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THE POPE'S INFALLIBILITY

The gigantic struggle of nations embattled against nations with its ever accumulating horrors has shocked into silence the self-complacent prophets of the decadent modern philosophy of life. Hushed are the vain-glorious boasts of modern progress, silent the arrogant and baseless belief that the course of human evolution is ever onward and upward, and unheeded the futile effort of the modern mind to find some substitute worthy of itself for the outworn Christianity it had discarded.

Mockingly or despairingly is heard the query: "Is Christianity a failure?" Sober second thought rejects the implication. Neither national ideals nor social ideals have been Christian. Not Christian has been the trend of modern thought nor Christian the basic principles of modern society. The very corner-stone of Christian civilization, the Christian family, was crumbling away under the corroding influence of essentially pagan divorce; and the red handed slaughter, actual or anticipated, of countless unborn innocents selfishly practiced and shamelessly defended and advocated. Everywhere was the defilement of the State tending to make legal enactments the standards of morality. This, not Christianity, has failed.

Leading the world in modern thought and tendency, leading in Science and culture, in whose governing classes both politically and intellectually rationalism had superseded Christianity, Germany shocks the world by the logical and ultimate development and application of the very principles that the world loved so much; the State supreme, the State a law unto itself, the State above all restraint of the moral law, the State's right limited only by the State's might. Out of the tyranny of State supremacy and the chaos of private judgment, the legacy of the Reformation, England and the English-speaking world have emerged, because England had a thousand years of Catholic history and development before she was separated from the unity of Christendom, and during that time she was permeated with the influence of the Catholic Church, the creator and animating principle of European civilization. Not in any spirit of controversy do we recall these facts; they are the lessons of history now beginning to be acknowledged by all students unbiassed by the dying Protestant tradition. Now England is fighting, and we are fighting with her, against the Reformation principle of State supremacy and, though not so clearly perceived as yet, against the chaotic principle of private judgment.

With the awful consequences of bankrupt modern philosophy before their eyes it is not surprising that deep in the hearts of men there is questioning and weighing of things hitherto unquestioned and unconsidered. Beyond the clash of arms, the thunder of guns, and the welter of blood and carnage, stands one great power with no army, with no navy; centred in one old man, powerless, in a worldly sense, amongst the world's great powers, yet representing and exercising a power to which the world at this time instinctively turns. The Vice-gent of Christ, the Prince of Peace whose Kingdom is not of this world, stands out to day amid the clash of material forces as the representative and executive of that higher and nobler spiritual power which the world had almost forgotten. With millions of his spiritual children on both sides of the awful world strife, the Holy Father's heart is sorrowful unto death; the Holy Father's voice is for peace. "Politicians," says Rome,

"are concerning themselves with the national advantages and disadvantages of war—the Holy Father thinks only of the awful shame and horror of it, the sufferings it has brought upon so many millions, the harm it is doing Christian civilization."

"And instead of being a failure this latest utterance of the Pope has been a phenomenal, wonderful unprecedented success. It was a few earnest words spoken to a newspaper correspondent, and it has resounded throughout the nations high above the roar of battle. Every great newspaper in the world has reproduced it and commented upon it, and even when the comments have seemed to be unfavorable they have, in spite of themselves, set the people thinking about peace."

In the beginning of the War a great Nonconformist minister suggested the calling together of a council of Christendom. The Rev. R. J. Campbell of the City Temple, London, England, frankly acknowledged that no other than the Pope could call together such a council. Before the War the unhappy division of Christianity was widely deplored. Efforts were made to secure some sort of union amongst the memberless divisions of Protestantism. It is, then, not surprising that amidst the universally instinctive turning to the Centre of Unity, there should be some characteristic anti-Catholic comments on the action of the Holy See.

Amongst these is worthy of note that of a high class English weekly, The Spectator. "The claim of infallibility," says The Spectator, in an article reproduced in World Wide, "constitutes the Papacy a grand interpreter of civilization." The claim and there recognition of the claim is confounded by the Protestant Spectator. After centuries of flouting of all claims of the Papacy The Spectator on behalf of Protestants, renders an remarkable even if unconscious tribute to the Papacy.

The Spectator thinks that the Holy See should, in virtue of its infallibility condemn and left all infractions of the moral code in this War. And purporting to answer a perturbed Roman Catholic correspondent, says: "We fear—but here we write quite frankly as not belonging to the Roman Communion—that infallibility cannot of its nature, and never could, survive such tests as are now brought to bear upon it. It is a great superhuman pretension, which is found to be illogical and unworkable in a vortex of human suffering produced by intricate international politics. The test of events is too severe for it. We cannot see any other outcome than that many Roman Catholics should sadly recognize that technical or metaphysical explanations of infallibility after all avail nothing, and that Nemesis waits on all human claims which are pitched extravagantly high."

