

hesitation a public and eloquent retraction in the pulpit of his own cathedral. St. George Mivart acted with the same noble magnanimity. His views on eternal punishment, as published in the *Nineteenth Century*, met with decided disapproval from the Congregation of the Index. The truly enlightened scientist accepted the verdict, and in the pages of the same magazine hastened to publish and explain his motives for a full submission.

The question has been mooted, whether the laws of the Index bind, practically speaking, in America. Some authorities favor the negative, and consider that where Catholics are mixed up with a majority of adherents to other creeds, the rigor of the Church's legislation has been relaxed through the toleration of the sovereign pontiff. The far greater number however, of eminent canonists look upon this claim as untenable. It identifies itself with a view which deprived the Index of force outside of Italy, a view not only never tolerated, but repeatedly declared an abuse. No precedent can be appealed to as ground for the admission of a principle which has met with no favor, theoretically or practically at Rome. On the other hand, there are cases when, in pursuance to the laws of the Index, librarians and scholars on this side of the Atlantic have petitioned and received leave to examine prohibited books, a useless step if the liberty were already freely conceded. Again the power of the Roman Congregations is merely an extension of the powers enjoyed by the Sovereign Pontiff and therefore embraces the universal Church. The fact that the decrees of condemnation require the ratification of the Pope should lay all doubts at rest. Add to this, that the intrinsic reasons for which a book is censored are equally urgent in America as in Europe. The writings of Voltaire, Tom Paine, Renan, Dumas, Zola and others of the same school lose nothing of their utterly pernicious influence in being transferred from one clime to another.

There is an impression that the Index, though perhaps necessary in other times has now survived its usefulness. The present exercise of its powers conflicts with the liberty of the press. The claim is loudly asserted that any man has a

right to think what he likes and print what he thinks. It would be tedious to enter into these fallacies. In point of fact full liberty of the press never did and does not exist. Confiscated newspapers and imprisoned editors still rank among the official acts of liberal governments. As soon as Anarchy finds expression in America, fenianism in Britain, monarchy in France, the liberty of that particular press ceases. And yet when the interest of the state are not involved, the fundamental truths of religion are left at the mercy of every ink-slinger. Has man changed, or does he still remain a creature of flesh and blood? Are not pain, temptation, sin, the sadly stubborn and perplexing facts of this trying world? It may be readily admitted that man has an immortal soul and is destined for a future of unending beatitude, but are we to forget an almost fatal drawback? His nature is also subject to a mysterious degradation through which he seems weak in the presence of moral evil and is fascinated by the mere presentation of unlawful objects and ideas. In spite of enlightenment, progress, and advance, of the highest social culture, of material resources and mental endowments such as the world has perhaps never witnessed, the danger of knowing certain things has not diminished nor the helps against that danger increased. Apart from this, there is a certain amount of knowledge indispensable to men at all times and in all conditions. Does it appear reasonable that anyone should be permitted to think what he pleases about those truths, to scorn them as worthless, or deny them altogether. For instance to maintain that man with all his gifts differs in no essential way from the brute seems at once a criminal and foolish proceeding. On some of those truths, society depends for its very existence and development; the connection is so close that a blow at the former reaches the latter which to protect itself must extend a defending hand to the endangered principles. Among them are not merely those which regard society's temporal interests, the duties of subjects, the prerogatives and obligations of rulers. A necessary step further brings in another world with its strict duties and obligations. Man and society surely owe