

Ghost, went forth from the upper room in Jerusalem to bear witness to the Risen Saviour. (Acts ii., 14), even to the present hour, the Church has announced to the nations the sacred truths entrusted to her, condemning heresies as they arose, and confounding the false wisdom of the world: 'I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.' (Luke x., 21.)

For 19 centuries she has borne testimony to the truth. No power of earth has overawed her. No assaults from heresy or from the pride and passions of men have made her waver. No emergencies but have found her equal to them. Thrones and empires have changed around her, but her testimony to divine truth remains unchanged. Calm in the consciousness of her mission, as one 'whose eyes are ever gazing on eternal things, and whose ears are ever open to the harmonies of heaven,' she pursued her onward course 'preaching the word, being instant in season and out of season, reproving, entreating, rebuking in all patience and doctrine.' (II. Timoth. iv., 2.) No one has sought guidance from her in vain. No one following her has gone astray. The enemies of God have never ceased to pursue her with undying hatred. And how fierce have been the trials and persecutions which she has sustained. The Redeemer in the presence of the Roman Governor proclaimed His mission in the solemn words: 'For this was I born, and for this came I into the world that I should give testimony to the truth.' (John xviii., 37.) The Church has fearlessly followed in His sacred footsteps. We admire the heroism of the Martyrs. Why did they with such fortitude endure their martyrdom? It was that they might bear testimony to the truth. They sealed with their blood the doctrines of life received from our Saviour. No less sublime was the heroism of the Doctors of the Church, no less arduous the combats which they sustained against heresy and against the powers of this world, whilst bearing witness to the teachings of divine truth.

Whenever evil-designing men endeavored by profane novelty to corrupt the doctrines of Life, the Pastors of the Church under the guidance of the Successor of St. Peter assembled in General Council to solemnly proclaim the teaching of Christ, and to anathematize the contrary errors. Twenty of those General Councils have been held in the course of 19 centuries. Thus has the unity of the Faith been preserved inviolable, and the sacred tradition of the Redeemer's teaching has been handed down from the first Pentecost to the present hour. The first of these Councils was held in the year 325 in the city of Nicea. Arius and his followers, with reckless impiety, had impugned the Divinity of our Saviour. Three hundred and eighteen Bishops assembled under the presidency of the representatives of the Holy See to bear testimony to the Church's teaching. Many of them were true Confessors of the Faith, having endured the hardships of the prison or of exile during the persecutions of Diocletian and his associates in the Imperial authority. Some of them had suffered torture at the hands of the persecutors, and bore the trophies of their wounds. Many were famed for their learning and sanctity, and have since received the honors of the altar. Their decree went forth condemning the Arian impiety and denouncing anathema against those who would deny the Divinity of our Blessed Lord. With joyous acclaim the faithful throughout the whole world hailed the Synodal decree. The rotten branches lopped off from the tree of Holy Church, soon withered and decayed, but the tree itself continued to grow in stateliness, arrayed in fruitfulness and comeliness greater than before.

But you will say, will there then be no room for development in Divine Truth, no progress of Christian doctrine amongst us? There will assuredly be the amplest room for such progress and development, but without the Divine Truth and the teaching of Holy Church shall ever remain unchanged. As the venerable writer Vincent of Lerins remarks, when you are dealing with gold, you may burnish and brighten it as you please, but you must make sure that the gold remains unchanged; so too, he adds, under your care the fruitful and flowering plants of Divine Truth may grow in richness and fruitfulness, but see that they be not transformed into briars and thorns. There is in Holy Church and in her teaching a human element as well as the divine. That which is divine is all-perfect, and in it there can be no change, but in all that is human there is indefinite room for progress and growth. The Divine Redeemer was true God and true man. In His divine Person there could be no change, but in His human nature as the Gospel narrates, 'He grew in age and wisdom and grace before God and man.' So too the Church quickened by the Holy Ghost in her supernatural life is unchangeable,

