

## THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

THE subject of this paper was originally assigned by the Executive Committee of our Society to the Rev. Dr. John Courtney Murray, S.J. When Dr. Murray's recent illness prevented him from preparing his article, the subject was turned over to me. Consequently and unfortunately what you will hear will be a mere substitute for what obviously would have been a much more acceptable and authoritative piece of work. I hope that Dr. Murray will be called upon to deliver his paper at the next regular meeting of the Society in June, 1948. In voicing this hope I know that I speak for the entire membership of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

Despite the fact that this paper was of necessity hurriedly written, and despite the fact that the Society can confidently expect Dr. Murray's presentation of the same subject in the near future, I am convinced that some good purpose may be served by reading this statement. In a subject as delicate and complicated as that of the theology of Church and State there are bound to be some differences, at least in viewpoint or in stress, among the theologians. Thus, even if this paper turns out to manifest some attitudes distinct or divergent from those which will appear in Dr. Murray's forthcoming lecture, it may still be of some service. I believe that it will ultimately have been advantageous to the Society to have heard two approaches to this particular section of the theological field.

### I

We are dealing here and now with the *theological* teaching about the interrelations of Church and State. Thus our material is distinct from the doctrine about Church and State contained in public ecclesiastical law and from the actual history of the Catholic Church's accords and conflicts with the various civil societies within which it has lived in this world. It is perfectly true that an adequate theology *De ecclesia et statu* must take cognizance of both these sources. Both the authority of the canonists and the authority of the his-

torians are numbered among the *loci theologici*. Nevertheless, here as elsewhere, Sacred Theology seeks only to bring out a clear, certain, and unequivocal expression of the meaning of that message which we know as divine public revelation. This particular section of Sacred Theology strives to grasp and to present God's own teaching on how the Church and the State are meant to live together.

There are some tremendously important implications which follow from the fact that this is a theological subject. In the first place, a theological treatment of the relations between the Church and the State must not be allowed to degenerate into an attempt to prove that the particular system under which we live corresponds perfectly or exclusively with the teaching God has enclosed in His revealed message. Furthermore, we must never allow ourselves to fall into the delusion of believing that the Catholic teaching on this subject is good *because* it agrees with or praises any national way of life whatsoever, our own or any other. The standard by which theological teaching is judged is and must ever be the Faith handed over to the Church by Our Lord's Apostles and infallibly presented in the authentic pronouncements of the Church itself. This standard is no less actual in the treatise *de ecclesia et statu* than in any other portion of theology.

When we come to examine the theology of Church and State, we find that there are comparatively few theses contained in it. We also learn that by far the greater part of modern discussions about the matter center around one section, that which concerns the fundamental duty of the State towards the true Church of Jesus Christ. My paper will concern itself solely with this basic and highly important subject.

## II

In this particular treatise we begin by taking cognizance of the fact that both the Church and the State are perfect societies. In other words, each can be defined as a moral body which has as its end a good complete in its own order, and which possesses by right all the means for attaining that good, and which, consequently, is self-sufficient and independent within its own sphere. As a matter of fact the Church and the State are the only organizations in

the world to which the definition of the perfect society can be applied.

They are, however, by no means equal societies. The good in terms of which the State is defined as a perfect society is the *bonum commune temporale* of its own citizens. That good is completely subordinate to the ultimate supernatural good, the thing the Church was instituted to procure for man. In other words, the benefits which man receives through the agency of natural civil society are things which he is meant to employ in his quest for the supernatural beatitude toward which the Church is essentially orientated. The specific purpose of the Church, on the other hand, could not possibly be subordinated to any higher good, since there is no benefit which could possibly be superior to God's glory, achieved through the beatific vision within Christ's Church triumphant.

All the other theses in the theology of Church and State follow from and depend upon the basic realization that these two organizations are perfect, though unequal, societies. When Catholic theology recognizes the State as a perfect society, it means that it sees clearly and certainly implied in the deposit of divine public revelation the truth that the State is a legitimate entity, quite independent within its own natural and temporal sphere. In other words theology recognizes the fact that the Church, as such, has no direct power whatever over the State in those matters which, because of their purely temporal nature, lie within the competence of the State, even in those cases where the members of a given civil society are themselves members of the true Church of Jesus Christ. Despite the fact that Our Lord was and is the supreme monarch of all civil societies as well as of the brotherhood of His disciples, He promised to Peter only the keys of the heavenly kingdom, giving us to understand that there were realms of this earth over which the Prince of the Apostolic college was not set as a ruler. And He informed Pilate that the kingdom which was peculiarly His was "not of this world."

But, although the Church of Christ has no direct power over the civil societies of this world, and although it definitely is not commissioned by its divine Master to consider these various civil societies as departments of its own organization, every civil society or State has certain duties toward the Church which render the State

indirectly subordinate to the *Ecclesia Catholica*. It lies primarily within the competence of public ecclesiastical law to examine the details of that subordination, and to point out the direction and the extent of the Church's rights in the various kinds of States, Catholic and non-Catholic, with which the Church has come into contact. On the other hand the science of Sacred Theology is primarily competent to manifest the basic fact that every State is subject to an obligation, imposed by God Himself, to recognize the Catholic Church and to defer to its authority in spiritual matters.

### III

To ascertain the truth and the meaning of this obligation, we must appeal to two distinct teachings contained in the body of divine public revelation. The first is that which tells us of the unity of man's ultimate end. There is one, and only one, supreme good which God has set as the end of a successful human life. That good is God's own glory, to be realized in the beatific vision, enjoyed by a member of Christ within the Church triumphant. Any man who, through the grace of God, actually attains to this one supreme good, is, and for all eternity will have been, gloriously successful. And, despite all the pleasure and all the power he may have enjoyed in this life, the man who does not attain to this one supreme good will irrevocably have been a failure.

Since there is no secondary eternal end of man, in the possession of which man could be said to have been successful merely in the natural order, it follows that all human activity, social as well as individual, is ultimately to be referred to that supreme and *supernatural* good for the attainment of which Our Lord instituted the Catholic Church and dwells within it. It is perfectly true that there are acts and resources within the natural order, and that within this sphere the State is expected to operate and to achieve the purposes God has set for it. Nevertheless it remains true that all of these distinctly and objectively natural goods are meant by God to be employed toward the end of eternal and supernatural beatitude, with which the Catholic Church is concerned, and for which it has received its divine commission.

The second divinely revealed teaching pertinent to the matter

with which we are concerned is that which describes the nature and the commission of the Catholic Church itself. The Creator has commanded this Church, in its Apostolic hierarchy, to preach His message to all the nations of the earth. He has equipped this society with sufficiently clear and certain signs, indicating the divine provenance of its teaching and of its commission. Not the least among these signs or motives of credibility are the history and the present activity of the Church. Furthermore He has marked the Church in such a way that men can readily ascertain, not only that its message is divine, but that it is actually His kingdom on earth, the company within which He dwells, the company outside of which there is no salvation.

