

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE POPE'S SYLLABUS: WITH NOTES AND COMMENTS.

BY REV. J. M. CRAMP.

(Concluded)

ERRORS CONCERNING CIVIL SOCIETY CONSIDERED BOTH IN ITSELF AND IN ITS RELATIONS TO THE CHURCH.

Thirty-ninth: The State, as being the origin and fountain of all rights, possesses a right of its own, circumscribed by no limits.

The State is supreme, as Roger Williams said, "in civil things only."

Fortieth: The teachings of the Catholic Church are at variance with the well-being and interests of society.

This means, that some of the tenets held by the Roman Catholic Church, and some of its practices, "are at variance with the well-being and interests of society." The history of the reign of Louis XIV. of France furnishes abundant illustration in this respect.

Forty-first: The civil power, even when in the hands of a non-Catholic ruler, has an indirect negative authority over things sacred; consequently it possesses the right called *exequata*, but that right is also known as *appel comme d'abus*.

The "authority" spoken of relates to cases in which ecclesiastical proceedings may affect the civil rights of men. In such cases, the civil power may and ought to issue prohibitory decrees.

Forty-second: In case of a conflict between the laws civil and ecclesiastical, the civil law takes precedence.

If the affairs of the Church are so managed as to bring it into conflict with the State, in regard to things secular, the Church must yield, for the Christian law is—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." Rom. xiii. 1.

Forty-third: The State has the right to rescind, declare null and void solemn conventions (commonly called concordats) having reference to the exercise of rights appertaining to ecclesiastical immunities entered into with the Apostolic See, without the See's consent, and even against its protest.

If the operation of a Concordat is found to be injurious in any country, the government of that country has not only the "right" to amend it, but is under obligation to do so.

Forty-fourth: The civil authority may take cognizance of matters appertaining to religion, morals and spiritual government. Hence it may pass judgment on those instructions which the pastors of the Church, in discharge of their duty, issue for the guidance of consciences, and even it may determine concerning the administration of the holy sacraments, and the dispositions necessary for receiving them.

The "civil authority" has no power in matters "appertaining to religion," unless the "instructions" given trench upon the rights and liberties of the subject. Such infringement must be prevented.

Forty-fifth: The whole government of public schools in which the children of any Christian State are educated—episcopal seminaries only being in some degree excepted—may and ought to be given to the civil power, and given up in such sort that no right of interference by any other authority be recognized as to the management of the schools, the regulation of the studies, the conferring of degrees, and the choice or approbation of the teachers.

There is no error or heresy here. "Public schools" are institutions which are either aided or wholly sustained by the State: If the State supports, the state may control.

Forty-sixth: Even in ecclesiastical seminaries the method of statutes to be adopted is subject to the decision of the State.

That is, if those "seminaries" are dependent, in whole or in part, on the public revenue, or on the proceeds of endowments, of which the state is the natural guardian.

Forty-seventh: The best constitution of civil society requires that popular schools which are open to the children of every class, and public institutions in general which are devoted to teaching literature and science, and providing for the education of youth, should be withdrawn from all authority of the church and from all her directing influence and interference, and subjected to the complete control of the civil and political authority, so as to accord with the ideas of the ruler of the State, and the standard of opinions commonly adopted by the age.

This is No 45 in another form. No additional observation is required, except that the reasonableness of the views here advocated is especially manifest, when the population is composed of persons belonging to various religious denominations, all which, under a free government, possess equal rights.

Forty-eighth: Catholics may approve of that method of instructing youth which, while putting aside the Catholic faith and the Church's authority, looks exclusively, or at least chiefly, to the knowledge of natural things and the end of worldly social life.

Intelligent Catholics will be very apt to prefer the best schools for their children, and to secure their instruction in "the Catholic faith" by other means.

Forty-ninth: The civil power has the right of preventing bishops and the faithful from holding free and mutual communication with the Roman Pontiff.