whilst the earthly frame is ever more stately and progressive, ever developing yet always the same. In her doctrines of divine truth there is in like manner a constant progress and development, but there can be no real change in the matter of Faith. We may take an illustration from the marvellous works which the natural order presents. The leaf of a tree viewed with the naked eye discloses a singular perfection, and the symmetry of all its parts reveals the workmanship of the Divine Creator. Examine it with a powerful microscope its perfection is intensified a hundred fold, and it is found to be far richer and more beautiful in its varied details. So it is with the teaching of Holy Church. The more gifted the mind that studies sacred truth, the richer will be the lesson that that divine truth will impart. The Church assimilates to herself all the conquests of art and science, and encourages everything that may bring perfection to the human mind, for this reason that the higher the perfection which is thus attained, and the more intense the rays that are brought to bear upon the doctrines of Faith, the greater and richer shall be recognised the heaven-sent treasure that the Deposit of Divine Truth presents. The truths revealed by the Redeemer are of themselves all-perfect, but they are necessarily conveyed to us in all the imperfection which human language and the whole circle of material surroundings present. Those truths must ever remain complete, incorrupt, untainted, unchangeable, and unchanged in the Deposit of the Faith, but the more they are studied the greater will be the perfection, the inner beauty, the harmony which they reveal. In our knowledge and grasp of those truths there shall ever be room for indefinite development and progress.

Thus it is that the Fathers and Doctors of the Church from the earliest times, endeavored by word and by writing, to illustrate the doctrines of life as recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, and as set forth in the Creed and teaching of Holy Church. The sacred writers of later times have pursued the same course, and when heresies arose the dogmas which they impugned became more accurately studied, and were more definitely and distinctly proposed to the faithful, whilst they received the seal and solemn sanction of the Church.

In a special manner the Successor of St. Peter, as the watchman on the towers of Israel, faithful to the divine commission given him, 'confirma fratres tuos', has been indefatigable in season and out of season, with instructions, and Definitions of faith, and Encyclicals, ever on the alert to guard the faithful from the poison of heresy and the approaches of error, and ever intent to preserve to them in all its purity and integrity the priceless treasure of the sound doctrines of Divine Faith.

It was in the exercise of his supreme authority as teacher and guardian of Revealed Truth that our Holy Father, Pope Pius X., a few months ago addressed to the whole Catholic world the beautiful Encyclical, in which he condemned anew the manifold latter-day errors which are clustered together under the attractive name of Modernism. These errors are for the most part the outcome of the Rationalism which, for the past two centuries in many countries of Europe, left nothing undone to corrupt the teachings of the Faith. It was indeed little more than an attempted revival of Paganism, gathering together and presenting under new guises the ancient heretical errors that had many times been condemned. This Rationalism received its death-warrant from the Vatican Plenary Council, and, therefore, its votaries now assume the new name of Modernism, and under the vain pretence of a compromise with Revealed Truth, they endeavor to instil into incautious minds the deadly venom and poison of errors regarding the Divinity of Our Saviour and other most cherished doctrines of Holy Church. There is nothing new except the name, even in the iniquitous course which they thus pursue.

When in the first centuries Philosophic Paganism stood condemned before the world by the preaching of Divine Truth, and the writings of the Christian apologists, its votaries under the name of Neo-Platonism would propose a compromise, that under the mask of embracing some of the doctrines of life, they might the more securely propagate their old errors and lead the unwary into the devious paths of perdition.

In like manner when Arianism was condemned, its outcome under the name of Semi-Arianism continued for a long period to afflict the Church, and under the specious pretext of a compromise with the Church's teaching tore many of the faithful from the one true fold. So also Pelagianism was followed by Semi-Pelagianism. And, to come to later times, when Continental Protestantism or Calvinism was condemned, a compromise of error and truth was proposed under the name of Jansenism, and may we not regard the High Church masquerade in England and the United States as a somewhat similar but well-intentioned attempt to combine

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