#### IV

Thus, by reason of its nature and its commission, the Catholic Church has an actual and sovereign God-given right to preach its message and to establish itself among all the nations of the world. To this right on the part of the Church there manifestly corresponds a duty on the part of men, as individuals and as organized in civil societies, to hear that message and to accept it. Individual men are commanded by God to enter the brotherhood of Our Lord's disciples. As a matter of fact it would be absolutely impossible to hold consistently that the Catholic Church has a divine commission to teach, to baptize, and to make disciples among all nations unless we acknowledge a genuine obligation imposed by God upon all men and all nations to accept the Church and its teaching.

Because the Catholic Church is what it is, the one and only vehicle of salvation, commissioned and marked as such by the power of the Creator Himself, it cannot possibly be a good thing, in the full and absolute sense of the term, to have any individual human being or any State or civil society fail to acknowledge and to reverence the Church as God's kingdom on earth. The society which was born from the pierced heart of the Saviour has a valid claim upon the allegiance of all men. The conduct of any man or of any group of men who work against the Church must be considered as *objectively* wrong, as objectively contrary to the divine design of the economy of salvation. And, in exactly the same way, the conduct

of any man or of any group of men in ignoring the Church, or in affecting to treat it on a par with religious societies unauthorized by God, is *objectively* a violation of that order which God has imposed upon His creatures by establishing the true Church as an organization truly necessary for salvation with the necessity of means as well as of precept.

We must pay particular attention to this part of our theological teaching. We say that *objectively* the fact that any individual fails to enter the Church or that any State fails to recognize the Church as the only true and authorized agent of divine worship constitutes a contravention of the divine plan and that such procedure is *objectively* an evil thing. This doctrine does not mean and must not be interpreted to mean that every man who is not a member of the Church is formally blameworthy in the sight of God precisely because he has not entered it. Nor can this teaching be legitimately and logically interpreted to mean that the rulers of every State which does not acknowledge the Catholic religion as the only true service of the Creator are necessarily guilty in the sight of God on this account. Actually God has laid upon *us*, in our capacity as the members of His Son's household, a tremendous responsibility for working toward the spiritual enlightenment and the conversion of the non-Catholics we are able to assist.

Thus St. John Chrysostom makes it clear that it is an evil thing to have a man die outside the Catholic Church, while he insists at the same time that the guilt may rest on those members of the true Church who have been remiss about their divinely imposed obligation to work for conversions. He makes this statement about the responsibilities of the episcopal office in his *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*.

To pass over everything else: if one soul depart unbaptized, does not this subvert all his own prospect of salvation? The loss of one soul carries with it a penalty which no language can represent. For, if the salvation of that soul was of such value that the Son of God became man, think how great a punishment the losing of it must bring.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *In Actus Apostolorum homilia tertia.*

Thus it is clear enough that St. John Chrysostom, and all of the true Catholic tradition with him, taught that separation from the Church of God was undeniably an evil, even when that separation was not at all the fault of the person outside the Church. And, although what the great Father of the Church had to say applied primarily to individuals, it holds true also with regard to civil societies. Technically and absolutely, it cannot be considered a good thing to have any man live apart from God and His Christ. Absolutely speaking, we cannot say that it is a good thing to have any civil society in the world fail to acknowledge and worship Our Lord. And since, according to the actual designs of divine providence, we can have fellowship with Christ only through and in the Catholic Church, it is not *simpliciter* a good thing to have any individual or any society fail to acknowledge the Church of Christ for precisely what it is.

It is hard to believe that any reputable Catholic writer or teacher could be found to protest against this basic fact. To hold that it is, or that it could be, *simpliciter* and absolutely a good thing to have some person or some human society fail to acknowledge Our Lord and His Church would necessarily imply an intolerably crass misunderstanding of Our Lord's dignity and of His association with and in the society of His disciples. Since Christ is the living Son of God, sent by His Father to suffer and die for the salvation of all men, the failure of any individual or of any society to accept Him is objectively and absolutely calamitous. Since the fellowship and the salvation of Christ are not to be found outside of this Church, the failure to accept and acknowledge this Church is objectively an evil for any person or for any social group.

V

We must not allow ourselves to forget, however, that the message and the Church of Jesus Christ are addressed primarily to individual human persons rather than to States. Indeed, the civil society's obligation to accept Our Lord arises from the fact that it is a company of individual human beings, who are bound to acknowledge Christ in all of their activity, social as well as individual.

Thus the profession of Catholicism is due from that civil society whose entire citizenry have been enrolled in the kingdom of God on earth. Prior to that time, it is the duty of the Catholic citizens to use all of their resources to bring the saving truth of the Church to their neighbors outside the fold. Until that missionary activity of the Catholic citizenry has been accomplished, it is obviously impossible that the civil society itself should proceed to what is its objective good, the corporate profession of Christ and His Church. Nevertheless, because the Church is what it is, it remains objectively a bad thing to have any society or any individual fail to accept it. God is the universal Master of all men, to be worshiped and acknowledged by all men throughout the entire course of their activity. There is no valid approach to God other than through Christ, and there is no fellowship with Christ other than through His Church.

The authoritative pronouncements of the teaching Church with reference to the State's duties toward Christ and His kingdom on earth must be seen in the light of this fundamental teaching about the nature of the Church. Since the time of Pope Gregory XVI, whose pontificate began in 1831, the successors of St. Peter have spoken very frequently about the relation of the State to the Church. Acting in their capacity as the Vicars of Christ and as the proponents of divine public revelation, the Sovereign Pontiffs have issued their pronouncements in terms of God's message rather than in terms of any political popularity or appeal. Some, indeed a great many, of those States which officially recognized the Catholic Church as the only true religious society actually made hostile moves against the Church and set out to interfere with its activity in so far as they were able. Other civil societies which as a matter of fact did not recognize the Church officially were quite favorable to it in practice and gave it excellent opportunity to exercise its ministry. If the Roman Pontiffs had used political expediency as the norm of their teachings on this matter, they might well have inclined toward the systems existent in those nations which were most powerful and wealthy and which had generally caused less trouble for the Church than the countries that officially recognized the Catholic Church and the Catholic Faith. They did not surrender to this expedient, however, because, with the divine guidance that is given to them, they



proclaimed the Church over which they presided as a society divinely commissioned to preach the message of Christ to all nations, equipped with manifest signs attesting its own function as the bearer of God's revealed truth, and endowed with a right to be acknowledged as such by all men and by all peoples.

The first of the great political pronouncements on the Church's objective right to be acknowledged as the one and only authentic religious society by the State is to be found in the encyclical letter, *Mirari vos arbitramur*, issued by Pope Gregory XVI on Aug. 15, 1832. This was really Pope Gregory's inaugural encyclical. Although he had been elected to the Papacy on Feb. 2 of the previous year, the difficult conditions under which his reign was inaugurated prevented an earlier written communication on this subject to his brother bishops of the Church of Christ.

