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ON THE TEXT OF THE SYLLABUS¹

*Who is killing you?
Who is leading you?
— Rabelais*

Among the various non-believers who joined together in the common effort of *l'Action française*, there were differences of opinion and tendency, to be sure. Yet their stance of seeking the public good, on the one hand, and the pains they took to avoid all preconceived ideas, on the other, have led them on (or led them back) little by little to a plain fact: *here in this world* (whether it be a question of things spiritual or things temporal, of the moral order or the material one) the views, interests, suggestions, and decisions of Catholicism match up point-for-point with the essential interests of the French nation and of the civilized world. I speak of interests understood as pre-cisely as possible. I speak of Catholicism taken in strict definition.

I

There is no question here of that cloddish traditionalism that says: *We've always been Catholic; so we always will be . . .* As if change of religion and mass conversion were unheard-of phenomena, without example in history! No, we are dealing with something quite different: with something which shows that, in politics or in sociology, any and every separation from Catholicism, far from showing progress, denotes a step backward. So we are no longer dealing with a simple question of fact. We are trying to see what is, what has been, what can be, the best fact, the state of things that is happiest and most favorable.

One may call it the right, the good, or the useful. Whatever the words one uses, one must see the coincidence of the things themselves. The highest political and social values, as assigned and fixed by empirical test and science, are identical with those marked out by the teaching of the Church. Political and social truths, which pure analysis has elevated to the rank of evident principles, are met with again, here in sketchy form, there in full detail, in the Catholic synthesis. I am not proposing here to re-do the work of Paul Bourget, with his Homeric catalogue of Doctors and Fathers of natural realism, who accord with the Doctors and Fathers of a theology whose *supernatural realism* we cannot deny.² I am just reporting an experience. I am bringing something out of my memories and those of some friends. On points where the natural science of societies was leading us away from fashionable aberrations, Catholic doctrine would also have led us away from them, we found. On points where we were drawing closer to sound but much despised tradition, the same doctrine would have mandated the same movement. And where, finally, free critique or science was forcing us to

¹ Reprinted from *Action française*, May 15, 1906.

² The same issue of *Action française* printed Paul Bourget's speech at the inauguration of the Chair of the Syllabus. Bourget had invoked the names of Taine, Comte, Fustel, Renan, Balzac, Bonald, and Le Play.

demand certain new things and certain revivals, there again Catholicism would have provided indications, suggestions, and counsels, which I should not call parallel (because parallels never meet) but convergent, aspirant towards the same ideal point. The language of theology would often seem to us a kind of translation, elevated and sublimated, of our own empirical language. And always the two tongues corresponded to a T.

With this great fact, because we were stirred by a deep respect for facts, we were forbidden to tamper. On the contrary, our method and our principle, which was an intense desire for public Weal, an active will for public Good, conspired to make us boundlessly curious, prodigiously alert and watchful, in the presence of a fact so precious. This principle inspired in us the wish, desire, I should dare to say the *appetite*, for a synthesis and agreement. Oh, all this good-will did not blind us, not a bit. We felt a strong duty to show ourselves difficult, to demand proofs. But if our suspicious minds, with hard detective work, verified each of the observed coincidences and concordances, the happy outcome of each such test didn't exactly sadden us. Let's not be ashamed. Let's admit it. The prospect of reaching agreement, closer than we had ever hoped, with a goodly number of our fellow citizens, was itself the source of a fresh joy, and I know some mon-sters who said it openly. — *How delightful*, cried these unnatural Gauls, *to agree a little on poli-tics, even if we no longer agree on theology!*

You may well judge such dispositions harshly. A race like ours, which has received from its most remote ancestors an avid taste for civil war, is worthy of blame, no doubt, for not adhering to its rituals of division. One saw the same lapse from old national usage towards the end of the 16th century, when the Politic party took the lead in placing Henri IV on the throne. Why did those chaps interfere? Wasn't it fitting for good Frenchmen to keep on devouring one another? Those cynical chaps — they put a heritage of public weal ahead of a point of hereditary honor. If our movement has a predecessor, they are it. Just as they outdid one another in setting aside their opposed qualities as Leaguers or Huguenots, to bear in mind only their title of Frenchmen, so too have we set at nought our immediate historic antecedents. Concerned uniquely for the true and the good, those among us who had inherited anti-clerical traditions repressed them; those who had formed personal anti-Catholic biases, shed them. Our study, our examination of the religious question in France, was conducted in the sole light of our country's interests. With study we re-cognized, with research we came to feel, that, for us, only one attitude was appropriate vis-à-vis the Church: respect, friendship, deference. Some went all the way to piety and love. These senti-ments grew or took strength, when harrassments, initially silly, later odious, deprived French Ca-tholicism not only of her just historical privileges, not only of her equal legal status with the other cults, but of her very right to exist and develop in peace. It was hard for us to hide our indigna-tion and distress. Some small-minded persons, with low-slung hearts, have managed to interpret our words and actions on this issue in their own way, a way as short on insight as it is on nobility. I am writing what happened as it happened. If my simplicity dissatisfies anyone, he will no doubt add such ornament as his own taste requires. Thinking to paint us, he will be making his own por-trait (and not a very flattering one).

