

tolerance and passion such as are, alas! not unusual in deliberative assemblies even of the Christian Church. But it embraced also much learning and eloquence, especially on the part of the French and German Episcopate. Upon the whole, it compares favorably, as to intellectual ability, moral character, and far-reaching effect, with preceding Roman Councils, and must be regarded as the greatest event in the history of the Papacy since the Council of Trent.

The chief importance of the Council of the Vatican lies in its decree on Papal supremacy and Infallibility. It settled the internal dissensions between Ultramontaniam and Gallicanism, which struck at the root of the fundamental principle of authority; it destroyed the independence of the Episcopate, and made it a tool of the Primacy; it crushed liberal Catholicism; it completed the system of Papal absolutism; it raised the hitherto disputed opinion of Papal Infallibility to the dignity of a binding article of faith, which no Catholic can deny without loss of salvation. The Pope may now say not only, "I am the tradition" (*La tradizione son io*), but also, "I am the Church" (*L'Eglise c'est moi*).

But this very triumph of absolutism marks also a new departure. It gave rise to a secession headed by the ablest divines of the Roman Church. It put the Papacy into direct antagonism to the liberal tendencies of the age. It excited the hostility of civil government in all those countries where Church and State are united on the basis of a concordat with the Roman See. No State with any degree of self-respect can treat with a sovereign who claims infallibility, and therefore unconditional submission in matters of moral duty as well as of faith. In reaching the summit of its power, the Papacy has hastened its downfall.

For Protestants and Greeks the Vatican Council is no more œcumenical than that of Trent, and has only intensified the antagonism. Its œcumenicity was also denied by such eminent Roman Catholic scholars as Dollinger, von Schulte, and Reinkens, before their excommunication as "Old Catholics," because it lacked the two fundamental conditions of liberty of discussion and moral unanimity of suffrage. But the subsequent submission of all the Bishops who had voted against Papal Infallibility, supplies the defect as far as the Roman Church is concerned. There was nothing left to them but either to submit or to be expelled. They chose the former, and thus destroyed the legal and moral force of their protest, although not the power of truth and the nature of the facts on which it was based. Henceforward Romanism must stand or fall with the Vatican Council. But (as we have before intimated) Romanism is not to be confounded with Catholicism any more than the Jewish hierarchy which crucified our Saviour, is identical with the people of Israel, from which sprang the Apostles and early converts of Christianity. The destruction of the infallible and irreformable Papacy may be the emancipation of Catholicism, and lead it from its prison-house to the light of a new Reformation.

THE VATICAN DECREES. THE CONSTITUTION ON THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

Three schemes on matters of faith were prepared for the Vatican Council—one against Rationalism, one on the Church of Christ, and one on Christian Matrimony. The first two were revised and adopted; the third was indefinitely postponed. There was also much discussion on the preparation of a small popular Catechism adapted to the present doctrinal status of the Roman Church, and intended to supersede the numerous popular Catechisms now in use; but the draft, which assigned the whole teaching power of the Church to the Pope, to the exclusion of the Episcopate, encountered such opposition (*57 Non Placet, 24 conditional Placet*) in the