Holy Father, Pope XIII.

# On the Prohibition and Censure of Books.

(Liverpool Catholic Times.)

The head and sum of the duties and offices which must be most diligently and sacredly observed in this apostolic dignity is assiduously to watch and with fullest strength to strive that the integrity of Christian faith and morals suffer no loss. And that, more than at any other, is especially necessary at this time, when, through the unbridled licence of men's minds and hearts, almost every doctrine which the Saviour of men, Jesus Christ, delivered to the keeping of His Church for the salvation of the human race is daily called into question and endangered. In this strife against Corist certainly varied and innumerable are the crafty and injurious acts of His enemies; but full of danger above all others is that of intemperate writing and publishing broadcast what is written. For nothing more dangerous could be imagined to corrupt men's minds through contempt of religion and their hearts through incentives to sin. Wherefore the Church, the guardian and the mediator set to preserve faith and morals, fearing such great ill, very early understood that she must take some remedy against this plague; and for this end, as far as she could, has always striven to safeguard men against this terrible poison, reading bad books. The days nearest to her founding sav the vehement zeal of Blessed Paul in this matter, and so likewise, has every following age witnessed the vigilance of the Holy Fathers, the ordinances of Bishops, and the decrees of Councils. And especially is it testified by documentary records how vigilantly the Roman Pontiffs ha e guarded against heretical writings creeping in, to the injury of the public. Anastasius I. by solemn edict, condemned the more dangerous writings of Origen, Innocent I those of Pelagius, and Leo the Great all the books by the Manicheans. Well known in this connection are the decretal letters which Gelasius opportunely issued regarding the book that might and might not be accepted. And so, likewise, as time went on, did the sentence of the Apostolic See pin down as erroneous the pestilent books of the Monothelites, of Abelard. of Massilius of Padua, of Wickliff, and of Huss. But in the 15th century, when the art of printing had been discovered, not only was attention directed against those evil books which had already seen the light, but precautions were taken against the issue of such books in future. And indeed, at that period this foresight was required not from any light mouve, but for the very protection of virtue and public safety; for only too many people had immediately turned seide an art in itself most excellent, the source of the greatest blessings, and calculated to further the social wellbeing of the Christian world, into a great weapon for ruin. For the already great evil of wicked writings was made greater and more rapid by the ease with which they could be spread abroad. Therefore in their most salutary wisdom did Our predecessors, both Alexander VI. and Leo X., decree certain enactments, be-

But soon the wind became a whirlwind, and it w s necessary to repress the pestilence of these wicked heresies with more vigilant sternness. So the are absolutely forbidden. same Leo X., and afterwards Clement 3. Likewise are forbid VII., most toreibly decreed it to be unlawful to read or to possess the works of Lather. But when, to the misery of that age, the impure swill of these pernicious books had beyond bounds increased and crept into every place, there seemed to be need of a remedy fuller and more promptly efficacious. And this remedy Our predecessor, Paul IV. at once provided by issuing a list of books and writings against which the faithful were warned. And soon after the Fathers of the Council of Trent labored to restrain the increasing licence in reading and writing by a new decree. It was their will and enactment that authorities and theologians should be chosen for the duty not alone of increasing and perfecting the Index which Paul IV. had issued, but of framing rules to serve as a guide for publishers. readers, and users of these books; and to these rules Paul IV. gave the free of his

fitting the moral requirements of their

times, for the purpose of restraining

within bounds the publishers of those

apostolic recognition. But the very reason of the public welfare which in the beginn ng had begotten the Tridentine regulatic ns, nade changes necessary in them as time went on. And so the Roman Pontiffs, Clement VIII., Alexander VII, and Benedict XIV., prudently mindful of the needs of the times, made several decrees to develop them and adapt them to the day.