Men who were not Catholics, men who adhered to different shades of what is called free-thinking, in agreement politically on a monarchical conclusion, came together also on an article of religious politics: to wit, on the need to prefer and support Catholicism, endow it with privileges, in the name of France, in the name of civilization, in the very name of Reason. When the *Institut d'Action française* was being planned, our Catholic friends, who formed our right wing, had no trouble persuading us that one of its endowed chairs should be devoted especially to Ca-tholic political thought. It is no secret that the "left-wing" of *Action française* not only applauded this idea

but pitched in and strongly supported the inauguration or, if you will, the baptism of the Chair of the *Syllabus*. It would have been indiscreet of us to hazard our own opinion on these matters. But once the opinion had been given currency by able and competent Catholics, we admittedly served, favored, and seconded it with all our might.

II

Besides the fact that the *Syllabus*, of all the documents that have come out of Rome, is the most ultramontane, and hence the least suspect of making concessions to Gallican fixations, which have nothing to do with true veneration of our nation's past — besides that, I say, the *Syllabus* is also the place where we find Catholic politics on display at its most rigorous, defined in its most precise terms, along with the clearest expression of Catholicism's genius for realism, her spirit of organization. Any man, be he Iroquois or Hindu Brahmin, who loves what we love, will hardly be able to stop himself from loving this Catholicism that is set forth in the text of the *Syllabus*. Vice-versa, any Catholic, even if he has been somewhat tainted by the liberal spirit, once he has been led to meditate upon this noble text, must feel with us some kinship of mind, we think, and of method, of civic concern and patriotism. The psychological affinity shines even in those passages of the *Syllabus* which, by their nature, bear only upon the interior forum of Catholic consciences.

Many of us have said as much to our friends. Our friends, Catholic or not, have often met this exposition with a smile. They think that at bottom we are right, no doubt, but too patly right, too harshly right, to be allowed to carry this point without a fight. This fight we are waging today, or rather we are putting those friends of ours in shape to wage it, personally, with all their biases and precautions. We are placing under their noses this terrible catalogue of the *Syllabus*, along with notes intended to inspire reflection and analysis, along the lines of our social preoccupations. Much as Joseph de Maistre showed in the first chapter of his treatise, *Du Pape*, that the very privilege of the Roman pontiff which is most shocking, most dreadful, most brutal, I mean infallibility, is also the lot of every established power, whether of Istanbul or of London, so also do we propose to make people realize that rules such as those in the *Syllabus*, though comparable at first blush to the shackles of old-time torturers, are just the true reflection, the quite simple, necessary, and legitimate application, of a more general principle that is visible to all and received by common sense. This is not to take anything away from the particular individuality of each rule in the *Syllabus*. Nor is it to *tend* in any way to naturalize or laicize its source. Whether this law springs from heaven or sprouts from the earth, it has a point, a trait whereby it is adjusted to the human nature to which it is addressed: analysis of this *trait*, observation of this *point* and of the field of congruities surrounding it — therein lies the supreme interest, in my opinion, of studying the *Syllabus* for a moralist, jurisconsult, or politician.

The *Syllabus* is a list of matters divided into ten sections and comprising 80 articles. Each article bears a reference to previous documents, whose titles we have thought it unnecessary to reproduce. As to going back into those documents — that is a work which has often been done and which gives rise to discussions in which we, too, would have participated, if the statements in the articles themselves had seemed to us to bear any ambiguity. But no. The wording is clear, and the meaning is transparent. One may well develop and explain these articles, but there is no need to clarify them. For lack of space, we have much more reluctantly refrained from reproducing here the encyclical letter *Quanta cura* (Dec. 8, 1864) which introduces the *Syllabus*.

III

Were one to reread that beautiful letter, one would be struck by the insistence with which the head of the Church speaks of the relation between certain “errors” and the “storms” which have followed them. The influence of ideas upon things is here affirmed with a solemnity destined to upset the more skeptical of our mystics. The Pope insists also upon the tight connection between “the religious order and the social order”: *catholicae religionis civilisque societatis fundamenta*, says he in one breath. But then come two paragraphs so beautiful in meaning, so strong, so right, and so close to our way of thinking, that we cannot resist their attraction and must cite them at all cost.

The Pope has just given our old enemy, the liberty-principle, a rough handling, along with that naturalism or historical materialism which no one, we may rightly say, has fought more resolutely than we. Whereupon he says:

There is no shortage of men who apply to civil society the *impious and absurd principle* of “naturalism,” as they call it: they dare to teach that *improved government and civil progress absolutely require* that human society be constituted and governed without taking any further account of religion, as if it didn't exist, or at least without making any distinction between the true religion and the false ones. Furthermore, contrary to the doctrine of the Scriptures, the Church, and the Holy Fathers, they do not blush to affirm that *the best government* is the one in which people do not attribute to the civil power any obligation to repress by punitive sanction the violators of the Catholic religion, except when public tranquility may require it.”