It must be acknowledged that the necessity for the exercise of this "right" has frequently arisen, and that even Roman Catholic sovereigns have exercised it, out of regard to the welfare of their dominions, and the exemption of their subjects from exactions, compliance with which would impoverish their realms.

Fiftieth: The civil authority has of itself the right of presenting bishops, and can require of them to enter upon the care of their dioceses before receiving canonical appointment and apostolical letters from the Holy See.

If those "dioceses" comprise large districts of country, subject to the government of the bishops as secular lords, it may be perfectly proper for the civil power to take measures for the due succession of such government. There need be no clashing. But the best arrangement would be the separation of the civil from the ecclesiastical. A *prince-bishop* is an anomaly. Such beings ought not to exist.

Fifty-first: The State has also the right of deposing bishops from the exercise of their pastoral charge, and is not bound to obey the Roman Pontiff in those things which regard the establishment of bishoprics and the appointment of bishops.

The State has the same power to annul as to appoint. If civil inconveniences are likely to result from an "establishment of bishoprics," the state may prohibit it. But such cases must be very rare.

Fifty-second: Government may, in its own right, change the age prescribed by the Church for the religious profession of men and women, and may require of religious orders that none be admitted to take solemn vows without its permission.

It was not uncommon, in the last century or two of the Roman Empire, for persons to seek admission to the clerical order with a view to obtain immunity from civil duties and burdens. If in any country, monastics, as such, are exempted from civil duties and burdens, there is a temptation to enter the monastic life for the sake of that exemption, and governments have the right to interfere for their own protection.

Fifty-third: The laws securing the status of religious orders, and the exercise of their rights and duties, should be abolished; the State even should proffer help to all those who wish to withdraw from the religious life they have entered upon, and to break their solemn vows; and in like manner the State has the power to suppress religious orders, collegiate churches and simple benefices, even such as are under the right of a patron, and at its pleasure seize upon their goods and revenues, subjecting them to the public service.

The power of the State, in all these respects, cannot be denied. When and how it may be exercised most advantageously to the general interests of the country, the people themselves must determine, through their representatives.

Fifty-fourth: Kings and princes are not only outside the Church's jurisdiction, but take precedence of the Church in determining disputes that have reference to jurisdiction.

This can only mean, that the supreme authority of the state must be preserved, and that "the Church's jurisdiction" must not come into collision with it. It ought not.

Fifty-fifth: The Church should be separated from the State, and the State from the Church. Granted. It is a "consummation devoutly to be wished."

ERRORS CONCERNING NATURAL AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

Fifty-sixth: The laws of morality need no divine sanction, and it is not at all necessary that human laws, should be made conformable to the laws of nature or receive their binding force from God.

Condemnation of this article is quite reasonable. All true christians will agree to it.

Fifty-seventh: Philosophical and moral science, and State laws likewise, may and should withdraw themselves from the jurisdiction of divine and ecclesiastical authority.

No man can withdraw himself from "divine" authority. Ecclesiastical authority should be strictly confined within its appropriate limits.

Fifty-eighth: No other power should be recognized but material force, and all moral discipline and virtue should here for its end the accumulating and augmenting of wealth in every way possible and satiating the desire of pleasure.

Paul said,—"The powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. xiii. 1. Paul's Master said—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Mat. vi. 33.

Fifty-ninth: Right then consists in the material fact; all obligations on men are an empty name, and human facts require the force of right.

That is, "might is right"—which no good man believes.

Sixtieth: Authority is nothing more than numerical power and material force.

The same remark applies to this article.

Sixty-first: The injustice of a successful deed takes not from it the sanctity of right.

This is worse than nonsense. If success constitutes right, our moral codes will require a great deal of alteration.

Sixty-second: The principle of non-intervention, as it is called, should be proclaimed and adhered to.

As it is not stated what kind of intervention is referred to, and the Pope himself does not explain it, this article must be passed over.

Sixty-third: It is lawful to refuse obedience to legitimate princes and even to rise in rebellion against them.