The second section of the *Mirari vos arbitramur* deals with the teaching which the brilliant but ill-fated Felicité de Lamennais, together with his associates, Father Lacordaire and the Count de Montalembert, had expounded in 1830-31 in their paper, *L'Avenir*. De Lamennais and his friends were disgusted with the treatment being accorded the Catholic Church by the government of Louis Philippe. They found that the true Church in France was not being accorded the liberty which that government had been put in power to procure. Discouraged by the ineptitude of the governments of Louis XVIII and of Charles X, Bourbon kings who had accorded recognition to the Church, the writers of *L'Avenir* convinced themselves that the kingdom of God on earth would be better off in a State which would not accept Catholicism officially, but which would sponsor a complete freedom of expression together with an absolute civil indifference in matters of religion.

Considered merely as a political tactic, De Lamennais' campaign for the Church was judiciously conceived. He readily understood and preached the fact that the true Church would be much better off in the world apart from the encumbrance of the old monarchies then in process of dissolution. He knew that the old kingdoms had sadly mismanaged their relations with the Church and had abused the Catholic religion in the interests of their own rulers. He saw, furthermore, that the ever-increasing unpopularity of the old gov-

ernments served to discredit the Church, because the enemies of the Church labored to connect it with these governments and to represent it as an integral part of a discredited political system.

No objection could have been raised against this section of De Lamennais' teachings if he had contented himself with pointing out the fact that several of the then existent governments which recognized the Catholic Church as the one authorized proponent of the true religion had in practice behaved with abominable injustice toward the Church. What caused the trouble in his case was his contention that the State ought to withdraw all official acceptance of the Church. He wanted, not merely a cessation of abuse, but the destruction of the system which these politicians were abusing.

Had the Church been other than what it really is, a society divinely instituted and commissioned and endowed with a right to be accepted by every man and by every civil society, his objective might have been acceptable. But, precisely because the Church is what it is, and precisely because the Holy Father acted and taught in line with the divine revelation about the Church, a condemnation of De Lamennais' theses was called for and was actually forthcoming. That condemnation was set forth in the *Mirari vos arbitramur*. Because Pope Gregory XVI had to insist in this encyclical upon the absolutely unique position of the Church and upon its necessity, this document has been the object of many a vehement attack by the enemies of Catholicism. These men are always ready to welcome the Catholic Church on the condition that it present itself as a society similar to the other religious organizations in the world. It is precisely because the Church asserts the divinely revealed truth that it alone has been commissioned and authorized by God as the one necessary vehicle of salvation that they oppose it.

The *Mirari vos arbitramur* lists the error of those "who desire the Church to be separated from the *regnum*" among the evil effects which result from indifferentism. This indifferentism is described as "a very productive cause of the evils by which we deplore that the Church is afflicted at the present time." Pope Gregory defined it as "that evil opinion spread about on every side by the fraud of evil men, according to which the soul's salvation can be

established by any profession of faith if conduct be in accord with the standard of the good and virtuous." <sup>2</sup>

In other words, as the duty of his high office demanded, Pope Gregory XVI protested vigorously against those who propagated what he rightly designated as the evil or wicked opinion that a man could be considered as rightly ordered to God by the profession or possession of any sort of thing which might be designated as "faith." It was the style of his time, as it is unfortunately the style in our own, for men to insist upon the need of some vague sort of "religion" instead of upon the very real necessity for the acceptance of the one and only true divine public revelation in the visible Catholic Church. It was, as unfortunately it still is, the fashion to speak of any kind of religious attitude as a valid and praiseworthy faith, when actually only the Faith and the communion of the visible Catholic Church are sanctioned and demanded by God Himself.

Then as now, the intentions of the ill-instructed Catholics who adopted this method of expression (even though they would shrink from anything like an explicit profession of all that is involved in it) had the appearance of something laudable. They desired (as Felicité de Lamennais certainly did) to use this tactic so as to increase the effectiveness of the Catholic message in the world around them. Nevertheless, objectively considered, their teaching was an evil thing. The Catholic Church is commissioned to preach all and only the message which it has received from Our Lord as divine revelation. The doctrine that any sort of faith or any sort of religious attitude is pleasing to God is definitely opposed to the content of that message which the Catholic Church exists to teach. As a definite contradiction to the divinely revealed message, the doctrine of indifferentism is something which the visible head of Our Lord's Church was compelled to reprove.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This passage is found in the *Codicis iuris canonici fontes*, cura Eñi Petri Card. Gasparri editi (Romae: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1928), II, 748; and in Denzinger's *Enchiridion symbolorum* (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder & Co., 1937), n. 1613. Subsequent notes will refer to these publications as *CICF* and *DB*.

<sup>3</sup> De Lamennais and his associates had previously done excellent work in vindicating the rights of French Catholics against the officials of Louis Philippe.

Resulting from this pernicious error are the other doctrines denounced in the *Mirari vos arbitramur*. The first of these is the false teaching "that we must assert and claim liberty of conscience for everyone."<sup>4</sup> A later Pontiff, Pope Leo XIII, was to show in his encyclical *Libertas, praestantissimum naturae* that the expression "liberty of conscience" was capable of a meaning which is quite in accord with the teaching of the Church as well as that meaning which both he and Pope Gregory XVI condemned.<sup>5</sup> The "liberty of conscience" against which the Church protested was the thing which the enemies of the Church actually tried to inculcate when they used the phrase. It was the doctrine according to which man is not bound to obey any divine law in the practical direction of his own life. It is the teaching which claims that, for instance, a man's religion or lack of it is of no concern to anyone but himself. It is the expression of the sentiment underlying the attitude that a man is absolutely free, unrestrained by any moral bond, to worship God as he likes or not to worship Him at all.

Pope Gregory XVI mentions a "freedom of opinions which is spreading abroad unto the misfortune of both sacred and the civil affairs" as contributing toward the propaganda for the kind of "liberty of conscience" the Church must condemn. He condemns those misguided and rash persons who assert that such freedom of teaching can be of service to religion. And he castigates the unrestrained freedom of the press as another manifestation of the same evil.<sup>6</sup>

The doctrine of the *Mirari vos arbitramur* sets itself militantly against the catchwords and the empty phrases of its own time and of ours. In condemning the absolute freedom of opinions and of the press, the Holy Father was merely calling to mind the absolute, but for some the highly unpalatable, fact that to utter a falsehood in speech or in writing is an evil thing, and the fact that men are

This work was in no way condemned. The *Mirari vos arbitramur* rejected the theories pronounced by this group, although it did not mention the names of those who advocated the system it rejected.