We have underlined certain turns of phrase that are highly essential, if the casual reader is not to form a false idea of what is being said. The text does not say that it is necessary today, in the contemporary world, to commit the society's government to religious law, nor to use physical force, if need be, to achieve that end. The text says that it is absurd to believe that *the perfection* of societies and the *greatest good* in politics could reside in society's indifference to religion. The text means that it is absurd to say, *in general*, that the best government is the one which is least disposed to put its physical forces at the service of religious force. The text defines and rejects a false intellectual type: a false manner of thought. It puts us on notice that a concession, a toleration, though made and accepted to avoid a greater evil, does not provide the paradigm of political constitutions. It affirms that this paradigm would reside rather in a society in which the State was quick to serve the Church, precisely as a bodily organ not struck with paralysis or disorder is prompt to serve the decisions of the mind, as announced by the will.

What could be more simple and more true? And can one doubt that, in a normal society, unity of conscience is a good, whose preservation is worth a high price? It all depends on what this price is, no doubt. And nothing can set this price but the comings and goings of history. But we are not now treating of history, nor of contemporary politics. We are examining the general principles which ought to guide every idea of public well-being. The principles of the *Syllabus* are not more cruel, nor more rigid, than their opposites. Are they to blame for the Inquisition? Well, isn't the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* equally to blame for the Terror? Isn't *Free Speech* to blame for the interminable battles, gibbets, prisons, which have dirtied three centuries of European history? Every living idea contains, in potency, some bloodshed. Yet between the idea of *Liberalism* and that of the *Syllabus*, there remains exactly the same difference as between a meaningless butchery and a curative surgery. In order to choose between these ideas which, since they are both human ideas, both run the risk of giving pain as well as pleasure, of causing mirth along with alarm, of multiplying our corpses as well

as our babies, it is appropriate to re-move from both sides their common co-efficient of joy or misery, and to try quite simply to see which of them, in its most general expression, is right. Which one is true? Which one is good? Which one is, not sweet, nor agreeable, nor bitter, nor shocking, but of use? Which is the one which provides in the end more order, peace, progress, well-being for men? So posed, the question admits of no further doubt. Irresistibly one opts for the *Syllabus*.

Let us continue to read then, this capital page of the preface, keeping in mind these distinctions and observations, which will keep us company as we look at the text itself:

As a result of this absolutely false idea of society's government, they do not hesitate to favor an erroneous opinion which is as fatal to the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls as any error can ever be, and which our predecessor of happy memory, Gregory XVI, called a *delirium*, namely, that "freedom of conscience and of religions is a *right proper to each man*, that it should be proclaimed and secured IN EVERY WELL-ORDERED STATE, and that citizens have a *right* to a full liberty to express aloud and publicly their opinions, whatever they may be, by the spoken word, by the printed page, or by any other means, without Church or civil authority's *being able* to check them." However, in maintaining these over-bold assertions, they do not take thought, they do not reflect, that they are preaching a *freedom of perdition*, and that, if it is *always* permitted for human opinions to enter into conflict, there will never be a shortage of men who resist the truth and put their confidence in the verbiage of human wisdom, an extremely injurious vanity, which faith and Christian wisdom must studiously avoid, in keeping with the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

When religion is banished from civil society, when the doctrine and authority of divine revelation are rejected, the true notion of justice and human rights is darkened, is lost, and physical force takes the place of justice and true rights. Thus one sees clearly why certain men, paying no attention to *the most certain principles of sound reason*, dare to publish "that the will of the people, manifested through what they call public opinion or through some other such channel, constitutes the highest law, *irrespective of any human or divine right*; and that in the political order, steps already taken, just because they have been taken, have the force of right." Yet who does not see, who does not feel acutely, that a society withdrawn from the laws of religion and true justice can have no other end but to hoard up, to accumulate riches, and can have in all its actions no other law but the indomitable desire to slake the passions and procure pleasures? This is why men of this stripe persecute the religious orders with cruel hatred, paying no attention to the immense services they render *to religion, to society, and to literature*; this is why they rail constantly against them, saying that they have no legitimate reason to exist: herein they echo the calumnies of heretics. Indeed, as our predecessor of happy memory, Pius VI, taught with so much truth, "abolition of religious orders wounds the State that professes publicly to follow the counsels of the Gospel; it wounds a manner of life recommended by the Church as conformable to the doctrine of the Apostles; it wounds, finally, the illustrious founders of these orders, who were moved by none other than the inspiration of God to found them." They go further, and in their impiety they declare that one must take away from citizens and from the Church even the ability "to give alms publicly," and that one must abolish the law which "forbids servile work so as to create leisure for divine worship" on certain week-days. All this under the pretext that this ability and this law are in opposition to the principles of correct political economy.

Put your finger on the last line quoted here and move it up the page, without skipping, to the first line: you will find duly scourged and condemned each of the errors or insanities that we criticize, day after day, for reasons that have nothing to do with religion or even with morality. Here is that economic liberalism that forbids all State intervention; and here, further up, is the Statism that substitutes a public, administrative alms for the charity of individuals and groups. Here is that theory of human dignity — liberal, individual, protestant, essentially in keeping with *“the revolt of the individual against the species”* — in virtue of which people have outlawed religious orders among us in France. Here is the dogma of historical materialism, which is perhaps the most naive, the most pseudo-realistic of all the revolutionary dogmas. Here are the naturalism and fatalism which our friend Lucien Moreau has made the butt of his customary jibes, the habitual objects of his ridicule. Here is that worst of false gods, the Will of the People, under its motley costumes. And here finally is that “freedom of perdition,” that “delirium,” which is freedom of conscience and religions, conceived as “a right proper to each human being”: an idea that no just mind can endure without disgust — *each man* hailed as the sovereign of truth and falsehood, with full title to decide which is which!