Now, these things clearly show that the principal anxiety of the Roman Pontiffs has ever been to ward off the twin pest and ruin of communities-errors in fu ion and depravity in morals-from the civil and social life of men. Nor did this energy fail to be fruitful so long as in the administration of public affairs God's eternal law possessed its right to order and forbid, and the governors of commonweaths worked in unison with ecclesiastical authority. Everyone knows what followed. When time had gradually changed the aspect of affairs and man's environment, the Church, as is her wont, prudently took such steps

ances of the Rules of the Index, which seemed no longer opportune, she removed by decree, or, with a kindliness equalled by its foresignt, permitted to be regared as obsolete, in view of the strength of custom and use around her. In quite

Vatican Council drew near he gave the in No. 5. duty to some learned men, chosen to prepare arguments, to weigh out and appreciate all the Index Rules and to appraise what should be done with them. They unanimously decided that they ought to be changed, and several of the fathers openly professed their agreement with this decision and asked the Council to ratify it. On this point letters are

extant from the French Bishops expressing the opinion that it was necessary and too urgent to be del yed "to put the rules and the whole Index upon a basis better adapted to the age and easier to observe." And the same opinion was held by the German Bishops, who asked that the "Rules of the Index . . . should be submitted to a new revision and be edited afresh." And many Bishops from Italy and the other countries were of the same mind. And these

all, if we keep in viw the state of the times, of civil enactments, of popular usages, make a just request, and one in accord with the maternal charity of Holy Church. For in the rapid march of minds there is no field of knowledge in which literature does not too boldly wander; whence comes the daily glut of pertilent books. And what is sadder still is that amid this great evil the public laws are not only conniving, but allowing great licence. Hence, on the one hand, the minds of so many are loosed from religion, and on the other such perfect impunity of reading with-

out restraint whatever issues from the Press. Wherefore, bent on remedying these troubles, We have considered two things feasible, from which all may gather a certain and clear rule of action in this matter. First, that the Index of books unfit to be read should be most diligently re examined, and, when this is done, should be published. Secondly, We have considered the Rules and have decreed, while preserving them in substance, to make them easier, so that anyone, unless he be of evil mind, will not find it hard or troublesome to obey them. In this not only are We following the example of Our predecessors. but We are imitating the maternal zeal of the Church, which desires nothing so deeply as to show herself kind, and has

so watched over and still watches over

her ailing children that she may with

zealous love be sparing to their weak-

Whence, after mature consideration with the Cardinals of Holy Church who belong to the Sacred Council of the Index, We have decided to issue the General Decrees which are written be low and are conjoined with this Constitution; which Kules alone are to be used by the Sacred Council, and to be religiously obeyed by Catholics throughout the world. We wish that these alone be regarded as law, and We abro gate the Rules issued by order of the Holy Council of Trent, the Observations, Instructions, Decrees, and Monitions, and whatever else has been decreed and ordered on this matter by Our predecessors, excepting alone the Constitution "Sollicita et Provida" of Benedict XIV., which We decide to leave in force, as it now is in force.

General Decrees on the Prohibition and Censure of Books.

#### SECTION I. The Probibition of Books.

# CHAPTER I.

THE FORBIDDEN BOOKS OF APOSTATES HERE-TICS SCHISMATICS AND OTHER WRITERS.

1. All books which were condemned before the year 1600 by the Supreme Pontiffs or by ocumenical councils, and which are not enumerated in this new Index, must be considered condemned as before, with those exceptions which are permitted by these General Decrees.

2. Books of apostates, heretics, schismatics, and all other writers which defend heresy or schism, or in any way tend to overthrow the basis of religion,

3. Likewise are forbidden books of non-Catholics which professedly treat of religion, unless it is known that they contain nothing contrary to Catholic faith.

4. Books of those authors who do not professedly treat of religion, but merely in passing touch on truths of faith, are not to be considered forbidden by ecclesiastical law until they are proscribed by special decree.

# CHAPTER II.

THE EDITIONS OF THE ORIGINAL TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, AND OF VERSIONS NOT IN THE VULGAR TONGUE.

ancient Catholic versions of Sacred Scripture, even of the Oriental Church, published by any non Catholics, even though apparently edited faithfully and integ rally, are allowed to those only who are engaged on theological or biblical studies, provided, however, no attack be made, in the prefaces or notes, on dog

mas of the Catholic Faith. 6. In the same way and under the same conditions are allowed other versions of the Holy Bible edited by non-Catholics, whether in Latin or in any other classic language.

CHAPTER III. VERSIONS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE IN THE VERNACULAR.

