

The concessions of the German government to the Papacy, and the exaltation of the Pope by Bismarck, have aroused the Protestant consciousness. The Catholic priesthood of Germany is probably the best educated in the world; but they are dominated by ultramontanism. As the recently deceased secretary of the Pope, Jacobini, gained such signal diplomatic triumphs, so Beckx, the late general of the Jesuits, succeeded in making Jesuitism predominant throughout Catholicism. Catholic journalistic literature has of late made rapid progress; it is arrogant and defiant, defies the Papal Church, and denounces in unmeasured terms the reformation and Protestantism. No pains are spared, no means shunned, to gain an advantage over the Evangelical Church. Not only are the faithful held by threats of damnation, but it is insisted that children of mixed marriages must become Catholics. The Papacy is lauded as a model of tolerance and the advocate of liberty of conscience. These and other claims and practices have led Protestants to engage in a vigorous controversy with the old foe. Numerous oppressions of Protestants in Catholic lands are published, revealing in a glaring light what the Papal love of liberty really means. Spain and Italy furnish constant illustrations. Thus the Evangelical Germans of Verona recently held a religious service in a hotel. On the next day the priests of the place purified the place with holy water and reconsecrated the hall to its usual purposes—those of a drinking and dancing saloon. Now, whoever rents a place for such services again is threatened with the major excommunication. Facts thus prove incontestably that while the Catholics of Germany demand greater freedom than the Protestants possess, and claim to be the tolerant church, Protestants are treated with great indignity in Catholic lands.

Professor Jacobi, of Halle, the church historian, a pupil of Neander, has just published an open letter on the charge that Germany oppresses Catholics. He thinks the State obliged to defend itself against the assumptions of the Papacy, which exalts itself above the State and interferes with its prerogatives. "Let the Pope renounce the arrogant and false claims of the Syllabus of 1864; let Catholics repudiate it; then it will not be difficult for churches as well as States to enter upon a course of enduring peace." With the facts of history at his command, he arraigns the Papacy for its intolerance, for inciting princes and people against each other, for pronouncing anathemas on nations and delivering them up to other people as a prey, for expertness in political intrigue, and for committing the bloodiest crimes to satisfy the greed for power. He shows the dangers to which a Government is subjected when a foreign potentate can command nu-

merous subjects to refuse them allegiance, and uses its extraordinary power to enforce its command. He shows that the church has not repudiated its former acts, but has given them the stamp of infallible authority; and there is no reason why, when it sees fit, that church should not again interfere with the highest political interests of the Government. "Since the politics of the Pope is purely Papal, there is no reason why he may not, like former Popes, attempt to prescribe revolutionary acts, and forbid priests and people to render obedience to the Government in case the German people are obliged to wage war against a power friendly to the Pope." Jacobi thinks it not only right but also a solemn duty for nations to protect themselves against a foreign power who arrogates to himself the right to interfere with a people's political affairs. Whatever statesmen may do in the interest of expediency, he advocates strict adherence to principle as the only course worthy of the theologian and historian. He is specially indignant that the German authorities are appealed to for help in restoring the Pope to temporal power.

Aside from their dogmatic, historical, and political controversies, Protestants and Catholics are rivals in the effort to gain control of the masses. In view of the growing power of Socialism and of the alienation of the laboring classes from religion, this effort is of greatest importance. A recent Protestant writer says: "The fate of churches will be decided by their relation to the social question. That church will gain the victory which does most for the solution of the social problem. In every age the church has a special mission, and its future depends on the manner in which it accomplishes that mission. Its peculiar mission in the present pertains to socialistic questions. True, the pure Gospel cannot perish; but the fact that we have the pure Gospel is no guaranty for the continuance of our church in its present form. Pure doctrine is a great blessing; but it is also a talent entrusted to us; not its possession, but its proper use and increase will insure its retention. The ultimate decision of the worth of a church is always to be determined by the moral fruit it bears."

"No one can any longer doubt that now, after an apparent cessation of hostility, the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism has become more fierce than ever. Let us not, however, deceive ourselves; the decision will not be on the field of learned deductions, nor in the domain of dogmatic polemics; the decisive question is: Which church will gain the strongest influence over the life of the people? The social problem is the field on which the decisive battle must be fought."

Weighty words, indeed; and no less weighty for the churches of America and England than for those of Germany.