Note that there is not a hint that anything or anybody might replace the Pope. Just a sad and pessimistic welcome to the Roman Catholics who may sink hopelessly down to The Spectator's level of despair. Let us examine for a moment the rational and Catholic view of infallibility. The Spectator, "lest it be accused of using the term in a loose and vulgar sense," quotes a part of the definition. But from the beginning the infallibility of Christ's Church was always recognized. The definition of Papal infallibility simply recognizes that the Pope as Head of the Church enjoys the privilege that was always conceded to an Ecumenical Council. It is a question that the modern world will regard as of minor importance. It refuses to be bound by Ecumenical Council or Pope. And if an Ecumenical Council enjoys the prerogative, then by its own definition the Pope as the Supreme teacher of Faith and Morals is also infallible.

But the popular saying has it that, "no man is infallible." Good Protestants, nevertheless, proclaim the writers of the Bible infallible, and more than that, inspired.

Now inspiration is something more than infallibility. The Spectator may speak for those who believe neither in an infallible Church nor an infallible Book; neither in an infallible interpreter, nor inspired writer. Certainly the Bible and its inspired writers are a greater "superhuman pretension" than an infallible interpreter of revealed truth. And this is all that infallibility is concerned with: the interpretation and safeguarding of truths already revealed. The Protestant finds no difficulty in believing that Moses, and David and Isaiah and St. Paul and Matthew and John and all the other writers of the Bible are the inspired medium through whom God has revealed His truth to man. There

should, then, be no insuperable difficulty in recognizing that Peter the Rock on which Christ built His Church against which the gates of hell are powerless, Peter for whom Christ prayed that his faith should not fail and whom he commissioned to confirm his brethren, Peter whom they recognize as one of the inspired writers, there should be no insuperable difficulty in recognizing that Peter might also enjoy the lesser prerogative of infallibility. And if Peter, then Leo and Pius and Benedict, for Christ's promises are "to the consummation of the world."

Prejudice and bias and pre-conceived notions aside there is no "superhuman pretension" involved in the Pope's infallibility that is not involved in still greater degrees in believing that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. And the visitor from another planet whom The Spectator calls in as an unprejudiced witness would probably observe that nowhere in the civilized world, or in the uncivilized world either for that matter, is law left to interpret itself. There are judges and courts for that purpose; and always and everywhere some court of final appeal.

The Spectator confidently appeals to the planetary visitor. See this awful war, it involves questions of morals. Now the Pope claims to be infallible in questions of faith and morals. "We say nothing about faith but surely if ever there were a plain occasion for moral direction and moral judgment this war provides one." And The Spectator makes the other planet stranger silently acquiesce in the English Protestant view.

But the stranger might ask: Do you acknowledge the Pope's claim? And he would have to be told that England made it treason to be a papist. Many died martyrs, but as a great English historian says: "A whole nation could not be expected to imitate the example of Reynolds and Hale, and the three Carthusian priors, and Bishop Fisher, and Sir Thomas More. How many could calmly face the prospect of strangulation, the ripping knife, the block, to yield their testimony to the belief that there was a law above the laws of Parliament and the will of a despotic king?" Then the stranger might remark: England drove the Pope out of her national life? She does not believe in his mission? The Spectator might answer: Oh never mind questions of faith; we don't know what we believe; but isn't that a good one on the Pope who claims to be infallible in questions of morals? But the stranger amused in an other-worldly sort of way at the Englishman's rock-like prejudice might surprise and pain The Spectator by desiring to inform himself on the papal claims from some not unfriendly source. And he would find that neither Pope nor Church claims infallible guidance except in defining the principles of morality. For instance, to take an example unaffected by war passions, the Church infallibly defines as part of Christian revelation that Christian marriage is indissoluble except by death. She does not claim that in a particular marriage case that her courts are infallibly guided. Such decisions are human judgments based on human testimony and attain only human certainty. But she proclaims and safeguards the eternal principle of Christian morality that Christian marriage can be dissolved by no earthly power, not even by the Pope. Thus she stands as adamant against the corroding and corrupting influence of pagan sensuality as embodied in pagan divorce laws.

The Spectator confuses the infallibility of the supreme teacher in matters of faith and morals with the duty of infallibly arbitrating all human disputes. "And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him and offering Him vinegar, and saying: If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself and us." "Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again; save Thyself, coming down from the cross."