7. Since experience has proved that, on account of men's boldness, more evil than good arises if the Sacred Books are allowed to all without check in the vulgar tongue; wherefore all verses in the vernacular, even though made by Catholics. are entirely forbidden unless approved by the Holy See or issued under the care of Bishops, with notes taken from the holy Fathers of the Church and from

learned Catholic writers. 8 Prohibited are all versions of the Holy Scriptures made by whatever non the common weal. Several of the ordin. Catholic writers in whatever vulgar licence for single books, and only in having consulted their Ordinaries, so

tongue, and those especially which are spread broadcast by Bible Societies, again and again condemned by the Roman Pontiffs, since they entirely dis-card the most salutary laws of the Church relative to the issuing of the recent times Pius IX., from his Pontifi- Divine Books. But these versions are onl pre eminence, sent letters to allowed to those who are engaged in the Archbishops and Bishops in partial theological or Biblical studies, on obmitigation of Rule X. And as the serving the regulations set forth above

### CHAPTER IV.

INDECENT BOOKS. 9 Books which professedly treat on, narrate, or teach lasciviousness or obscenity—for here the question is not one of faith merely, but of morals, which are easily corrupted by the reading of such books-are absolutely prohibited.

10. Books, whether they be of authors ancient or modern, belonging to what are called the classics, if infected by this taint of turpitude, are, on account of their elegance and propriety of language, permitted to those only whose station or teaching office affords a reason; but on no account, unless expurgated with exceeding care, must they be given to or read before boys and youths.

### CHAPTER V.

SOME BOOKS OF A PARTICULAR KIND.

11. Books detracting from the reverence due to God, the Blessed Virgin, the saints, the Church and its worship, the Sacraments, or the Apostolic See, are condemned. Under the same probibition come those works in which the idea of the inspiration of Holv Scripture is perverted or its extension too strictly limited. Books in which the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy or the clerical or religious state is deliberately assailed with opprobrium are likewise fo**r**bidden.

12 It must be held as unlawful to publish, read or keep books in which fortune telling, divination, magic, the summon ing of spirits, and other such superstitions are taught or recommended.

13. Books or writings which tell of new apparitions, revelations, visions, prophecies, and miracles, or which introduce new devotions, even under the pretext that they are private, are proscribed if they are published without due permission from ecclesiastical superiors.

14. In like manner are prohibited books which uphold the lawfulness of the duel, suicide, or divorce, which treat of the Masonic sects and other societies of that kind and maintain that these are not baleful but useful to the Church and civil society, and which defend errors proscribed by the Holy See.

#### CHAPTER VI.

SACRED PICTURES AND INDULGENCES.

15. Pictures, however printed, of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and saints, or other servants of God, which are not in conformity with the sense and decrees of the Church, are absolutely forbidden. New ones, whether prayers be attached or not are not to be published without the permission of the ecclesiastical authority.

16. All persons are interdicted from publishing in any way Indulgences which are apocryphal and have been condemned or recalled by the Holy Apostolic See. Those that have been already published are to be withdrawn from the faithful.

17. All books, epitonies, pamphlets, license from competent authority.

# CHAPTER VII.

LITURGICAL BOOKS AND PRAYER-BOOKS

18. Let no one take upon himself to make any alteration in authentic editions of the Missal, the Breviary, the Rituals the Ceremonials Episcoporum, the Roman Pontifical, and other liturgical books approved by the Holy Apostolic See; in case this has been done, the new editions are prohibited.

19. No litanies except the most ancient and the ordinary ones, which are contained in the Breviaries, Missal, the Pontificals and the Rituals, the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin which are usually sung in the Holy House of Loreto, and City and the Sacred Master of the Aporthe Litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus already approved by the Holy See, are to be published without the revision and approbation of the Ordinary.

20. Let no one, without licence from legitimate authority, publish books or pamphlets of prayers, devotion, or religious, moral, ascetic, and mystic doctrine and teaching or other books of this kind, even though they may appear calculated to promote the piety of Chris tians; otherwise they are to be deemed prohibited.

# CHAPTER VIII.

JOURNALS, LEAFLETS AND PERIODICALS.

21. Journals, leasiets and periodical publications which of set purpose attack religion and morality are to be regarded as proscribed not only by natural but also by ecclesiastical law.

And when necessary let the Ordinaries 5. Editions of the original text and of take care to warn the faithful opportunely with regard to the danger of such reading and the injury it causes.

22. Let no Catholic, especially no ecclesiastic, publish anything in jour nals, leaflets or periodical publications of this kind, except for a just and reasonable cause.

# CHAPTER IX.

THE PERMISSION TO READ AND KEEP PRO-HIBITED BOOKS.

