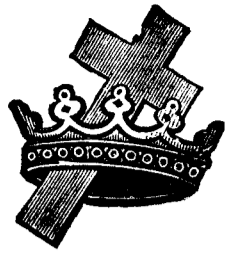


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THE POPE'S LATEST LETTER.

Full Translation of the Sovereign Pontiff's Pronouncement on "Americanism."

[Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times.]

The *Sun*, Baltimore's leading daily newspaper, and one of the most reliable secular journals in the country in matters pertaining to the Catholic Church, published in its issue of the 23d ult. "an approved translation of the original Latin" text of Pope Leo's letter to Cardinal Gibbons on "Americanism." The *Sun* enjoys the confidence of His Eminence the Cardinal, and though the translation is described as "approved," not "official," the reliability of the enterprising journal is such that the *Catholic Standard and Times* feels no hesitation in reproducing its matter, having no fear that the forthcoming official translation will differ in any essential point from the one here given.

The letter from the Pope was forwarded by Cardinal Rampolla, the Papal Secretary of State, his letter being as follows:

"*Most Eminent and Reverend Lord Cardinal:* In a former letter of last October I had the honor to make known to Your Eminence that the Holy Father intended to address in due course of time a Pontifical letter concerning "Americanism," so called. It now devolves upon me to remit to you a copy of the promised letter, advising you at the same time that other copies will be forwarded to you through Monsignor the Apostolic Delegate.

"I profit by the present opportunity to renew the expression of my profound veneration. Kissi:g your hands, I am your humble servant,

M. CARDINAL RAMPOLLA.

"Rome, January 31, 1899."

THE POPE'S LETTER.

Pope Leo's letter is as follows:

To Our Beloved Son, James Cardinal Gibbons, Cardinal Priest of the Title Sancta Maria, Beyond the Tiber, Archbishop of Baltimore.

LEO XIII., POPE—BELOVED SON, HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BLESSING:

We send to you by this letter a renewed expression of that good will which we have not failed during the course of our pontificate to manifest frequently to you and to your colleagues in the episcopate and to the whole American people, availing ourselves of every opportunity offered us by the progress of your Church or whatever you have done for safeguarding and promoting Catholic interests. Moreover, we have often considered and admired the noble gifts of your nation, which enable the American people to be alive to every good which promotes the good of humanity and the splendor of civilization. Although this letter be not intended, as preceding ones, to repeat the words of praise so often spoken, but rather to call attention to some things to be avoided and corrected; still because it is conceived in that same spirit of apostolic charity which has inspired our other letters, we shall expect that you will take it as another proof of our love; the more so because it is intended to suppress certain contentions which have arisen lately among you to the detriment of the peace of many souls.

It is known to you, beloved son, that the life of Isaac Thomas Hecker, especially as interpreted and translated in a foreign language, has excited not a little controversy because therein have

been voiced certain opinions concerning the way of leading Christian life.

We, therefore, on account of our apostolic office, having to guard the integrity of the faith and the security of the faithful, are desirous of writing to you more at length concerning the whole matter.

"THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE."

The underlying principle of these new opinions is that, in order to more easily attract those who differ from her, the Church should shape her teachings more in accord with the spirit of the age and relax some of her ancient severity and make some concessions to new opinions. Many think that these concessions should be made not only in regard to ways of living but even in regard to doctrines which belong to the deposit of the faith. They contend that it would be opportune, in order to gain those who differ from us, to omit certain points of her teachings which are of lesser importance and to tone down the meaning which the Church has always attached to them. It does not need many words, beloved son, to prove the falsity of these ideas if the nature and origin of the doctrine which the Church proposes are recalled to mind. The Vatican Council says concerning this point: "For the doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed, like a philosophical invention, to be perfected by human ingenuity, but has been delivered as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ to be faithfully kept and infallibly declared. Hence that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once declared, nor is that mean-

ing ever to be departed from under the pretense or pretext of a deeper comprehension of them."—*Constitutio de Fide Catholica*, chapter iv.

"ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN."

We cannot consider as altogether blameless the silence which purposely leads to the omission or neglect of some of the principles of Christian doctrine, for all the principles come from the same Author and Master, "the Only Begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father." John i. 18. They are adapted to all times and all nations, as is clearly seen from the words of our Lord to His Apostles: "Going, therefore, teach all nations; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world." Matt. xxviii., 19. Concerning this point the Vatican Council says: "All those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the Word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by her ordinary and universal magisterium, proposes for belief as having been divinely revealed."—*Const. de fide*, chapter iii.

Let it be far from any one's mind to suppress for any reason any doctrine that has been handed down. Such a policy would tend rather to separate Catholics from the Church than to bring in those who differ. There is nothing closer to our heart than to have those who are separated from the fold of Christ return to it, but in no other way than the way pointed out by Christ.

The rule of life laid down for Catholics is not of such a nature that it cannot accommodate itself to the exigencies of various times and places. The Church has, guided by her Divine Master, a kind and merciful spirit, for which reason from the very beginning she has been what St. Paul said of himself: "I became all things to all men that I might save all."

"TEACHING AND GOVERNING."

History proves clearly that the Apostolic See, to which has been intrusted the mission not only of teaching, but of governing the whole Church, has continued "in one and the same doctrine, one and the same sense and one and the same judgment."—*Const. de fide*, chapter iv.

But in regard to ways of living she has been accustomed to so yield that, the divine principle of morals being kept intact, she has never neglected to accommodate herself to the character and genius of the nations which she embraces.