Ah yes; this is the Gethsemane of Christ's vice-gent on earth; and the world reports his bitter sorrow. There are, thank God, few Spectators who mock at his infallibility.

God leads us by strange ways; we know He wills our happiness, but we neither know what our happiness is, nor the way. Left to ourselves, we should take the wrong way; we must leave it to Him—Cardinal Newman.

THE POPE AND PEACE

To those who find fault with the Holy Father's constant desire and appeal for peace Rome very pertinently points out a fundamental misconception of the whole question:

Thus it would seem as if everybody except the Pope still wants more misery, more destruction, more bloodshed. Mere argument is of little use against such a psychological state.

And yet in normal times it would be obvious that all the objections raised against the Pope's efforts for peace are based on an elementary misconception. People are confusing peace with the conditions of peace but Benedict XV., who for the last eight months has never ceased to invoke peace through every means available to him, has not yet said a single word about the conditions of peace. The conditions of peace must, for weal or woe, depend on the results of the war—not merely the apparent results up to the present, but the results that would in all human probability be obtained by continuing the war to the bitter end. In reality the Holy Father is only asking the United States and the belligerents themselves to begin to consider the possibility of stopping now, rather than six months or a year hence, the destruction of human life and happiness which has been going on day after day since last August.

There is also behind all such objections to the consideration of peace the despairing conviction that only by crushing victory and overwhelming force can satisfactory peace terms be reached. Is it treason not to despair of humanity and civilization?

THE AMERICAN NOTE

Before the RECORD will have reached its readers Germany's answer to the American note on the sinking of the Lusitania will probably have been given to the press.

Seen in the perspective of the horrors of this War the sinking of the Lusitania is a small matter. Nevertheless it involves a principle of international law hitherto unquestioned. And this principle the United States vigorously and unequivocally asserts. "American citizens act within their indisputable rights in taking their ships and in travelling wherever their legitimate business calls them upon the high seas and exercise those rights in what should be the well justified confidence that their lives will not be endangered by acts done in clear violation of universally acknowledged international obligations, and certainly in the confidence that their own Government will sustain them in the exercise of their rights."

Germany proceeds on the assumption that international law as hitherto understood is abrogated; that England in intercepting foodstuffs going to the civilian population of a country not blockaded, creating a "military area" of the North Sea, and otherwise has disregarded international law as heretofore understood and accepted. Germany claims to have herein justification for her proclamation of a "war zone" around the British Islands, and she proclaimed that "travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk."

Any such justification is anticipated in the American note when it says: "No warning that an unlawful and inhuman act will be committed can possibly be accepted as an excuse or palliation for that act or an abatement of the responsibility for its commission."

The United States stands squarely and firmly against the position taken by Germany in her submarine warfare. Will Germany recede from that position? If not will the United States be drawn into the War? It has been suggested that Germany is deliberately attempting to draw the United States into war. Then she might freely make submarine war on all shipping coming from America, and the output of American munition factories would be diverted to domestic purposes. Whatever temporary advantage might thus be gained would be utterly insignificant compared to the final enlistment of the tremendous resources of the United States on the side of the Allies. We may conclude that there will be no war with the States, unless, as some suggest, that the German authorities would really welcome some such excuse for suing for peace. They might thus save their faces with their own people by pointing out that no other course was possible with the world in arms against them.

But that war between the States and Germany is even by the strongest pro-British papers regarded as only a remote possibility is indicated by this concluding paragraph in an editorial of the N. Y. Times:

"The people's full confidence in the President is to be justified. He will in no sense misrepresent them. His note will give no provocation to war, its whole purpose will be to avert misunderstandings that might sever friendly relations. He is with conscience, with sincerity, and with firmness seeking to avert the great calamity of war, without involving us in the greater calamity of invoking the reproach of supine toleration of unbearable wrongs."

After the President's note had been published the Times said:

"The President brings clearly into view Germany's way out. He is conciliatory to the point of clearly indicating the terms of a reply that will meet our demands. We can not believe that (Germany) will choose the path to perdition."

ABOUT BOOKS AND READERS

Do Catholics read anything but their prayer books? What a ridiculous question, you say. And at first sight it does seem ridiculous. But to the struggling Catholic author enumerating his sales it seems anything but absurd. He at least may be pardoned for thinking that a great number of Catholics never read anything but the "Key of Heaven" or "The Garden of the Soul."