23. Books condemned by special decrees or by these General Decrees can be read and kept only by such as have re ceived due authorization from the Holy See or from those to whom it has dele-

gated the requisite power.

24. The Roman Pontiffs set up the Stered Congregation of the Index to grant licences for reading and keeping whatsoever books are prohibited. But power for the regions subject to their jurisdiction. This authority belongs this kind, and in general all writings likewise to the Sacred Master of the specially concerning religion and mor-Apostolic Palace, but merely for the ality.

urgent cases. And if they shall have obtained from the Apostolic See the general power of granting the faithful a licence to read and keep prohibited books, let them give it only in chosen cases and for good and reasonable canve.

26. All who have obtained Apost die authorization to read and kep prohibited books are not thereby empowered to read and keep any books whatev rorj mrnais proscribed by the local Octinaries, unless the power of reading and keeping books by whomsers remidented be ex pressly given to them in the Apostolic Moreover, they who have procured a licence to read prohibited books must remember that they are bound by a grave precent to guard such book- as that they may not fall into the hands of

#### CHAPTER X.

THE DENUNCIATION OF BAD BOOKS. 27. Although it is the duty of all Catholics, particularly of those eminent in learning, to denounce had books to the Bishops or the Apostolic See, still this duty belongs by special title to Nuncios, Delegates Apostolic, local Ordinaries, and Rectors of Universities which are

notable as seats of learning. 28. It will be well when denouncing bad books not only to indicate the title, but also, as far as it can be done. to explain the reasons for which the book is thought deserving of censure. And for those to whom the denunciation is addressed it will be a sacred duty to keep

secret the names of the denouncers. 29. Let Ordinaries also, as delegates of the Apostolic See, endeaver to proscribe and take out of the hands of the faithful bad books and other pernicious writings published or circulated in their Dioceses Let them submit to the Apostolic judgment those works or writings which require a closer examination or for which, in order to insure a salutary effect, the decision of the highest authority may appear to be needed.

#### SECTION II. The Censership of Books.

CHAPTER I.

THE AUTHORITIES WHO HAVE CHARGE OF THE CENSORSHIP OF BOOKS.

30. From what has been laid down above (No. 7) it is clear with whom lies the power of approving or permitting editions and versions of the Sacred Scriptures.

31. Let no one dare again to publish books which have been torbidden by the Apostolic See; should an exception appear admissible in any particular case for a grave and reasonable cause, it is never to be made until a licence has first been obtained from the Sacred Congregation of the Index and the conditions prescribed by it have been observed.

32. Whatever pertains in any way to the causes of beatification and ca..onization of the servants of God cannot be published without the sanction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

33. The same is to be said of the collections of the decrees of the different Congregations; that is to say, these col lections cannot be published unless li cence has previously been obtained and the conditions said down by the directors of each Congregation have been ob-

34. Vicare Apostolic and Missionaries Apostolic are to observe faithfully the leadets, etc., recording grants of Indulg-Propaganda with regard to the pub

lishing of books. 35. The approbation of books the censorship of which is not reserved by the present Decrees to the Holy See or the Roman Congregations is a matter apper taining to the Ordinary of the place at

which they are published. 36. Regulars are to remember that, in addition to the licence from the Bushop, they are bound by a Decree of the sacred Council of Trent to obtain authorization for the publication of a book from the Superior to whom they are subject. And such permission is to be printed at the beginning or the end of the work.

37. It an author living in Rome wishes to publish a book elsewhere than in the City, no other approbation is required but that of the Cardinal Vicar of the tolic Palace,

# CHAPTER II.

THE DUTY OF CENSORS IN THE EXAMINATION OF BOOKS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

38. Let Bishops to whose office it belongs to grant authority to print books take care to entrust the examination of them to men of approved piety and learning, upon whose faith and integrity they can rely, confident that they will not be influenced by favour or ill-will, and that all human considerations will be put aside.

38. The c neors are to recognise that of the various opinions and views (according to the injunction of Benedict XIV.) they must judge with a mind free from all prejudices. They must, therefore discard affection for any particular nation, family, school, or institution, and put away from them party zeal Let them keep before them the dogmas of Holy Church and the common teaching of Catholics which are contained in the decrees of the General Councils, the Constitutions of the Roman Pontiffs, and the concensus of the Doctors of the Church.