Who can doubt that she will act in this same spirit again if the salvation of souls requires it? In this matter the Church must be the judge, not private men, who are often deceived by the appearance of right. In this, all who wish to escape the blame of our predecessor, Pius VI., must concur. He condemned as injurious to the Church and the spirit of God who guides her the doctrine contained in proposition lxxviii. of the Synod of Pistoia, "that the discipline made and approved by the Church should be submitted to examination, as if the Church could frame a code of laws useless or heavier than human liberty can bear."

DIFFERENCES POINTED OUT.

But, beloved son, in this present matter of which we are

speaking there is even a greater danger and a more manifest opposition to Catholic doctrine and discipline in that opinion of the lovers of novelty, according to which they hold such liberty should be allowed in the Church, that her supervision and watchfulness being in some sense lessened, allowances be granted the faithful each one to follow out more freely the leading of his own mind and the trend of his own proper activity. They are of opinion that such liberty has its counterpart in the newly-given civil freedom which is now the right and the foundation of almost every secular State.

In the apostolic letters concerning the constitution of States addressed by us to the Bishops of the whole Church we discussed this point at length, and there set forth the difference existing between the Church, which is a divine society, and all other social human organizations which depend simply on the free will and choice of men.

It is well, then, to particularly direct attention to the opinion which serves as the argument in behalf of this greater liberty sought for and recommended to Catholics.

LIBERTY NOT LICENSE.

It is alleged that, now the Vatican decree concerning the infallible teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff having been proclaimed, nothing further on that score can give any solicitude, and accordingly, since that has been safeguarded and put beyond question a wider and freer field, both for thought and action lies open to each one. But such reasoning is evidently faulty, since, if we are to come to any conclusion from the infallible teaching authority of the Church, it should rather be that no one should wish to depart from it, and moreover that the minds of all being leavened and directed thereby, greater security from private error would be enjoyed by all. And further, those who avail themselves of such a way of reasoning seem to depart seriously from the overruling wisdom of the Most High—which wisdom, since it was pleased to set forth by most solemn decision the authority and supreme teaching rights of this Apostolic See—willed that decision precisely in order to safeguard the minds of the Church's children from the dangers of these present times.

These dangers, viz., the confounding of license with liberty, the passion for discussing and pouring contempt upon any possible subject, the assumed right to hold whatever opinions one pleases upon any subject and to set them forth in print to the world, have so wrapped minds in darkness that there is now a greater need of the Church's teaching office than ever before, lest people become unmindful both of conscience and of duty.

We, indeed, have no thought of rejecting everything that modern industry and study has produced; so far from it that we welcome to the patrimony of truth and to an ever-widening scope of public well-being whatsoever helps toward the progress of learning and virtue. Yet all this, to be of any solid benefit, nay, to have a real existence and growth, can only be on the condition of recognizing the wisdom and authority of the Church.

"NO THOUGHT OF WRONG OR GUILE."

Coming now to speak of the

conclusions which have been deduced from the above opinions, and for them we readily believe there was no thought of wrong or guile, yet the things themselves certainly merit some degree of suspicion. First, all external guidance is set aside for those souls who are striving after Christian perfection as being superfluous or, indeed, not useful in any sense—the contention being that the Holy Spirit pours richer and more abundant graces than formerly upon the souls of the faithful, so that without human intervention He teaches and guides them by some hidden instinct of His own. Yet it is the sign of no small over-confidence to desire to measure and determine the mode of the Divine communication to mankind, since it wholly depends upon His own good pleasure, and He is a most generous dispenser of His own gifts. "The Spirit breatheth whereso He listeth." John iii., 8.

"And to each one of us grace is given according to the measure of the giving of Christ." Eph. iv., 7

LAW OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

And shall any one who recalls the history of the Apostles, the faith of the nascent Church, the trials and deaths of the martyrs, and, above all, those olden times so fruitful in saints, dare to measure our age with these or affirm that they received less of the divine outpouring from the Spirit of Holiness? Not to dwell upon this point, there is no one who calls in question the truth that the Holy Spirit does work by a secret descent into the souls of the just and that He stirs them alike by warnings and impulses, since unless this were the case all outward defense and authority would be unavailing. "For if any persuades himself that he can give assent to saving, that is to Gospel truth when proclaimed without any illumination of the Holy Spirit, who gives unto all sweetness both to assent and to hold, such an one is deceived by a heretical spirit."—From the Second Council of Orange, Canon 7.

Moreover, as experience shows, these motions and impulses of the Holy Spirit are for the most part felt through the medium of the aid and light of an external teaching authority. To quote St. Augustine, "He (the Holy Spirit) co-operates to the fruit gathered from the good trees, since he externally waters and cultivates them by the outward ministry of men, and yet of Himself bestows the inward increase."—*De Gratia Christi*, chapter xix. This, indeed, belongs to the ordinary law of God's loving providence that as He has decreed that men for the most part shall be saved by the ministry also of men, so has He wished that those whom He calls to the higher planes of holiness should be led thereto by men; hence St. Chrysostom declares we are taught of God through the instrumentality of men.—*Homily I. in Inscib. Altar.* Of this a striking example is given us in the very first days of the Church.

For though Saul, intent upon blood and slaughter, had heard the voice of our Lord Himself and had asked: "What dost Thou wish me to do?" yet he was bidden to enter Damascus and search for Ananias. Acts ix. "Enter the city and it shall

(Continued on Second Page.)