All of this is quite sound. But even more than the truth or soundness of the Pope's remarks, what one savours here is the sublime strength, the manner in which this truth is presented to us. Its beauty, its force, its high and solemn relevance, seems to me to flow from a bold intelligence, yes, from a thought that is complete and by that very fact exclusive and intolerant. The Thinker can patch up, take pity, offer his hand, give his heart. But Thought Itself draws its circle and, if you are outside it, it simply shows you that you are outside, that *you err*.

...“I do not know you,” “I do not recognize you any more,” is the whole sense of the anathema. People are full of tenderness for the victims of this sentence. But we should be allowed, today, to admire how much of a help the anathema has been for innumerable humble people, whom it defended and strengthened. The logician's *definition* is not just the torment of aesthetic imagination: it is also the security of the mind at work. In moral and religious matters, it offers the same advantage as a moat in front of a bulwark. A cruel and pitiless institution, to judge by the grimaces of the hapless, discomfited enemy; but piously protective, a true monument of mercy, refuge, safeguard, asylum of pity, if one thinks of one's friends, one's innocent fellow citizens, whom it shields and keeps, safe and sound.

From this perspective, from this order of considerations, the order and perspective of intellectual and moral methodology, it isn't just the political advice of the *Syllabus* that we free-thinkers put to use. At the risk of repeating myself, I should like to make people understand how much a Catholic dogma's very mode of expression teaches one, if it is rightly appreciated and understood. From it one may learn the exact sense and appropriate use of sound and neat distinction, the encompassing vision of the like and the unlike, the prompt and solid synthesis of different aspects of the same term, the logical connection of different terms, and finally the good construction of an unyielding order. Such lessons would be useful to all, even to the writers of the *Lanterne* [a liberal Catholic journal], who wrote about us in this very connection last May 11: *speaking of positivism in one breath with the Syllabus is an indication of phenomenal cheek or of the oddest aberration. These words growl at being juxtaposed.* The author of this filler-paragraph evidently does not know what the *Syllabus* is, nor what positivism is, and so it is he who plays the beast and does the growling he thinks he hears in the words. In itself, the *Syllabus* remains the type and model of logical architecture.

To be sure, it has walls and it has vaults, piers and foundations. It is not all doors, windows, and openings. It is not composed of the airy void or naked space. It exists, poses, founds, describes a determinate figure: circumscribed, it excludes what is not of itself. To reproach it for *forbidding the*

human mind to open certain problems (a reproach which a young scholar who is a friend of ours addressed to it the other day) makes no sense. The Catholic *Syllabus* does not forbid the opening of any problem. Rather, for certain problems, it formulates its solution. Do you accept it? You are in the bosom of the Church. Do you not accept it? You aren't. Hard as this "excommunication" may seem, it is not peculiar to the *Syllabus*, nor to the Church. Every doctrine, every system, every reality, excommunicates in order to exist. By approaching indeterminacy, pure liberty is pure nothing. But the marvel here is the fullness of the whole and the perfection of the detail. A small number of Catholics seem to maintain explicitly that the *Syllabus* does not oblige them in conscience, because it does not come from a more than human authority, since Pope Pius IX was only expressing his personal opinions in it. Well, for quite different reasons, I should like it if every good and true Catholic could think that; for then, without chilling any friendships, I could write that we have before us a masterpiece of the wisdom and foresight of human genius.

SYLLABUS OR RESUMÉ OF THE PRINCIPAL ERRORS OF OUR TIME, AS INDICATED IN THE ALLOCUTIONS, ENCYCLICALS AND OTHER APOSTOLIC LETTERS OF OUR HOLY FATHER, POPE PIUS IX.

I. — Pantheism, Naturalism, and Absolute Rationalism.

1. — A divine, supreme Being, perfect in His wisdom and providence, and distinct from the universe of things, does not exist; God is rather identical with the nature of things, and hence is subject to changes; through these God comes to be in man and in the world; all beings are God and possess the proper substance of God. God thus forms with the world but one, self-same thing, and hence spirit and matter are the same, as are freedom and necessity, truth and falsity, good and evil, the just and the unjust.

This paragraph, so remarkable for the vigor with which metaphysical premises are conducted to moral and political conclusions, inevitably makes one think of [the soci-alist orator and politician] Jean Jaurès, the Pantheist of Toulouse, as one of our friends calls him. It is not known widely enough that Jaurès is quite a pantheist, as his two doctoral theses show. People do not sufficiently appreciate the connection between pantheism and social-democracy. An immanent God sanctifies the force of the current wave and divinizes the evolution of societies. He similarly sanctifies and divinizes the fantastic flights of eccentric consciences. And he teaches people not to distinguish anything, so that they may confuse everything. Many of the semi-Protestants among our adversaries would not be socialists, democrats, or Dreyfussards without the in-fluence of these underlying pantheistic conceptions.