40. On the completion of the examination, if there appears to be nothing against the publication of the book, let the Ordinary give the author in writing, and entirely gratis, permission for its publication, to be printed at the beginning or the end of the work.

# CHAPTER III.

BOOKS TO BE SUBMITTED TO CENSORSHIP BEFORE PUBLICATION.

41. All the faithful are bound to submit to ecclesiastical censorship before publication at least those books which both the Supreme Congregation of the have reference to the Holy Scrintures, Holy Office and the Sacred Congr gation | Sacred Theology, Ecclesiastical History, of the Propaganda Fide possess the same | Canon Law, Natural Theology, Ethics, or other religious or moral subjects of

42. Let not members of the diocesan 25. Bishops and other Prelates holding clergy publish even books treating of the

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that they may give a proof of their obedi-ence towards them — They are forbidden to undertake the directing of journals or periodical sheets without first naving ob tained leave from the Ordinaries.

#### CHAPTER IV.

TRINITES AND PUBLISHIES OF POOKS.

43 Let no book subject to evclesiastic al censure be printed unless it losars at the beginning the name and sorname both of the author and publisher; also the name of the place and the year in which it is printed and published. It is any case it seems well that the name o the author should be withheld, the power of pernitting this is to he with the Ordinary.

44. Printers and publishers of hocks should bear in mind that new editions of a work which has been approved require a fresh approbation, and that the approbation given to the original text does not suffice for its translation into another language.

45. Books condemned by the Ap \*tolic See must be considered condemned everywhere, no matter into what language they are translated.

46. Let all vendors of books, especially those who rejoice in being Catnolics neither sell, supply, nor keep books treating "ex professo" of observe matters; other prohibited books let them not keep for sale, unless they shall have obtained leave through the Ordinary from the Sacred Congregation of the Index, and let them not sell them to anyone unless in the exercise of a wise dis cretion they can form the opinion that they are lawfully sought by the pur chaser.

#### CHAPTER V. PENALTIES AGAINST TRANSGRESSOES OF THE

GENERAL DECREES. 47. All and everyone reading, without the anthorization of the Ap stolic Sec. the books of apostates and heretics which champion heresy, also the books of any author whatsoever expressly for bidden by Apostolic Letters, and keeping, printing, or in any way detending munication specially reserved to the

Roman Pontiff. 48. Those who, without the approbation of the Ordinary, print or cause to be printed the books of the sacred Scriptures or notes or commentaries upon them fall "ipso facto" under excommunication unreserved.

49. Those who shall have transcressed in the other things prescribed by these General Decrees are to be sexiously admonished by the Bisnop in accordance with the degree of gravity in the true gression; and if it shall appear fitting let them be restrained by canonical pen-

We decree that this letter and all that it contains can never be censured or impugned on the ground of its having been obtained through furtiveness or surprise \* of imperfect intention on Oar part, or of any other defect whatsoever, that it ever shall be and is in force, and that it should be inviolably observed, judicially and otherwise, by all persons of whatsoever degree or pro-eminence, also de l claring null and void the action of anyone by whom, with whatever authority or under whats ever pretext, knowingly or unknowingly, anything diff rent to this should nappen to be attempted everything to the contrary not with stand-

ing Moreover, We desire that copies of this Letter, even when printed-subscribed, however, by a notary and strengthened by the seal of an ecclesiastical dignitary-should have the same credit as would be given to the indication of Our Will on the presentation of the present Letter.

To no man, then, let it be permitted to violate this page of Our Constitution, ordinance, limitation, restriction, and will, or with rash daring to go against what it prescribes. And if anyone should presume to do so, let him know that he will incur the displeasure of Almighty God and the Blessed Apostles reter and Paul. Given at St. Peter's, Rome, on the

25th February, in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord, 1896, the nineteenth year of Our Pontificate. A. CARD MACCHI. A. Panici, Subdatarius,

VISA DE CVRIA I. DE AQVILA E VICECOMITIBVS Loco † Plumbi.

> Reg. in Serret. Brevium. I. Cygnonius.

The words of the original are "vitio subreptionis aut obreptionis," a term in jurisprudence applied to official letters obtained by surprise and therefore held to be noll. "Observio" occurs when the letters are obtained by an expose in which something essential is omitted; "subreptio" when they have been obtained by an expose which is false.

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