not cite the records of the sufferings of the Waldenses, the Huguenots, the Netherlanders, and others, nor the story of the Inquisition, to prove that the system of Romanism is an intolerant and persecuting system. The facts of these records of fire and blood are but the logical outcome of the principles to which this series of articles has asked the thoughtful attention of the friends of human liberty and progress. A system that exalts man into the place of God's law; that makes a sinful man lord of the conscience; that takes upon itself, in its assumed authority, to change laws of God's appointment, and lower for itself and others the standard of morality, may be expected, by every means on which it can lay hold, to force conformity to its own decisions, and thus to sacrifice on the idol altar of its unholy and blasphemous ambition the civil and religious liberties of our race.

## PSALM XLIV.

(Sung by the Martyrs of Bohemia, 1621.)

O GOD, we with our ears have heard,  
Our fathers have us told,  
What works Thou in their days hadst  
Ev'n in the days of old. [done,  
Thy hand did drive the heathen out,  
And plant them in their place;  
Thou didst afflict the nations,  
But them Thou didst increase.

For neither got the sword the land,  
Nor did their arm them save;  
But Thy right hand, arm, countenance;  
For Thou them favour gavest.  
Thou art my King; for Jacob, Lord,  
Deliverances command.  
Through Thee we shall push down our  
That do against us stand. [foes,

\* "*Tradita, definita, et declarata, indubitanter recipio atque profiteor. Simulque contraria omnia atque haereses quascunque ab ecclesia damnatas et rejectas et anathematizatas ego pariter damno, rejicio et anathematizo.*"—(Form of Oath of the Profession of Faith for Roman Catholics. See *Canones et Decreta Sacrosancti (Ecumenici Concilii Tridentini*, sub Paulo III., Julio III., et Pio IV., Pontificibus Maximis, Ratisbone, 1888; *Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Baltimorensis Tertii*, Baltimore, 1886, p. 229; also the same oath sworn by the members of the Baltimore Council of 1884, p. liii.)

# APPENDIX.

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## AUGUSTINE AND THE PAPACY.

(The following note from Rev. Dr. M'Allister was too late for insertion at page 375).

The papal encyclical referred to above was issued at Rome on June 29, 1896, just the day before the Glasgow Reformed Presbyterian Convention met. An authorized summary of it had at once been furnished to the newspapers. Since then a complete authorized translation, issued by the Catholic Truth Society of Scotland, has been obtained, and more recently the original Latin in a double number—Fasciculi vii. and viii., of “Nuntius Romanus:” a monthly document published at Rome under the immediate supervision of the Pontiff.

In its effort to prove the papal infallibility and supremacy as formulated by the Vatican council, this encyclical letter appeals to the teachings of honoured fathers in the early Christian Church. As these fathers never claimed to be inspired or infallible, it is a strange process of proof to cite their fallible utterances to support the teachings of an infallible letter. But let that incongruity pass. If this encyclical is infallible, its citation of authorities, its inferences, deductions, and, in a word, its entire process of argument, must be infallible. Will it bear the test? Let the candid reader judge.

First of all, it is asserted that “the fathers of the Vatican council laid down nothing new, but followed divine revelation and the acknowledged and invariable teaching of the church as to the very nature of faith, when they decreed as follows: ‘All those things are to be believed by divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the written or unwritten Word of God, and which are proposed by the church as divinely revealed, either by a solemn definition or in the exercise of its ordinary and universal Magisterium.’” (Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII. on “The Unity of the Church,” Catholic Truth Society of Scotland, Glasgow, page 18; see also “Nuntius Romanus,” as above, p. 163; also *Acta et Decreta Sacrosancti (Ecumenici Concilii Vaticani Romae, 1872, p. 132.)*)

This universal Magisterium is that of the Supreme Pontiff, as is expressly declared in the Vatican decree of infallibility, in chapter iv., which is entitled, “*De Romani Pontificis Infallibili Magisterio.*” (See *Acta et Decreta, pp. 170, 172.*)



Augustine is quoted to support the claim that the above has been the invariable teaching of the church. To this "infallible" claim and citation of that honoured early father we give a flat contradiction. Passing by the equally unfounded claim that the Vatican fathers followed divine revelation, this note will consider simply the unwarranted use made of the authoritative name of Augustine. The Augustine who did maintain such prerogatives as belonged to the Roman Pontiff was Augustine Triumphus, who wrote at the close of the 13th century. But the great Augustine, the church father and theological authority of the close of the 4th and beginning of the 5th century, A.D., furnishes the most explicit testimony against the foregoing assertion of this encyclical. The main passage quoted to sustain the doctrine promulgated by the Vatican decree and reaffirmed so strenuously in this papal encyclical is itself a proof of the strongest kind against that doctrine.

What is purported to be quoted as given in the authorized translation of the encyclical is the statement that "the church, as is evident to all, possesses the supreme authority of the Apostolic See through the episcopal succession." (See p. 18.) But Augustine does not speak in this passage of the authority of the Apostolic See at all. He speaks of the authority of the church, "which," he says, "even by the confession of the human race has obtained from the Apostolic See, through the succession of bishops [or presbyters], . . . the height of authority"; "quae usque ad confessionem generis humani ab apostolica Sede per successiones episcoporum . . . culmen auctoritatis obtinuit." (Augustini Opera, Benedictine Edition, Tom. viii., p. 69; also "Nuntius Romanus," p. 163.)