<sup>4</sup> *CICF*, II, 748; *DB*, 1613.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *CICF*, III, 307.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *CICF*, II, 749 ff.

possessed of sufficient dignity and power to be held accountable by God for the truth and the justice of what they say and write. If they use their God-given power of expression to propose statements which are untrue, unjust, or uncharitable, then they are perverting the very power they have received from their Creator.

It is against this background of indifferentism, the false "freedom of conscience," freedom of thought, and freedom of expression, that Pope Gregory XVI sets forth his brief teaching on the "separation of the Church from the *regnum*." After describing the unfortunate effects which these pernicious doctrines had produced in the world of his time, the great Pontiff made this declaration.

Nor could we foresee any happier results for religion and for the government out of the desires of those who long to have the Church separated from the *regnum* and to have the mutual concord of the *imperium* with the priesthood broken off. It is quite evident that the lovers of shameless liberty [*impudentissimae libertatis*] are very much afraid of that concord which has always been a good and salutary thing both for the sacred and the civil societies.<sup>7</sup>

In a general way, then, the *Mirari vos arbitramur* classifies the advocacy of what it calls the separation of Church and State along with the various errors that seek to limit the rights of God over human activity. For, after all, indifferentism and the various types of false liberalism which flow from it all postulate a blasphemously inaccurate notion of God Himself. They are founded on the concept of a God whose sway in the affairs of human activity is strictly limited to that field of conduct which man in his kindness consents to devote to religion. The God of indifferentism is one devoid of any real and positive rights over the affairs of human thought, of human expression, or of the civil order.

Such a concept is manifestly contradictory to the divine truth, contained in the message entrusted to the Catholic Church. Hence it is the duty of the Church to denounce this teaching. If it were to allow these doctrines to pass unnoticed, it would be, equivalently at least, allowing its own children to imagine that its own message

<sup>7</sup> *CICF*, II, 751; *DB*, 1615.

was compatible with indifferentism. It is only in this light that we can appreciate the meaning of the two sentences in the *Mirari vos arbitramur* in which Pope Gregory XVI mentioned the teaching of those who advocated the separation of Church and State.

When Pope Gregory spoke of the concord or harmony between Church and State as something which had been always *fausta ac salutaris* to both societies, he must not be interpreted to mean that whenever there has been a recognition of the true Church by the State both the civil and the religious orders have prospered. The early part of his own pontificate was troubled and embittered by governments which recognized the Church as the one true and legitimate vehicle of divine salvation. Hence the mere fact of recognition was no guarantee that the Church would be aided and revered as God wills that it should be.

The thing praised by the Pontiff is harmony or concord between these two perfect societies. This is a good in itself. Where it exists, it is *simpliciter* a blessing to the State and to the people who make up the State. Obviously the State which lives in this harmonious relation with the society of Jesus Christ can be plagued by other troubles. The recognition of the Church which is objectively demanded by the divine law carries with it no surety against all other ills, any more than a virtuous life will guarantee a man against misfortunes and hardships. But, precisely because harmonious relations with the true Church are good in themselves, they constitute a benefit to the civil society in which they exist. That is precisely what Pope Gregory taught.

With the death of Pope Gregory XVI and the accession of Pope Pius IX in 1846, a new era in the history of doctrinal pronouncements on the divine teaching relative to Church and State opened. Father De Pascal in his article on Liberalism in the *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique* assures us that, during the early days of Pope Pius' reign, the report was current that he favored the movement against which his predecessor had spoken and that he had, for all intents and purposes, torn up the encyclical *Mirari vos arbitramur*.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *DAFC*, II, 1825.

In France Montalembert, the old associate of De Lamennais, was recognized as the leader of the liberal Catholic group. He had remained faithful to the Church even after the defection of his brilliant leader. Around him there gathered a brilliant group of publicists, including such figures as Bishop Dupanloup, Father Gratry, and Montalembert's associate of other years, Father Lacordaire. As definite opponents of the liberal group Bishop (later Cardinal) Pie and the great journalist Louis Veuillot stood out. It is important to note that the liberal group formed the heart of the French faction among the minority Bishops in the Vatican Council, and that the firmest supporters of the definition of papal infallibility were to be found in the ranks of their opponents.

This situation is noteworthy in view of the fact that Catholic liberalism (or liberal Catholicism) had originally, under the aegis of Lamennais, been strongly ultramontane, in opposition to the Gallicanism which had characterized the French episcopate in the time of Pope Gregory XVI. The Gallican proclivities of the later liberals appeared in sharp relief subsequently to, and may perhaps have been influenced by, the encyclical *Quanta cura*, issued by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1864. This letter confirmed and set forth in even stronger relief the teachings contained in the *Mirari vos arbitramur*. The *Quanta cura* is the encyclical to which the famous Syllabus of Errors was attached.

What seems at any rate to have been one of the more important occasions for the appearance of the *Quanta cura* was the publication of two lectures which Montalembert delivered at Malines on Aug. 20 and 21, 1863. These two lectures were published in the *Correspondant* issues of Aug. 15 and Sept. 25 of that same year. They were then brought out in the form of a brochure with the title *L'Église libre dans l'État libre*, a somewhat unfortunate phrase which Cavour had previously employed in anti-Papal Italian politics.<sup>9</sup>

In the first of his lectures Montalembert had made it very clear that he had no intention of trying to speak as a theologian. He considered his remarks simply those of a Catholic politician and historian. As such he sought the cause of what he considered the general ineffectiveness of Catholicism in the public life of his own

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, IX, 585 ff.

time. He suggested that such ineffectiveness stemmed from the refusal of Catholics to enter into the spirit of revolution which had brought a new sort of society into being. He was convinced that democracy was in power, and that it would grow ever more influential in the days to come. He pointed out the fact that democracy itself needed Catholicism in order to produce the fruits of true liberty. He taught that civil and religious liberty was more advantageous to the Church than the protection of the old kings had been, and that Catholics would fail in their duties were they not to take advantage of that liberty.

In the second discourse, Montalembert concentrated upon the problem of freedom of religion or of cult. He claimed that Catholics were generally mistaken about the origin of this concept, and that it was really something of Catholic rather than of pagan provenance. He believed that this freedom of cult was the thing which the old martyrs of the Catholic Church had sought in the pagan Empire, and that it was in consequence something which the Church should seek to bring about in all countries in his own time. He believed that there should be freedom for heresies as well as for the true religion of Jesus Christ, on the grounds that persecution by the Church was as odious as persecution against the Church. He proclaimed his belief that the common law was the only protection for religious freedom.

Basically, of course, Montalembert's teaching was, like all other Catholic liberalism, a kind of manifestation of complacency with the world itself. In this system the Church is represented as a social unit which is required to conform itself to the spirit of the times, and not essentially as the bearer of a message which all the men of the world are called upon to believe as divine revelation and as a fellowship into which all the men of the world are commanded to enter so that they may obtain the salvation which Our Lord died upon the cross to merit for them. With all the good will in the world, Montalembert and his associates succeeded in twisting the basic nature of the Christian Church and of the Christian religion. Thus it was not a merely political or historical error, but a misinterpretation of the divine message itself, which called the Supreme Pontiff to pronounce on the doctrines of liberalism.