Oxford University taught passive obedience and non-resistance in the time of Charles II., but found the application very inconvenient in the reign of James II., his successor. If "legitimate princes" become tyrants, they must be restrained.

Sixty-fourth: The violation of the most sacred oath or the perpetration of any wicked and atrocious deed should not only not be condemned, but should be considered every way lawful and deserving of the highest respect when done for the love of country.

Revolutions interfere with all social engagements, and are seldom bloodless. The real criminals, in such cases, are those whose oppressions render revolutions necessary. "Love of country" may justify the adoption of even violent measures to get rid of them.

ERRORS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN MATRIMONY.

Sixty-fifth: In no way can it be conceded that Christ raised matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament.

Certainly not:—he did no such thing.

Sixty-sixth: The sacrament of marriage is only an accessory to the contract, and is divisible from it, and that sacrament exists simply in the nuptial benediction.

As there is no such thing as a "sacrament of marriage," we may be spared the necessity of offering any observations.

Sixty-seventh: The Bond of matrimony is not indissoluble by the natural law, and divorce in the strict meaning of the word, may, in various cases, be sanctioned by the civil authority.

The laws of marriage are constituted by the civil authority, and the same authority may decide the question of divorce, and fix the limits within which it may be allowed.

Sixty-eighth: The Church has not the power of enacting diriment impediments to marriage, such power belonging to the State, by whose authority existing impediments of that kind may be removed.

Marriage being a civil contract, legislation on the "impediments" belongs to the State. The "Church" has usurped a power in this respect, which ought not to have been submitted to.

Sixty-ninth: It was in later ages the Church began to enact diriment impediments, not in her own right, but by that right which she had borrowed from the State.

It was not so at first. The New Testament confers no power in this matter on the "Church," or its ministers.

Seventieth: The canons of the Council of Trent which pass the censure of anathema on those who dare to deny the Church's power of enacting diriment impediments, are either not dogmatical or must be understood to refer to this borrowed power.

The "canons" are harmless, except to Roman Catholics themselves. No others recognise "the Church's power."

Seventy-first: The form ordained by the Council of Trent does not bind under penalty of nullity whenever the State may have prescribed in another form, and may wish that marriage under this new form should be deemed valid.

In France and Italy the civil ceremony, performed in the presence of the appointed officer, constitutes the legal marriage. The religious ceremony may be added or not, at the option of the parties. The marriage is valid, in the eye of the law, though the religious ceremony is not performed—but not in the view of the Church.

The Church's refusal to recognize the validity of the marriage does not, however, affect the legitimacy of the children which may be the fruits thereof. That is secured by the State.

Seventy-second: Boniface VIII. was the first to assert that the vow of chastity taken in ordination annuls marriage.

This is a chronological question, the settlement of which is of no consequence. Boniface VIII. was the roughest of the rough Popes.

Seventy-third: By virtue of a purely civil contract, marriage, so called, may exist among Christians; and it is false that either the contract of marriage among Christians is always a sacrament or that there is no contract if the sacrament be excluded.

There is nothing here additional to the preceding articles.

Seventy-fourth: Matrimonial causes and espousals belong, of their own nature, to the civil tribunal.

N. B.—Under this head may be classed two other errors—on abolishing the celibacy of the clergy and preferring the state of marriage to that of virginity. These have been condemned, the former in the "Qui Pluribus," November 9, 1846, and the latter in the apostolic letter, "Multiplices Inter," 10, 1851.

Unquestionably.

The considerations referred to in "N. B." are not now before us. The enforcement of the celibacy of the clergy, which is one of the novelties of Rome, presents that Church in direct hostility to the New Testament—is antichristian in its nature, and demoralizing in its effects.

ERRORS CONCERNING THE ROMAN PONTIFF'S CIVIL PRINCEDOM.

Seventy-fifth: Children of the Christian and Catholic Church are disunited among themselves as to the compatibility of the temporal with the spiritual rule.

As this is a statement of fact, which cannot be controverted, why should it be condemned?