It is entirely misleading to conduct the argument from this quotation, as if "Apostolic See" meant "Roman See," or as if there were only one "Apostolic See" and that at Rome. Augustine in this passage is evidently tracing the authority of the church in his day from the See of the apostles collectively considered down through all the succession of bishops to his own times. That the expression "Apostolic See"—in the Latin, "apostolica sedes," or "apostolica cathedra"—has this collective sense in Augustine, and that his repeated use of the plural "successions" in his reference to the "successiones episcoporum" or "successions of bishops [or presbyters]" cannot refer exclusively to an episcopal succession at Rome, but to the successions of bishops or presbyters throughout the whole church in which were many Sees just as truly apostolic as the See of Rome, is made certain by another passage in his writings which this encyclical does not quote, where he speaks of the church as "the

Christian Society which, through the *Sees* of the apostles and the *successions* of bishops, is diffused by a certain propagation throughout the world"; "quae per sedes apotolorum et successiones episcoporum certa per orbem propagatione diffunditur." (Opera Augustini, Tom. ii., p. 1028, Mignis Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Tom. xxxiii.)

Another part of this first quotation from Augustine in this encyclical is as follows in the Latin: "Cui nolle primas dare, vel summae profecto impietatis est, vel praecipitis arrogantiae"—"to be unwilling to give the first place to her [the church] is certainly most impious and recklessly arrogant." (Opera Augustini. Bened. Ed., Tom. viii., p. 69.) This bears hard on the Pontiff himself and the Vatican council, for to claim that the Pontiff's definitions are of themselves, and not from the consent of the church, the final and authoritative rule of faith, is certainly "to refuse to the church the primacy," and this, Augustine says, "is most impious and above measure arrogant." All that the Pontiff's encyclical accomplishes, then, by this citation from Augustine, is to convict its "infallible" author of the utmost arrogance and impiety.

Further on, the author of this encyclical quotes from Augustine's letter to Glorius, Eleusius and others, usually numbered as "Letter 43," a statement which, taken by itself, might seem to support a certain primacy in the church of Rome. It speaks of "the Roman church in which the primacy of the Apostolic See has always flourished"; "Romanae ecclesiae, in qua semper apostolicae cathedrae vigerit principatus." (See "Nuntius Romanus," p. 173; also Aug. Op., Mign., Tom. ii., p. 163; and Bened. Ed., Tom. ii., p. 91.) But this does not mean that the authority of the Apostolic See is identical with that of the Roman church. The statement is that the authority of the Apostolic See had always flourished in the particular locality of the church at Rome; while the implication is that it had not always flourished in other parts of the universal church. This is another instance of the utmost impiety and arrogance in assuming that the Roman church is equivalent to the Catholic or universal church.

But this same letter gives a fuller and clearer statement on the point in question, in the light of which latter statement the former must be interpreted. Why did not the "infallible" Pontiff show the candour and fairness of an ordinary fallible author, and quote, or at least refer to, the following passage in the same letter? In reference to the unjust use of authority by the bishops of Rome about which certain persons were complaining, Augustine says: "As if it could

not be said and most justly said to them concerning this, Behold, we may think that those bishops who judged at Rome were not good judges; there was yet remaining the plenary council of the universal church, where a cause can be prosecuted even with these judges themselves, in order that if they were convicted of having given wrong judgment, their sentences might be rendered null and void"; "Quasi non eis ad hoc dici posset et justissime dici, Ecce, putemus illos episcopos, qui Romae judicarent, non bonos judices fuisse; restabat adhuc plenarium Ecclesiae universae concilium, ubi etiam cum ipsis iudicibus causa posset agitari, ut si male iudicasse convicti essent, eorum sententiae solverentur." (Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Opera Augustini, Tom. ii. p. 169.)

According to Augustine, then, the See of Rome was only one of the Sees at which an inspired apostle had been originally in authority. And the successions of bishops or presbyters at all these Sees, including that of Rome, like the successions of bishops or presbyters at other Sees or centres of ecclesiastical life where no apostle had ever been, even in his day, long after the decease of the apostles, were on a perfect equality. The bishops at Rome were like all their brethren—liable to be convicted by an Œcumenical Council of having given wrong judgment in the local courts. And this proves, by the authority of Augustine, what the encyclical in question confirms, that the bishop of Rome to-day, notwithstanding his assumption of infallibility, is like the bishops of Rome in Augustine's day: liable to serious error. His distortion and perversion of historical testimony in an *ex cathedra* and "infallible" papal document is evidence of the deteriorating effect of Romanism on its own ultimate standard of moral obligation, and thus of its hostility to civil and religious liberty.

[The extraordinarily wide circulation given to this papal encyclical both in its original Latin and in translations, with a view to induce Christians generally to believe that the great problem of "the unity of the church" can be solved only by submission to the primacy and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff, must be the plea for adding this extensive note to an already extensive discussion.]