In the *Quanta cura* Pope Pius IX declares that he "reproves, proscribes, and condemns" the various errors mentioned in that document. Furthermore, he teaches that the errors against which the encyclical is directed are

false and perverse opinions which we must detest all the more because they strive especially to impede or to remove that salutary power which, from the commission and the mandate of its divine Founder, the Catholic Church ought to exercise freely until the end of the world, not only with reference to individual men but also with reference to nations, peoples, and their supreme rulers and [because they strive especially] to do away with that mutual association of understanding and the concord between the priesthood and the *imperium* which has always been a good and salutary thing both for the sacred and the civil societies.<sup>10</sup>

The teaching of the *Quanta cura* cannot, of course, be classified as a solemn definition of the Sovereign Pontiff, in the technical sense in which the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* had contained a definition. Nevertheless the *Quanta cura* was and remains very obviously a tremendously important document of the ordinary *magisterium* of the Church. In this letter Pope Pius IX taught that Catholics ought to hate the various errors to which he refers precisely because they are conducive to the weakening of the Church and because they tend to do away with the harmony which rightly ought to exist between the Church and the civil society. Thus the basic thesis of Catholic liberalism is itself condemned and other teachings are reproved by the Vicar of Christ precisely because they tend towards this doctrine. The quotation from the *Mirari vos arbitramur* was the best possible indication but by no means the only indication that Pope Pius IX intended to renew and confirm the teaching of his great predecessor in the See of Peter.

The *Quanta cura* goes on to describe the system which Pope Pius IX wished to denounce.

You know very well, Venerable Brothers, that at this time there are to be found not a few who, applying the impious and absurd principle of *naturalism*, as they call it, to the civil society, dare to assert that "the

<sup>10</sup> *CICF*, II, 994; *DB*, 1688.

best plan for civil society and civic progress requires absolutely that human society should be established and governed without taking religion into account, as if it did not exist, or at least without making any distinction between the true religion and the false ones." And, contrary to the teaching of the Sacred Scriptures and the holy Fathers of the Church, they do not hesitate to assert that "the best condition of society is the one in which there is not attributed to the *imperium* the duty of coercing the violators of the Catholic religion with prescribed penalties, except in so far as public order should require."<sup>11</sup>

What Pope Pius IX censured so strongly in the *Quanta cura* was the contention that an order in which the State would pay no attention to the Church and in which it would make no distinction between the one true religion and the many false ones existent within its borders should be considered as the *best* situation. The Holy Father, in presenting this teaching, was taking necessary cognizance of the revealed doctrine about the Church. He concentrated upon the task of showing that the true Church of Jesus Christ could never regard any situation as the *best* in which a great number of men within the State and the State itself failed to give to Our Lord the service and the belief He rightfully demands. In other words, he strove to bring out the basic and necessary fact that the Catholic Church is not the kind of organization which can be true to its own principles in giving unqualified approval to any situation where the true God is not worshiped according to the rites He has instituted and within the fellowship He has established.

And, because it is the one supernatural society manifestly established by the true God for all men, the Catholic Church has a genuine right to the support of the State. Hence the second opinion denounced in the *Quanta cura* is an implication which follows from an inadequate and inaccurate notion of the Church itself and of God's rights over His creatures. It would, of course, be completely wrong to take these words of Pope Pius IX as in any way involving the belief that in every State where the government had offered its support to the Church, that support had always been intelligently or even justly given. Manifestly civil support intended for the Church, like any other function of political society, is something which can

<sup>11</sup> *CICF*, II, 994 f.; *DB*, 1689.

be and which has been abused. Nevertheless the fact remains that, because the God who dwells within the Church is the same God to whom man owes the service of every portion of his activity, and because the only legitimate service or worship of God is to be found in the one society He has instituted and authorized, man in his civic life owes allegiance and support to this visible society.

Furthermore, in order to understand this teaching of the *Quanta cura*, we must take explicit cognizance of the fact that the Holy Father is certainly not arguing that the State should or legitimately could under any circumstances force any person into the true faith of Jesus Christ. Specifically Pope Pius IX taught that it would not be the best condition for the State to have a situation in which the State would refuse to recognize its obligation to use its power to punish those who had committed crimes against the Catholic religion. Once we realize the truth that the Catholic Church has the God-given right to exist among and to be accepted by all the nations of the earth, this teaching of Pope Pius follows as a visible and inevitable consequence. A manifest offence against this society and against its liturgy *objectively* constitutes an evil which the State should do everything in its power to discourage. Again, such an offense is *objectively* harmful even to the temporal welfare of the citizens, which the State is essentially and necessarily organized to obtain and develop. *Objectively*, then, this sort of support is due to the Church by the demands of religion itself.

On the other hand, however, the Church is the kind of society which men absolutely must not be forced to enter against their own wills. It is the *ecclesia*, the *congregatio vocatorum*, but the vocation by which a man is summoned to enter the society of the faithful is the call of God's grace, not the power of earthly coercive activity. The forcing of any person into the Church is, by reason of the nature of God's dealings with His creatures, not only an affront to the individual thus injured, but an affront to the society of Christ. The Church has always thus understood it. If ill-instructed or malign enemies of the Church choose to twist that portion of the Church's teaching which appears in the *Quanta cura* into an appeal on the part of Our Lord's society for State support in forcing unwilling members into its fold, these men are committing what is objectively

an inexcusable blunder and what is in all probability subjectively a grave act of slander.

After mentioning and condemning the two expressions of naturalism which we have just seen, the *Quanta cura* goes on to denounce another manifestation of this same system. In so doing it uses and thereby confirms a condemnation which Pope Gregory XVI had incorporated into his *Mirari vos arbitramur*. The *Quanta cura* qualifies as "erroneous" and as "tremendously harmful to the salvation of souls" an opinion which Pope Gregory XVI had designated as a *deliramentum*. The offending opinion is the one which holds

that liberty of conscience and of religions belongs to every man as an essential right, which ought to be proclaimed and asserted by law in every properly constituted society; and that citizens have the right to a complete liberty which neither ecclesiastical nor civil authority can restrain, [a liberty] to manifest and declare their ideas, whatever they may be, openly and publicly, in speech, or by the printed page, or in any way whatsoever.<sup>12</sup>

The *Quanta cura* took the terms "liberty of conscience" and "liberty of religions" as they were used by the anti-Christian propagandists of its own day. Both of these expressions were employed to designate what was supposed to be a native human right to select any of the various religious systems in the world or to reject all of them. In other words, they were used in the fashioning of a system which taught that the rejection of divine worship or the choice of a religion other than the only one which has been authorized and commanded by God could be considered as objectively a good thing.