2. — One must deny any action of God upon men and upon the world.

It's the "republican God" of Alfred de Musset. He practices *laissez-faire* and *laissez-passer*, like the State imagined by Léon Say.

3. — Human reason, considered in total independence of God, is the sole arbiter of what is true and

false, good and evil; it is a law unto itself and is sufficient to procure the good of individuals and peoples through its own natural power.

Whether individual or general, this "reason" here appears to have as its essential trait the great liberal attribute of *independence*. But in fact everything is dependent and interdependent: that is the joint conclusion of social criticism, experience, and science.

4. — All the truths of religion derive from the native force of human reason; hence it follows that reason is the sovereign rule whereby man can and should acquire his knowledge of all truths of every variety.

Here begins a series of propositions that are strictly religious. We shall not be so bold as to venture into them. It will be enough for us to stand amazed at the extreme incoherence and bizarre inconsistency of those mixtures of "rationalism" and religion which the *Syllabus* prosecutes with so much logic in the name of Catholicism's general principle and economy. In article 10, one should stand especially amazed at the pitiable distinction, hatched by some liberal brain, between philosophy and the philosopher.

5. — Divine revelation is incomplete and hence subject to a continual and indefinite progress in keeping with the development of human reason.

6. — Faith in Christ is in opposition with human reason, and divine revelation not only fails to benefit anything but actually harms man's perfection.

7. — The prophecies and miracles displayed and recounted in the Holy Scriptures are poetic fictions, and the mysteries of the Christian Faith are the upshot of philosophical investigations; mythical inventions are found in the books of both Testaments, and Jesus Himself is a myth.

II. — Moderated Rationalism

8. — As human reason is equal to religion itself, the theological sciences should be treated like the philosophical sciences.

9. — All the dogmas of the Christian religion, without distinction, are the object of natural science or philosophy; and human reason, equipped with only an historical education, can achieve, by following its own natural strengths and principles, a true knowledge of all the dogmas, even the most recondite ones, provided only that these dogmas be proposed to it as an object of study.

10. — Since the philosopher is one thing and philosophy itself is quite another, the former has the right and duty to submit himself to whatever authority he has acknowledged as genuine; but philosophy itself neither can nor should submit to any authority.

11. — The Church not only shouldn't ever chastize philosophy but should even tolerate errors in philosophy, leaving the task of self-correction to the discipline itself.

12. — The decrees of the Apostolic See and of the Roman Congregations impede the free progress of

Science.

This article 12 corresponds to the objection raised by our friend, quoted above; “the decrees of the Apostolic See or the Roman Congregations” do not in fact impede the consideration of any problem; essentially, they do not touch upon any problem that science would wish to raise.

13. — The method and the principles according to which the old scholastic Doctors cultivated theology no longer befit the needs of our time and the progress of the sciences.

The principal defect of the method of the “old Doctors” was that it was straight-forward and clear; liberalism, which survives only as a fish in muddy water, begins by imploring people not to define their terms, not to qualify them, not to connect them logically, not to let them interact with one another at all; by this means, no doubt, one can hope to live in peace with one's neighbor; but one cannot dream of having a disciplined and coherent conversation with him: where would the common language be?

Anti-scholastic prejudice would have as its final effect the disappearance of language and the suppression of all intellectual rapport among men. By defending the method of “the old Doctors,” what the Church is really defending is civilization and humanity.

14. — One should pursue philosophy without taking any account of supernatural revelation.

Non-Catholic critics have often asked themselves how this bizarre dissociation could have taken shape in the mind of a Catholic.

III. — Indifferentism. Latitudinarianism.

15. — It is up to the free discretion of each person to embrace and profess the religion he deems true on the basis of the light of reason.

It is quite singular that, in their mania for subjectivism, the liberals who are believers do not accord any privilege, any special right, to what they themselves nevertheless maintain is the objective truth! A liberal is nothing but a disorganized mind. After all, if you admit that there exists a *religious* truth (binding individuals together and binding each individual for himself), you cannot allow that this truth should be at the mercy of the first *individual* doubt: you must rather conclude that man, even when solicited by what he calls his reason, remains obligated by the force of his previous adherence, which he made with his whole being. His will, his faith (that is, his fidelity), ought to guard him and, quite literally, save him. This point of psychology may suggest the broad outlines of a complete system of moral and even social hygiene.

16. — Men can find the path to eternal salvation and attain it in the practice of any religion at all.

17. — At least, one ought to have good hope of eternal salvation for all those who do not live in the bosom of the true Church of Christ.

18. — Protestantism is just a different form of the same true Christian religion, a form in which one

can be just as pleasing to God as in the Catholic Church.

IV. — Socialism, Communism, Secret Societies, Bible Societies, Clerico-Liberal Societies

Plagues of these kinds have often been struck with condemnations formulated in highly severe terms: in the encyclical *Qui pluribus* of November 9, 1846, in the allocution *Quibus quantisque* of April 20, 1849, etc.

