

THE SYLLABUS OF POPE PIUS X.*

BY HYACINTHE LOYSON.

[In the last moment, while making the present number ready for the press, we received Father Hyacinthe Loyson's communication concerning the Syllabus of the Pope. We notice that he recognizes the piety of the present head of the Roman Church, but regrets his narrowness. He expresses himself rather boldly, but such is the habit of reformers who have a message to deliver, and high ideals to which they aspire. He is not, however, discouraged as to the future, for he is confident that God still governs the development of the Church, and the very mistakes which the Vatican may make will in the long run lead to progress and reform.—ED.]

"Roma locuta est, causa finita est."

I HAVE undertaken to write some comments (more or less complete) upon the Syllabus of Pius X; but what is the use since the document is of no interest to any one, both freethinkers and Catholics having formed their opinion at the outset? I refer to those Catholics who are intelligent but not courageous, and who will always submit externally although constantly resisting inwardly, and the freethinkers who have ceased to expect good fruit from a corrupt tree, that is to say, from a Church whose authority rests upon falsehood in history and temporizing in ethics.

Roma locuta est, causa finita est: words which in the text of St. Augustine never possessed the meaning which the Ultramontanes forced upon them, but which to-day have acquired a new significance. Rome might be considered the guardian of a profound secret, but she has finally spoken, and her word has been of so little value that her friends can no more expect anything further than can her enemies. The cause is indeed finished, *causa finita est*.

Pius IX gave us the theory of Ultramontanism, but Pius X puts it into practice, and practice dooms theory. We are witnessing a great practical lesson.

I saw all this in 1869, when I resigned of my own accord from the pulpit of Notre-Dame, a position as good as that of many of our actual bishops, but in which I no longer felt free to be honest. I

* Translated from the French by Lydia Gillingham Robinson.

never lied to my conscience, but more than once I was condemned to keep silence when according to the decree of the Vatican it amounted to prevarication. "Dumb dogs, who have forgotten how to bark," says the prophet. I did not wish to be one of that number.

Without renouncing Catholicism which was too dear to my heart, I appealed from an ill-informed pope to one better enlightened, and from a council limited in its jurisdiction and without liberty in its deliberations, to a council representing not a part only of Christianity but Christianity as a whole, and speaking not in a partisan spirit, but in the spirit of truth, of justice, and of God. It is not only the Gallican Church which said, "*Concilium est supra Papam.*" History says the same thing when it shows us one council condemning Pope Honorius for a heretic, and another one that deposed three popes.

My appeal was not heeded in the least. I now renew it, however, in order to remain faithful to the traditions of the Church without much hope that it will fare any better. The hour in which I speak is even worse than when I spoke thirty-eight years ago. In order to have a Council there must be bishops, and in those days there were the Darboys, the Strossmayers, the Passavalis, and others besides, who although not holding such high positions were far from being insignificant. Now we no longer have bishops, true successors of the apostles, but only prefects robed in violet, appointed or recalled by Pope Pius X and by his Secretary of State, Merry del Val.

The true bishops passed judgment in matters of faith,—*propterea ego judico*, was the canonical formula. These fictitious bishops keep silence or else speak so low that they are not heard even in matters of discipline and opportunity. This has been evident in their recent assemblies at Paris. "The will of the Pope, the will of God," they repeat incessantly in their pastoral letters.

Since they have unlearned the lessons of the prophet of Galilee, since they have forgotten the example of St. Paul who boasts of having resisted St. Peter, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed," let them learn of the curé of Meudon: "We must not fall into popery," wrote Rabelais, "for popery is simply idolatry."

Perhaps our bishops will finally understand that they are not only ignorant of history, filled as it is with the errors of the popes, but they are the instigators of a new idolatry which an ignorant and passionate man in his false piety sets up instead of reason, of conscience, and of God.

Must we then lose courage entirely after dedicating our lives

to religious truth? Far be it from us to display such baseness! "If bishops have the hearts of women, the women must have the hearts of bishops," said the abbess of Port Royal. In place of the bishops of France who do not dare and the women of France who do not know, the laity must come to the front, laity and priests alike.

I knew the clergy of France better than they did at Rome,— I mean the chosen spirits who will finally carry the masses with them. I know how we must interpret the silence which these men will not always keep.

One of the most distinguished among them wrote me recently, "Your word, believe me, can still prevent the ruin, or repair it. God, the soul, Jesus Christ; what a cause to defend!" And he added, "Poor theologians, who attempt to confine the infinite in the four and twenty letters of the alphabet! Their formulas have destroyed the enthusiasm of souls, without bringing them obedience and peace."

As for myself, I am too old to say much to-day, but I hope that I will not die without having seen those laborers of God arise, who will rebuild the new structure in individuals and religious societies. However, in order to accomplish this, it is necessary that the old walls be torn down, and it is to this end that a pious and narrow pope is working with a truly providential energy, and assisted by the Roman congregation of the Index and Inquisition, and above all by the cosmopolitan order of the Jesuits.

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth!" says St. John the Divine, "for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

It is said that Cardinal Sarto, who did not wish to be made pope, said to Cardinal Lecot, "*Electio mea esset ruina Ecclesie.*" "My election will be the downfall of the Church." He foretold the truth.

God knows what He is doing in governing the world by the folly of men together with his own wisdom. We ask for reform in the theology of the seminaries, in the performance of worship, in pious observances, in the regulations of discipline, in the centralization of government. The wind which blows from the future with constantly increasing force will blow away all of this like dead leaves. It will waft away the errors and secular abuses, and with them that part of the institution from which they have become inseparable. We hoped to reform the Church, God will transform it.