In denying that man has the native or proper right to select any religion he pleases, Pope Pius IX was simply proclaiming the divinely revealed truth, as the duties of his high office demanded. Obviously, if men have the right to choose their religion, there is no one religion manifestly authorized and commanded by God Himself or, an even more blasphemous implication, God has not the right to command man about the way in which He wishes to

<sup>12</sup> *CICF*, II, 995; *DB*, 1690.

be served and worshiped by His creatures. And, on the other hand, since God has really instituted a Church, and since He has actually constituted this Church and the revelation it preaches infallibly as things truly necessary for salvation with the necessity both of precept and of means, man has no God-given right to reject this Church or this message. The Catholic who would admit that *simpliciter* such a right belonged to man would by that very fact be recreant to his duty as an exponent of the divine truth.

The error condemned by Pope Pius IX holds that such freedom is a genuine human right, and that the law ought to proclaim this freedom in every rightly constituted society. It is, of course, one thing for a State to decide not to influence its citizens in any way in their religious adherence. It is quite another thing to incorporate into the law or the constitution of a State the doctrine that the freedom to choose any religion that appeals to a man is a native and proper human right. If a State were to make this latter pronouncement, it would thereby not only be making an erroneous pronouncement, but it would go utterly beyond its own field of competence.

The "Catholic liberal" doctrine denounced and unmasked in this section of the *Quanta cura* holds that this erroneous teaching should be proclaimed by law in every rightly constituted society. It holds, furthermore, that the State has neither the obligation nor the power to protect its own citizens against the ravages of manifest error. For, if men are to be allowed absolute freedom to teach publicly whatever they happen to desire, it follows that there is nothing wrong in allowing other men to be harmed, intellectually and morally, through the acceptance of false teaching, or at least that this affair has nothing to do with the temporal welfare of the citizen, which is the essential concern of the State.

In the *Quanta cura* Pope Pius IX took explicit cognizance of the fact that no government and, for that matter, no sane individual, ever thought of propounding an absolute freedom of expression. There are, and there always have been, limits beyond which no government would go in allowing or sanctioning the public expression of thought. Any government with even a modicum of strength will forbid speeches and writings which incite to riot and will en-

force some sort of prohibition of libelous expression. Thus the proposition to which Pope Pius IX referred related to a freedom to say or to write anything at all about religion and morality, under the pretext, ultimately, that these affairs were either of too little importance or too little understood to have the civil society do anything about them. The *Quanta cura* simply set forth the unquestioned Catholic teaching that these matters are of the maximum importance, and that, described as they are in the manifestly authentic deposit of divine public revelation, it is the objective duty of the civil society to take account of them, and to act against the harming of its own citizens by the specious presentation of false doctrine. It taught, furthermore, that the true Church of Jesus Christ must in no way be subordinated to any civil society whatsoever.

## VI

The *Syllabus of Errors*, "embracing the principal errors of our time which are mentioned in the encyclicals and in the other apostolic letters" of Pope Pius IX is one of the most famous of modern ecclesiastical documents. This *Syllabus* was sent to the bishops along with the encyclical *Quanta cura* itself, together with a covering letter from Cardinal Antonelli. Several of the errors denounced in this document have immediate reference to the theology of Church and State.

Thus the nineteenth proposition lists as an error the statement that "the Church is not a true, perfect, and distinctly free society, nor does it possess its own proper and constant rights granted to it by its divine Founder, but it belongs to the civil power to define the Church's rights and the limits within which it is competent to exercise those rights."<sup>13</sup>

The twenty-first proposition stigmatizes the error that "the Church has not the power to define dogmatically that the religion of the Catholic Church is the only true religion."<sup>14</sup> The twenty-fourth denounces the false teaching that "the Church has not the power of bringing force to bear, nor has it any temporal power, either direct

<sup>13</sup> *CICF*, II, 1002; *DB*, 1719.

<sup>14</sup> *CICF*, II, 1003; *DB*, 1721.

or indirect."<sup>15</sup> These three propositions, together with the fortieth, which lists the error that "the Church must be separated from the State and the State from the Church"<sup>16</sup> give the necessary basis for any effective theology of Church and State.

The particular errors about the relations of the Church and the State which have been current since the rise of liberalism have, however, been motivated in great measure by the doctrines of indifferntism and latitudinarianism. The Syllabus of Errors considers the chief tenets of these systems in four distinct propositions.

The fifteenth error listed in the Syllabus holds that "a man is free to embrace and profess the religion which, led by the light of reason, he shall have thought to be true."<sup>17</sup> This proposition, of course, deals with *objective* right. The Syllabus does not say that a man who uses his reasoning powers to find the proper way to worship God, and who unfortunately makes a mistake and ends up with a false religion, is subjectively guilty of sin. Nevertheless, in the face of a hostile and misunderstanding world, the Holy Father insists that the divine worship is a tremendously important thing and, furthermore, an affair which must be judged objectively.

Even if a man were to "reason" himself into the position of thinking that it was permissible for him to steal, he could not possibly be called objectively free to rob his fellows. In exactly the same way, even though a man might, as a result of poor instruction, come to the conclusion that it would be right for him to select the religion he wished or, for that matter, to reject religion as such, he would not be and could not be objectively free to adopt such a course. Objectively God commands all men to accept the Catholic teaching and to enter the Catholic Church. Objectively the following of a religion other than that of the Catholic Church is a contravention of the divine precept. No one can be said to be free to disobey the divine mandate, even though he may be acting in invincible ignorance.

Actually a person is said to be free with reference to something which is good, and which leads to the ultimate good, but

<sup>15</sup> *CICF*, II, 1003; *DB*, 1724.

<sup>16</sup> *CICF*, II, 1004; *DB*, 1740.

<sup>17</sup> *CICF*, II, 1002; *DB*, 1715.

to which there are real alternatives. Thus there is and there should be moral liberty with reference to things which are good but which are not necessary for the attainment of the ultimate good. Now the Catholic Church is necessary for man's ultimate end and good with the real necessity of means. Consequently there can be no such thing as a God-given right or liberty to choose some religion other than that of the Catholic Church.