V. — Errors Touching the Church and Her Rights

19. — The Church is not a true and perfect society that is fully free; she does not enjoy her own proper and constant rights conferred upon her by her divine Founder; it belongs rather to the civil power to define what the rights of the Church are and the limits within which she may exercise them.

This is the theory of State-granted liberty, which does not even do justice to communal or professional liberties! Every doctrine of the State as dispenser and distributor of rights will crumble before the simple observation that society, both spiritual and temporal, is anterior, both logically and historically, to the State.

20. — Ecclesiastical power should not exercise its authority without the leave and consent of the civil government.

An old and pleasant pretension of certain Gallican doctors, who fell out among themselves in any case, depending on whether by "ecclesiastical power" they meant Rome or the Church of France. One should be able to see today that the extravagance condemned by article 20 of the *Syllabus* could serve to define a world turned upside down: for how can the spiritual solicit the "leave" or "consent" of the temporal? Au-guste Comte would reply with a snort of indignation.

21. — The Church does not have the power to define dogmatically that the religion of the Catholic Church is the sole true religion.

22. — The obligation that rests upon Catholic teachers and writers is limited to things that have been defined by the Church's infallible judgment, such as the dogmas of Faith which must be believed by all.

"Teachers" and "writers," since they have more rights than others, also have more duties. If the humble sheep can be content to adhere to dogmas defined by the Church's "infallible judgment," the writers and teachers should show above and beyond that a singular prudence in matters upon which dogmatic definition has not intervened. Prudence implies an extreme deference towards simple advisories, a strict obedience to mere rules of discipline.

23. — The Sovereign Pontiffs and ecumenical Councils have transgressed the limits of their power; they have usurped the rights of princes, and have even erred in definitions touching upon faith and morals.

24. — The Church has no right to use force; she has no temporal power direct or indirect.

Article 24 and those that follow should be examined in the light of this preliminary question: — yes or no, is the Church an autonomous moral force? If the answer is yes, the solutions of the *Syllabus* occasion no doubt: the Church has the right to use the material force which she may have at her command in fully and unanimously Catholic societies, just as, in a vigorous animal, the will has the right to move the limb; such temporal power as the Church has does not depend upon the State; she has the right to acquire or possess, to exercise a temporal authority, etc.; she does not depart from her role when she intervenes in affairs of the State; but the State does depart from its sphere when it intrudes into the affairs of the Church... All of this is understood on a plane of high generality and deduced from definitions of temporal power and spiritual power, while being subject in practice to all sorts of nuances and amendments proportional to the force and extent of the Catholic faith in each given society. The exercise of a right is something different from the right itself.

Moreover one should not forget — if one wishes to judge the past fairly in the light of these principles — that medieval princes willingly considered themselves ecclesiastical dignitaries; the two societies could seem to them combined and represented in their own person. For the case of our own France, in particular, let us not exaggerate the gravity of certain conflicts; the prince who said, "I am the State," knelt like his ancestors before his confessors and chaplains. In the process of taking each other's measure and limiting each other, these two great Powers, in friendship and concurrence, may each have augmented its own awareness, power, and dignity. The unsettled state of these questions prior to the *Syllabus* and to the Council begat a kind of rivalry which, though dangerous in itself, had more than one good effect. Never did the Church enjoy more authority than under the old Monarchy. And never did the civil power find itself better defended, better armed, and more influential in affairs of the Church. The holy king Louis IX may be called anti-clerical, and it fell to Philip the Fair to accept the canonization of his ancestor.

25. — Besides the power inherent in the Episcopate, there is a temporal power which has been explicitly or tacitly granted to it by the civil authority, and which is therefore revocable at the pleasure of the same civil authority.

26. — The Church does not have the natural and legitimate right to acquire and possess property.

27. — The Church's sacred ministers, including the Roman Pontiff, should be excluded from all action and authority over temporal matters.

28. — Bishops are not even permitted to publish apostolic letters without government leave.

29. — The favors granted by the Roman Pontiff should be considered null, unless they have been requested through the government.

30. — The immunity of the Church and of ecclesiastical persons derives its origin from civil law.

31. — Ecclesiastical courts for trying clerics on temporal charges, whether civil or criminal, ought to

be abolished absolutely, even without consulting the Apostolic See, and without paying any attention to its protests.

All particular jurisdictions are of the social order, of natural "right," hence anterior to the State. Every once in a while the State destroys them, and the course of things restores them. Example: our employer-employee grievance councils.

32. — The personal immunity by virtue of which clerics are exempt from military service can be abrogated without any violation of equity or natural right. Civil progress demands its abrogation, especially in a society constituted in accordance with liberal legislation.

Same comment as above. Equality and uniformity are anything *but* progress — so much so, that they yield the most oppressive of rules. Only privilege makes free.

33. — By no intrinsic or natural right does the regulation of theological instruction belong to ecclesiastical jurisdiction alone.

My, haven't people talked about that!

34. — The doctrine of those who compare the Roman Pontiff to a free prince, exercising his power in the universal Church, is merely one that prevailed in the Middle Ages.

35. — There is nothing to prevent a decree of a General Council or an act of all the peoples from transferring the sovereign Pontificate from the Roman bishopric and from the city of Rome to another bishopric and city.