Seventy-sixth: The abolition of the temporal power which the Apostolic See possess would conduce very much to the liberty and prosperity of the Church.

So all Protestants believe. And so the disestablishment of the Irish Church will probably prove a great blessing, by the exciting the liberality and activity of her members, and giving her the benefit of self government.

N. B.—Besides these errors explicitly condemned there are many others implicitly censured while laying down and asserting the doctrine to which all Catholics should adhere with the most unshaken constancy, regarding the Roman Pontiff's civil principedom. This doctrine is clearly enunciated in the allocution, "Quibus Quantesque," April 10, 1849; in the allocution "Si Semper Aute," May 20, 1850; in the Apostolic letter, "Cum Catholica Ecclesia," March 20, 1860; in the allocution "Novos," September 28, 1860; in the allocution "Jandunum," March 18, 1861; and in the allocution Maxima Quidem," June 9, 1862.

ERRORS WHICH HAVE REFERENCE TO THE LIBERALISM OF THE DAY.

Seventy-seventh: It is no longer expedient in this our age that the Catholic religion should be considered as the only religion of the State to the exclusion of all other forms of worship.

Neither "expedient"—nor right—nor safe—nor Christian.

Seventy-eighth: Hence in some Catholic countries a praiseworthy provision has been made by law that immigrants to those countries should be permitted the exercise of their several forms of worship.

It is "a praiseworthy provision." But how absurd, and even impious, it is to talk of "permitting" men to worship God according to their consciences! No earthly power, has the right to interfere between man and his Maker.

Seventy-ninth—It is utterly false that civil liberty tends to all forms of worship and full license to every one to openly declare his opinions or thoughts, tends to corrupt more easily the morals and minds of nations and to scatter abroad the plague of indifference.

Liberty, civil and religious, tends to the safety and glory of nations. To assert that it corrupts morals or produces "indifference" is to betray lamentable prejudice and ignorance.

Eightieth: The Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself and be in harmony with progress and liberalism and modern civilization.

If he cannot, it shows that he does not understand Christianity, that he is deaf to the admonitions of experience,—and that he has not profited by the lessons of history.

If the Oecumenical Council should endorse these condemnations, the Church of Rome will be placed in antagonism to true freedom, and will stand forth among the nations as the champion of all that is narrow, and bigoted, and intolerant. For though some of the articles are so worded that Protestants can agree with the Pope respecting them, the major part expresses truths, the condemnation of which is the condemnation of right,—and reason—and wholesome doctrine—and sound progress.

Wolfville, Dec. 6, 1869.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

MURDOCH ROSS SENR.,

At Margaree, Oct. 15th 1869, Murdoch Ross Senr., in the 83rd year of his age. He was a native of Scotland; and professed religion, and united with the Baptists while in his native land. Afterward, he removed to this Island; and was one of the number who banded together to form a Baptist Church in this place.

He was a shrewd man, a great reader and for many years an active member of the Church.

J. F. KEMPTON.

P. S.—The following particular in reference to Mr. Ross were forwarded to me for insertion in the *Christian Messenger*, by his son, the Rev. Hugh Ross.

J. F. K.

Murdoch Ross was a native of Skye, Inverness shire, Scotland. He professed to have met with a change of heart at the age of twenty, in connection with the Church of Scotland. Three years after this his views, in reference to the subjects and mode of Christian Baptism, were changed; and in consequence of this, feeling it to be his duty, he left the communion of his father's church and joined that of the Baptists.

Forty one years ago he crossed the Atlantic with his family and landed on the shores of Cape Breton, near to the town of Sydney. From this he carried his youngest children on his back and travelled over mountains and through valleys till he arrived at the valley of the Margaree. There, in the midst of the forest, he pitched his tent and resolved to make a livelihood. He was a lion-hearted man, and not easily discouraged in prospect of hardship. Well do I remember the commencement of his arduous toil in the valley of Margaree.

Standing at the foot of a large elm tree (about twenty four feet in circumference) he turned