The sixteenth proposition of the Syllabus refers to this same field of indifferentism. It signalizes the error that "men can find the way of eternal salvation and can obtain eternal salvation in the cult of any religion."<sup>18</sup> The seventeenth lists the error that "at least we can well hope for the eternal salvation of all those who have never in any way lived in Christ's true Church."<sup>19</sup> The eighteenth contains the latitudinarian error that "Protestantism is nothing else than a different form of the same true Christian religion, within which one may serve God as well as in the Catholic Church."<sup>20</sup>

## VII

The doctrine on Church and State, which had been presented by Pope Gregory XVI and confirmed so effectively by Pope Pius IX, was magnificently elaborated in the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII, raised to the throne of Peter on Feb. 20, 1878. One of Pope Leo's earliest pronouncements on this subject is to be found in his encyclical *Humanum genus*, issued on April 20, 1884. The *Humanum genus* is a condemnation of Freemasonry. It begins with the statement of the truth that the human race is divided into two kingdoms or cities, the City of God, which is the Catholic Church, and the kingdom of Satan, the group loosely bound together under the rule of "the prince of this world" to fight against the people of God. It notes that in the nineteenth century the sect of the Freemasons was beginning to act as the most militant element in this confederation against the Church and was in some measure uniting

<sup>18</sup> *CICF*, II, 1002; *DB*, 1716.

<sup>19</sup> *CICF*, II, 1002; *DB*, 1717.

<sup>20</sup> *CICF*, II, 1002; *DB*, 1718.



and co-ordinating all the efforts against Catholicism.<sup>21</sup> These Freemasons are represented as the chief purveyors of naturalism, and one of their most reprehensible functions in the world is that of encouraging the separation of Church and State.

By a long and persevering labor, they endeavor to bring about this result, that the teaching office and the authority of the Church should be of no moment in civil society. For this reason they preach to the populace and contend that sacred affairs ought to be entirely separated from civil affairs. Thus they shut out the wholesome influence of the Catholic religion from the laws and from the administration of the State, and in consequence they think that civil societies ought to be established with no reference to the teachings and the commandments of the Church.<sup>22</sup>

Working for the separation of the Church from the State, then, is seen as one of the tasks to which the kingdom of Satan has set itself in this world. The unqualified approval of such a condition is thus represented as something quite out of harmony with the exigencies of Catholic thought.

The most important document issued by Pope Leo on the Christian teaching about the Church and the State is, of course, the encyclical *Immortale Dei miserentis*, published on Nov. 1, 1885. This letter contains as its first thesis the proposition that "the State, constituted as it is, is absolutely bound to satisfy the many and grave duties which bind it to God by a public profession of religion."<sup>23</sup> This obligation on the State's part is based primarily upon the fact that the State's own authority is ultimately derived from the divine law itself. It is also based upon the fact that man owes God the tribute of service or of religion in every department of his life, social as well as individual.

The encyclical brings this doctrine out strongly.

Nature and reason which command every individual to worship God devoutly in holiness, because we belong to Him and we must return to Him, since from Him we came, bind also the civil community by a similar law.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *CICF*, III, 221 f.

<sup>22</sup> *CICF*, III, 225.

<sup>23</sup> *CICF*, III, 236.

For men living together in society are under the power of God no less than individuals are, and society, no less than individuals, owes gratitude to God who brought it into existence and who maintains it, and whose ever-bounteous goodness enriches it with countless blessings. Since, then, it is not right for any man to be remiss in the service due to God, and since the greatest duty of all men is to embrace by inward intent and by their conduct the religion, not that which each one may fancy, but the one which God has commanded and which certain and most clear signs show to be the only true one among them all, it follows that it is a crime (*scelus*) for the State to act as if there were no God, or to have no care for religion as something beyond its competence or something of no practical value, or, out of many forms of religion, indifferently to adopt that one which pleases the fancy.<sup>24</sup>

Pope Leo insisted upon the fact that the recognition of the true religion was the duty of the ruler. The State has been instituted in order to bring about the temporal welfare of its citizens. This end in itself is subordinated to the ultimate and eternal supernatural good to which man is actually ordered by God. Hence the State's care should concern the temporal order of men who are *de facto* raised to the supernatural end.

As an integral part of his teaching, Pope Leo dwells at some length upon the fact that the Church is actually provided, and well provided, with marks which unquestionably attest the authenticity of its claims to be the kingdom of God on earth, the one society definitely charged by God with the conduct and care of man in line with his eternal and supernatural end. The apostolic college which rules this society has been endowed by God with unrestricted authority in the field of religion. Consequently it is this definite visible society which the State is called upon to recognize and to aid, and apart from which the State cannot properly discharge its obligation to serve God. Pope Leo also reminds his readers of the fact that a neglect of religion on the part of the State or of its citizens leaves them open to the fatal and entirely false implication that there is no objective basis for right itself.

He teaches, furthermore, that it is wrong to ignore the true Church within the State, and that it is likewise wrong to attempt

<sup>24</sup> *CICF*, III, 236 f.

to subject the Church to civil authority. He repeats Pope Gregory's warning about the separation of Church and State, citing the words of the *Mirari vos arbitramur*. And Pope Leo XIII makes it perfectly clear that false religions and religious societies unauthorized by God have not a genuinely objective right to existence or to the protection of the State. Here, however, the *Immortale Dei miserentis* explicitly teaches that the recognition of false religions on the same footing as the true Church does not necessarily involve any subjective guilt on the part of rulers.

The Church indeed judges it to be illicit to place the various kinds of worship on the same footing as the true religion, but it does not, on that account, condemn those rulers who, for the sake of securing some great good or of hindering some great evil, patiently allow custom or usage to be a kind of sanction for each kind of religion having a place in the State. And in fact the Church is accustomed to take serious pains to see that no one shall be forced to accept the Catholic faith against his will, for, as St. Augustine wisely reminds us, "Man cannot believe otherwise than of his own free will."<sup>25</sup>

The teaching of the *Immortale Dei miserentis* on the Christian doctrine of Church and State is amplified in the great encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum naturae*, issued by Pope Leo XIII on June 20, 1888. This letter gives the Church's teaching on the existence of free will in man, and upon the fact that human liberty, in order to operate properly, must be governed by law. It mentions and denounces three distinct kinds or degrees of liberalism, and it makes this pronouncement with reference to the mildest form of this error.

There are others, somewhat more moderate though not more consistent, who affirm that the morality of individuals is to be guided by the divine law, but not the morality of the State, in such a way that God's commands can be ignored in public affairs and can be disregarded entirely in the framing of laws. Hence there follows that fatal theory of the need of separation between the orders of the Church and of the State. But the absurdity of such a position is manifest. Nature itself proclaims

<sup>25</sup> *CICF*, III, 245 f.; *DB*, 1874 f.

the necessity of the State providing means and opportunities whereby the community may be enabled to live properly, that is to say, according to the laws of God. For, since God is the source of all goodness and justice, it is absolutely ridiculous that that State should pay no attention to these laws or should act against them. Moreover, those who are in authority owe it to the commonwealth not only to provide for its external well-being and advantages, but still more to have regard for the welfare of men's souls in the wisdom of their legislation.<sup>26</sup>