36. — The definition of a national Council admits of no further discussion, and the civil government can require one to conform to it.

37. — One can set up national Churches withdrawn from the authority of the Roman Pontiff and *entirely* separated from him.

The adverb `entirely' is worthy of note as an attenuation and a careful reservation. A strong error among certain nationalists, full of illusions over the scope and nature of Gallican dreams, is the idea that Roman unity implies ritual uniformity or centralization. The diversity we see among the Eastern Uniates is a sufficient answer to this confusion. But Gallicanism was really separatist. To my mind, it is one of the ugly and awful excesses of regal power, using and spreading this power outside its true sphere, like so many other centralizing excesses that dated from Mazarin and Colbert! Without nit-picking at the memory of the great king and his ministers, and without doing them the injustice of comparing them to the Constituent Assembly, whose blinkered doctrine they would never have accepted, one can see in the deplorable things they brought about the germ of destructive principles, which would emerge more fully later on. The four Gallican Articles were not the Civil Constitution of the Clergy; the breach of Marseille is not the suppression of the historic provinces: and yet there is a bit of the one hidden in the other! The word `responsibility' is too strong for a mere precedent, unknowing and involuntary. But the precedent deserved the penalty of being regretted.

38. — Too many arbitrary acts on the part of the Roman Pontiffs is what forced the division of the Church into East and West.

**VI. — Errors Touching Civil Society, Whether Considered in Itself
or in Its Relations with the Church**

39. — Since the State is the origin and source of all rights, the right which the State itself enjoys is not circumscribed by any limit.

This is the original blunder of all democratic sociology. It has already been criticized above. If one speaks of a right, the source of social rights is society, not the State.

40. — The doctrine of the Catholic Church is contrary to the well-being and the interests of human society.

The opposite of this is just what we are working ourselves to death to prove here. And that is exactly why the liberal Catholics wish us a bad end. Mercifully, their breed is few in numbers.

41. — The civil power, even when exercised by an unbelieving prince, has an indirect, negative power over sacred affairs. Hence the civil power not only has the right called *exequatur* but also the one called appeal *ab abusu*.

42. — In case of conflict between the two powers, the right of the civil power prevails.

Articles 41 and 42 are governed by the consideration already stated above, that the temporal cannot take precedence over the spiritual, nor the less noble over the more noble.

43. — The lay [*i.e.* civil] power has the right to suppress, declare void, and make null the solemn treaties it has concluded with the Holy See (concordats) dealing with the exercise of rights pertaining to ecclesiastical immunity, without the consent of that See, and despite its diplomatic protests.

This article, violated by MM. Combes, Delcassé, and Loubet, states a general custom of international law — not to mention the French politeness which long held sway in Europe.

44. — Civil authority can intervene in matters pertaining to religion, morals, and spiritual direction. Hence civil authority can judge the Instructions which the Church's pastors publish, in their line of duty, for the guidance of people's conscience; civil authority can even pass decisions on the administration of the Sacraments and on the dispositions required to receive them.

These woes have perhaps only an historical interest. But then again, perhaps we shall live long enough to see them revive . . .

45. — With the partial exception of episcopal seminaries, all regulation of the schools open to the public, in which the youth of a Christian country are educated, can and should belong to the civil authority — in such a way that no other authority is accorded any right to intervene in school discipline, curriculum, grading policy, or in the choice or certification of teachers.

The State, any state, is merely the functionary of society. A Catholic society obviously has the right to supervise the religious and moral education of its children, and the exercise of this supervision can only belong to its Church.

46. — Furthermore, even in seminaries for clerics, the method to be followed in the course of studies is subject to civil authority.

47. — The sound constitution of civil society demands that schools having a popular character, open to all children of any social class, as well as public institutions in general which are devoted to literature, advanced studies, and the higher education of youth, be exempted from all Church authority, regulation, or intervention, and that they be fully submitted to the will of the civil and political authority, in accordance with the desire of modern governments and the general current of modern opinion.

What anarchy such a shut-out of spiritual power has always led to, and always will lead to, inevitably! "Fully submitted to the will of the civil and political authority," our own schools today are seed-beds of socialism, opposition to military service, and anti-patriotism. The *Syllabus* shows why: — "in accordance with the desire of modern governments and the general current of modern opinion," including that of the current Ministers.

48. — Catholics can approve of a system of education which is outside of the Catholic faith and Church authority and which has as its sole or principal end the knowledge of purely natural things and of social life in this world.

Beginning with article 48, the errors condemned in this section bear the mark of the absurd: contradiction in their terms. They lead to the confusion of functions, to the triumph of incompetence, and to the reversal of every just relation between the spiritual and the temporal.

49. — Secular authority can prevent the bishops and the faithful from communicating freely with each other and with the Roman Pontiff.

50. — Secular authority possesses, of itself, the right to present bishops and to require them to take over the administration of their dioceses, before they have received canonical installation and Letters Apostolic from the Holy See.

51. — Furthermore, the secular power has the right to forbid bishops to exercise their pastoral ministry, and it is not bound to obey the Roman Pontiff in regard to the erection of bishoprics and the installation of bishops.