But this is a reading age, and surely Catholics are of the age? Unfortunately we must plead guilty to the charge. In nothing are we so up to date as in this matter of selecting our books. The presses of the world are working over time turning out avalanches of printed matter, much of which is positively bad, and nearly all of which is worthless. Now since it is demand that creates the supply there must be a demand for such reading matter, and it would be idle to shut our eyes to the fact that a certain portion of it is a Catholic demand. The trashy, ephemeral literature of the day finds its way into Catholic homes. The insane drivelling of some half educated semipagan is almost wept over by gushing maidens and simpering youths. Robert Chambers is a demi-god, but Robert Benson is—well, not "class." "Service" "Rhymes of a Rolling Stone" is "just too sweet for anything," but Fischer's "Toller" is too serious for ill blooded people.

It is a sorry admission to make, but since nothing is gained by evasion, we might as well face the fact that to multitudes of our people who pride themselves upon being "literary" the field of Catholic letters is an unexplored region. People talk learnedly of Shaw who never read a line of him, but they shake their heads at the mention of Sheehan. They never heard of him, and even if they had perchance happened upon one of his books it would never do to admit it. It would be "bad form," and all that, since the very best people do not read books by Catholics, not to say Catholic priests. Real culture is enshrined between the pages of a Hall Caine or a Marie Corelli, but to have even a bowing acquaintance with John Ayseough is to ticket one's self as "provincial." We want to be "in the fashion," and the seven deadly sins have always been decidedly more fashionable than the four cardinal virtues. In nothing are we much as in our reading matter do we ape the ways of the world. People do not talk about Catholic books, and we want to read what is talked about. It is strange that it should be so. It is strange that we should make literary friends of people with whom we would not associate in the flesh. We would not admit an immoral man or woman into our homes, but we throw open our doors to the immoral book. Oh, the curse of being "in the fashion!" We like to follow the crowd. Why it should never occur to us that, as a rule, to be with the crowd is to be wrong, is a mystery. Why should we be content to be a tail? When will our people realize that it is their duty to strive to lead the crowd in the right direction? It is only permitted to be "in the fashion" when the fashion is right. And as a rule the fashion is wrong. Who can set it right if we do not do so? We have certain fixed principles to guide us. The crowd has no principles of any kind, and so it follows its own bent. The literature of the day has no "conscience." The question is have we, Catholics, any? We are not to be understood as asserting that we should read nothing but Catholic books. The world's masterpieces are our common heritage. But those who rigidly boycott our Catholic authors are not those who sit at the feet of the immortals. To such Algernon Vere de Vere is far more important than the Prince of Denmark. We do say that there are

very many books, even "best sellers" which should never be found in the hands of Catholics. Furthermore, there are many books which if morally blameless are worthless, and the reading of which is a pure waste of time at best. Life is too serious to be frittered away over the pages of "shilling shockers." We should, then, exercise good judgment in selecting our literary fare. We should feed our minds upon healthy food, and we should realize that we have a duty to our own Catholic authors that we should not be slow to perform.

COLUMBA.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IT WILL be no surprise to Catholics throughout the world who take an intelligent interest in their Faith and who followed closely the late Pontificate, to learn that the sanctity of Pius X. is universally acclaimed in Church circles in Rome, and that the probability of the introduction of his cause, looking to his eventual canonization, is common subject of discussion. "There are thousands of Catholics who believe," says a clerical contemporary, "that the late Pope was a saint—not only a saintly man as all the world knows him to have been, but a veritable saint of God, to be named with the great ones who glorify the Church's calendar."

THE ABOVE, as read with its context, was not written with intent of anticipating the judgment of the Church, or of imputing more than human authority to the many edifying incidents related of the holy Pontiff. But, at least, the author hopes, as all may hope and pray, that an examination of the Pope's life and works, if made, will fully satisfy the rigorous conditions required for the honors of the altar, and that in due time we may rejoice in being able to publicly honor and invoke him whom all Catholics so loved and venerated during his lifetime.

PIUS X. WAS, before all things, a Pastor and Shepherd, whose first concern was God's glory and the salvation of men. His pontificate will be forever illustrious for its great works undertaken and carried through successfully against every human progression, but it is safe to predict, it will shine even more gloriously by reason of the personal sanctity of the man, and that beautiful and winning simplicity of character which impressed itself so strongly upon all those whose privilege it was to know him or, at any time during that memorable decade, to have looked into his face and heard his voice.

WHILE THE virtues of Pius X. were universally acknowledged during his life and especially at his death, it is Catholics only who can really appreciate the measure of the world's indebtedness to him. Aside from his personal character, the Pope who crushed the head of the rising serpent of Modernism, who delivered the Church in France from threatened slavery; who reaffirmed the sanctity of the marriage tie and brought into prominence the Church's supernatural guardianship of its sacramental character; who codified the laws of the Church; set on foot the revision of the Latin Vulgate—one of the greatest works in the realm of scholarship undertaken for centuries; and who did so much for the spreading and deepening of devotion to the Holy Eucharist—a Pope who was responsible for all this and more, can scarcely fail to take his place in the Church's annals as among the very greatest of her Pontiffs, and a man after God's own heart. That the honors of the altar should be the heritage of such an one would seem to human eyes to be a natural and fitting climax.

