

in the humanism which was nourished in the very sanctuary by the highest dignitaries, and bore its worst fruits in the midst of a Catholic nation at the time of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists. Catholics had produced no better refutation of the errors enumerated in the schema than such men as Leibnitz and Guizot. There were multitudes of Protestants in Germany, England, and North America who loved our Lord Jesus Christ, and had inherited from the shipwreck of faith positive truths and monuments of divine grace. Although this speech was greeted with execrations, it had at least the effect that the objectionable preamble was somewhat modified.

The supplement of the decree binds all Catholics to observe also those constitutions and decrees by which such erroneous opinions as are not here specifically enumerated have been proscribed and condemned by the Holy See. This can be so construed as to include all the eighty errors of the Syllabus. The minority who in the General Congregation had voted *Non Placet* or only a conditional *Placet*, were quieted by the official assurance that the addition involved no new dogma, and had a disciplinary rather than a didactic character. "Some gave their votes with a heavy heart, conscious of the snare." Strossmayer stayed away. Thus a unanimous vote of 667 or 668 fathers was secured in the public session, and the Infallibility decree was virtually anticipated. The Pope, after proclaiming the dogma, gave the Bishops his benediction of peace, and gently intimated what he next expected from them.

THE VATICAN DECREES, CONTINUED. THE INFALLIBILITY DECREE.

II. THE FIRST DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH OF CHRIST (CONSTITUTIO DOGMATICA PRIMA DE ECCLESIA CHRISTI).

It was passed, with two dissenting votes, in the fourth public session, July 18, 1870. It treats, in four chapters—(1) on the institution of the Apostolic Primacy in the blessed Peter; (2) on the perpetuity of St. Peter's Primacy in the Roman Pontiff; (3) on the power and nature of the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff; (4) on the Infallibility of the Roman Pontiff.

The new features are contained in the last two chapters, which teach *Papal Absolutism* and *Papal Infallibility*. The third chapter vindicates to the Roman Pontiff a superiority of ordinary episcopal (not simply an extraordinary primatial) power over all other Churches, and an immediate jurisdiction, to which all Catholics, both pastors and people, are bound to submit in matters not only of faith and morals, but even of discipline and government. He is, therefore, the Bishop of Bishops, over every single Bishop, and over all Bishops put together; he is in the fullest sense the Vicar of Christ, and all Bishops are simply Vicars of the Pope. The fourth chapter teaches and defines, as a divinely revealed dogma, that the Roman Pontiff, when speaking from his chair (*ex cathedra*), i. e., in his official capacity, to the Christian world on subjects relating to faith or morals, is infallible, and that such definitions are irreformable (i. e., final and irreversible) in and of themselves, and not in consequence of the consent of the Church.

To appreciate the value and bearing of this decree, we must give a brief history of it.

The Infallibility question was suspended over the Council from the very beginning as the question of questions, for good or for evil. The original plan of the Infallibilists, to decide it by acclamation, had to be abandoned in view of a formidable opposition, which was developed inside and outside of the Council. The majority of the Bishops circulated, early in January, a monster petition, signed by 410 names, in favor of Infallibility. The Italians and the Spaniards circulated similar petitions separately. Archbishop Spalding, of Baltimore, formerly an anti-Infallibilist, prepared an address offering some