By the nature of things, then, there is no such thing as an objective and God-given liberty of religion, that is, a freedom or permission to man to select any sort of worship he likes or to refrain from adoring God altogether. In the same way the freedom of the press and the freedom of teaching are meant to be liberties to expound truth. God does not will that man use his powers of expression for the dissemination of error and injustice. If liberty of conscience be understood in terms of the false freedom in the matter of worshiping God, it is necessarily an evil thing. But the expression, as Pope Leo reminds us, is capable of a perfectly correct meaning. If it be taken to mean "that every man in the State may follow the will of God and, from a consciousness of duty and free from every obstacle, obey His commands," the encyclical teaches that "this is true liberty."<sup>27</sup>

The *Libertas praestantissimum naturae*, in dealing with the problems of liberalism, finally comes to the relations of the Church and the State, and gives the most explicit and detailed statement of that teaching to be found in the official declarations of the Sovereign Pontiffs. Speaking of those who, though acknowledging the need of worship on the part of the individual, deny any necessity for religion on the part of the State as such, the encyclical declares:

From this teaching, as from its source and principle, flows that fatal principle of the separation of Church and State; whereas it is, on the contrary, clear that the two powers, though dissimilar in functions and unequal in grade, ought, nevertheless, to live in concord by harmony in their activity and by the faithful discharge of their respective duties.

<sup>26</sup> *CICF*, III, 302 f.

<sup>27</sup> *CICF*, III, 307.

But there are two opinions on this matter. Many wish the State to be separated from the Church wholly and entirely, so that with reference to every right of human society, in institutions, customs, and laws, the duties of the State and the education of youth, they would pay no more attention to the Church than if it did not exist. At most they would allow the citizens individually to attend to their religion in private, if they so desired. . . .

Others do not oppose the existence of the Church, and they could not. Yet they deprive it of the nature and the rights of a perfect society, and maintain that it is not its business to make laws, to judge, or to punish, but only to exhort, to advise, and to direct its own subjects in accordance with their own consent and will. By such teaching they pervert the nature of this divine society. . . .<sup>28</sup>

There is still another group classed by Pope Leo XIII with the liberals, a group which does not, like the others, advocate separation of Church and State. These last avoid the crass errors of their associates, and only insist that the Church live according to the spirit of modern times. The *Libertas praestantissimum naturae* has this to say about these mild liberals:

Lastly there remain those who, while they do not approve the separation of Church and State, think nevertheless that the Church ought to adapt itself to the times and conform to what is required in the modern system of government. Such an opinion is sound, if it is to be understood of some equitable adjustment consistent with truth and justice; in so far, namely that the Church, in the hope of some great good, may show itself indulgent and may conform to the times in so far as its sacred function permits. But it is not so with regard to practices and doctrines which a perversion of morals and a warped judgment have unlawfully introduced. Religion, truth, and justice must ever be maintained; and, as God has entrusted these great and sacred matters to the care of the Church, it can never be so unfaithful to its office as to dissemble with regard to what is false or unjust, or to connive at what is hurtful to religion.<sup>29</sup>

Pope Leo makes it perfectly clear that he understands unrestricted freedom of expression and the so-called freedom of re-

<sup>28</sup> *CICF*, III, 309 f.

<sup>29</sup> *CICF*, III, 310.

ligion as evils. The Church does not and will not call them benefits, even though such teaching might possibly win a certain measure of popularity for the Church in modern society. "Liberty," he tells us, "is to be regarded as legitimate only in so far as it affords greater facility for doing good, but no farther."<sup>30</sup> The faithful children of the Church have the definite obligation of using the liberty they enjoy for the service of God in doing good.

To us, the Catholics of America, Pope Leo sent his encyclical *Longinqua oceani spatia*, dated Jan. 6, 1895. This letter contains a valuable teaching for the theology of Church and State. In explaining the tremendous vitality of the American Church, the Holy Father attributed it in great measure to the equity of our laws, but, at the same time, he insisted that the condition of the Church with reference to the State in America is not the most desirable condition for the kingdom of God in this world.

But, moreover (a fact it is pleasing to acknowledge), thanks are due to the equity of the laws which obtain in America and to the customs of the well-ordered Republic. For the Church among you, unopposed by the Constitution and Government of your nation, fettered by no hostile legislation, protected against violence by the common laws and the impartiality of the tribunals, is free to live and act without hindrance. 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 the State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced.<sup>31</sup>

Such is the teaching of the *Longinqua oceani spatia*. The Holy Father would not allow the fact that the Catholic Church is enjoying great prosperity in the United States to blind us to the sovereign truth of our obligation to work towards the propagation of the true Church and the true Faith within our own land. Since our own country is a democracy, and therefore a civil society within which the people themselves actually though indirectly rule, it is obvious that there will be no such thing as a civic worship of God

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *CICF*, III, 461 f.

according to the Catholic religion until the people as a whole have received the grace of the true Faith.

Indeed, the charity which serves as one of the inward bonds of the true Church itself demands that we do all in our power to bring the ineffable blessing of Catholic truth to our own fellow citizens, and to them primarily. By the order of charity these people, precisely because they are especially close to us, have the first call upon us. It is God's holy will that we should work for their eternal happiness, and that we should strive by all the resources at our command to bring them the divine truth which they need in order to receive full benefit from Christ's death for them and for us.

The *Longinqua oceani spatia* serves as a warning against the type of complacency which can be frightfully dangerous to the Christian spirit. Because we are, on the whole, rather prosperous in this land of ours, there is always the tendency or the temptation to "let well enough alone," and to consider the condition of our country to be, if not what God has commanded, at least good enough to satisfy ourselves and, incidentally, to exempt us from what might prove to be the highly difficult duty of extending our efforts in the home mission field. In the light of Pope Leo's warning the evil of this tendency becomes apparent. The Catholic Church is not commissioned by God to enjoy merely a prosperous existence among the nations of the world. It is, on the other hand, fashioned and strengthened by divine grace in order to continue the missionary work of its Founder. It lives in order to glorify God through the sanctification of its own members and through the conversion of non-Catholics to God through Our Lord and His Church.

In other words, it would be wrong and uncharitable for Catholics in this country to be absolutely satisfied with the religious condition as it stands. As long as there are people who still lack the benefit of Christian unity, which Our Lord merited for us by His death, there is no room for complacency on the part of those who are informed about the nature of the Church as God's kingdom on earth and who are animated by a real charity toward God and their neighbors. These people are well aware of the fact that the truth by which men are saved is not some sort of ridiculous "greatest common factor" which might be supposed to be held in common

by all those who profess to have any religion at all, or even by a "greatest common factor" of the Catholic message and the tenets of the various Protestant religious societies. Furthermore they know that fellowship with our Lord is enjoyed, not in some amorphous group of "men and women of good will," but only in the unity of the visible Catholic Church. Loving our fellow citizens, it is our intention to bring them the truth and the fellowship with God which they need. This truth is Catholic truth. The bond of unity is that of the Catholic Church. We have no right, as followers of Christ, to be complacent while a great many of our fellow citizens still lack these divine benefits which should come to them through our activity.

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