THE SINKING of the Lusitania under such appalling and horrifying circumstances, taken with the finding of the Commission named by Parliament, under the presidency of Viscount Bryce, to investigate and report on "outrages alleged to have been committed by German troops during the present war" would seem to have removed all doubt as to the reality of said outrages. Many people— we think most people—have been inclined to consider current reports as greatly exaggerated: the result of the Commission's investigation is to show that their gravity has been rather understated—a finding which is borne out by the German Government's tacit acceptance of responsibility for the Lusitania horror, and its insolent bearing in respect to the same.

CATHOLIC JOURNALS, whether on this side of the water, or the other, have shown no disposition to judge the German people harshly in this matter, or unduly to anticipate the findings of history. They have been disposed rather to allow for heated exaggerations and to lay the responsibility at the door of that ruthless and overbearing Prussian military spirit of which the world has heard so much and had so many concrete examples since this War began. But the German Government's own attitude toward the sinking of the Lusitania puts at rest all such doubts and scruples, and proclaims the Kaiser's posture as a "man of God" to be a farce which can be fittingly characterized only by such adjectives as impious or profane. The Prussian military theory must be judged by its own standards.

WE SAW last week that the savagery of the German troops in Belgium were but the working out of a deliberate system which exalts terror and outrage into legitimate weapons of warfare. Aside from the later official admissions, we are not left to conjecture on this point. Catholics in the nature of things have, in Belgium and France, been the chief sufferers, and from the lips of prelates of European reputation we have details of the appalling sacrileges which have resulted. At a meeting in Westminster Cathedral Hall in February last, Mgr. de Waehter, Auxiliary Bishop to Cardinal Mercier, recounted some of the doings of the German armies in Belgium. They would be unbelievable if emanating from an unauthoritative source, and are recorded only as showing the lengths to which misguided human nature can go under the aegis of a debased philosophy.

AT THE meeting referred to Bishop Waehter thus delivered himself. The full significance of his words can be understood only by Catholics:

"He said that he had been informed recently of awful cases of sacrilege committed in Belgian churches. The German system, he said, was to frighten and to terrorize. They had no respect for churches or convents or religious institutes of any kind. Everything had to be destroyed. They had used churches for stabling horses, and had indulged in all sorts of excesses in sacred buildings. In the case of one beautiful cathedral, so many sacrileges had been committed in it, said the Bishop, that it had to be consecrated again by Cardinal Mercier before the Holy Sacrifice could be offered in it. The Cardinal performed the ceremony of consecration in the presence of the German Burgomaster. He had had to be done by priests of sacrilege committed in other places, the details of which would horrify anyone. Certainly several priests had died as martyrs and had given their lives for the faith. German soldiers dressed in the best vestments played and danced in the churches and fell to the ground in a state of drunkenness. Nothing but ruins remained in many cases, and he had received information of priests saying Mass in cellars, a spectacle which drew tears from the eyes of all present. That was the state of things in Belgium now, not only in the diocese of Malines, but in other dioceses."

IF THE War, with all its appalling sufferings and sacrifices, succeeds in abolishing forever from the earth a spirit so atrocious and detestable, it will, in the judgment of humanity, not have been waged in vain.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

While on the Eastern front the Russians seem to be at last making a stand against the onrush of the Austro-German drive, in the west the French gained a sweeping victory.

The French offensive on the right swept on toward the Arras-Lens road like a flood. It gained the heights of Notre Dame de Lorette, the hills west of it and flowed round the villages of Abail, Carency, Souchez and Neuville, St. Vaast and almost isolated them with their German garrisons. By dint of the expenditure of 270 rounds of high explosives per gun one day all the German defenses except the villages were leveled to the ground.

The allies have good hope that the German troops will be destroyed and the French generals who are leading this powerful and valiant attack will gain great success if they can break through the hard outer crust of the German defenses. The British believe they can scatter the German armies, whose offensive causes them no concern at all. But to break this hard crust they need more high explosives, more heavy howitzers and more men. This special form of warfare has no precedent.—Globe, May 15.

THREE GREAT BATTLES

From Arras to the sea at least three separate and tremendous battles have been fought. In former days any of them would have decided the fate of nations; to-day they are but