52. — By its own proper authority, the government can change the age prescribed for professing religious vows, for women as well as for men, and can enjoin religious communities from admitting anyone to solemn vows without government authorization.

53. — One should abrogate the laws protecting the existence of religious houses, their rights, and their

functions; further, the civil power can give its support to those who wish to leave the religious life and break their solemn vows; indeed, the civil power can completely suppress these religious communities, along with collegial churches and simple benefices, even if they exist by patronal right, and appropriate their goods and revenues to the civil authority's will and administration.

54. — Kings and princes are not only exempt from the Church's jurisdiction but are actually superior to the Church as regards settling questions of jurisdiction.

55. — The Church should be separated from the State, and the State from the Church.

Recall that we define the relations between the spiritual and the temporal quite differently.

But in a Catholic society, how can one admit this monstrosity, or rather this corpse: the soul over here, the body over there?

VII. — Errors Regarding Natural and Christian Morality

56. — The laws of morality have no need of divine sanction, nor is it at all necessary for human laws to conform to natural law or receive from God the power to oblige.

Autonomous morality, said Kant. Law sovereign because it's the law, said Rousseau. Here again, the Church's theological doctrine of politics finds a correspondance and an analog in the positivist doctrine of politics, which subordinates the law to the fullest common good. In Catholic logic, the fullest of all goods, the sovereign good, is called God.

57. — Philosophical and moral science, like the civil laws, can and should be withdrawn from divine and ecclesiastical authority.

What spiritual power, sure of itself in representing any intellectual synthesis at all, would neglect this high control of science and law? And what scholar adhering to this synthesis, or what legislator belonging to an organization enlightened by this spiritual power, would *want* to neglect its say-so, since it is the interpreter of theoretical truth and the trustee of the rules of life?

58. — One should recognize no forces but those resident in matter; and every system of morals, all upright conduct, should consist in accumulating and augmenting material riches of all kinds and in giving oneself up to pleasures.

Observe that the native and proper function of spiritual power is to impede precisely such supine conduct of one's personal existence.

59. — Right consists in material fact; all the duties of men are words devoid of meaning, and all human deeds have the force of rightness.

In a way analogous at least to Catholic doctrine, realist politics defines a right deed as one crowned by much and long-standing historical consent — that is, a deed of proven beneficence. From the set of "all" human deeds, that idea will cast out a great number, notably including the sort mentioned in article 61: injustices that bring initial success.

60. — Authority is nothing but the sum of majority numbers and material forces.

We go even further than this condemnation. We say that this “sum,” which cannot constitute authority, cannot even furnish a sound expression of the public interest. And we prove it.

61. — If an unjust deed turns out well, it ceases to offend against the canons of rightness.

62. — One should preach and practice the principle of *non-intervention*.

In whatever sense one understands this non-intervention, it has often been deleterious for those who have professed it *as a principle*. Thus capitalists have allowed much rancor and envy to grow up in the classes they employ. Thus princes have allowed many revolutions to occur in neighboring countries. Both have had to pay in the end.

63. — It is permitted to refuse obedience to legitimate rulers and even to revolt against them.

Insurrection *is not* the holiest of duties. There *are* legitimate governments. But which governments are they? Here is what our teacher Drumont wrote in *Libre Parôle*, May 12, 1906: “In reality, there has not been any legality since the invasion of the Tuilleries on August 10, 1792. A regime which had enjoyed centuries of existence could pass as legal. But since that time (setting aside the governments set up in Brumaire and in December, which could hardly be offered as examples of legality), the regimes which have followed have represented nothing but the success of a popular movement in Paris: the sheer will of certain brave and resolute men who, in July of 1830, or February of 1848, or on September 4, 1870, sat down as comfortably as possible upon the legality of the moment.”

64. — The violation of an oath, no matter how sacred, plus shameful and criminal action opposed to the eternal law, no matter what it might be, should not be condemned but rather is licit and worthy of high praise, when it is inspired by love of one's country.

Regarding this article, we think it would be useful to recall what we said to Marc Sangnier in *Marc Sangnier's Dilemma*. We were talking about our defense of Colonel Henry. Sangnier had followed the lead of the pro-Dreyfus writers and had accused us of inventing “the guilty word, ‘false patriot.’” We took him back to the documents. We showed him that the blameworthy expression had been invented by the very people who were blaming it on us. Those of us who have formed our own synthesis of thought around the idea of our Country have drawn upon laws a little loftier than the country's gross and immediate utility. Our idea of Country, *pulcherrima rerum*, commands nothing “criminal” or “shameful.” It does not serve to falsify human nature, and it does not favor the instincts for artifice or ferocity... — But what does it say in case of necessity? What does it say when public safety is threatened?

— Cases of necessity are not cases of morality. In cases of dire need, taking bread is not theft, and war is not organized homicide: a different law, a *supreme or ex-treme* law comes into effect, and much of the casuistry of deceiving people depends upon this law.

In order to judge Colonel Henry calmly, we looked from the angle of his duties of state.

VIII. — Errors Concerning Christian Marriage

65. — One cannot establish by any reasonable argument that Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament.

Recall that the indissolubility of marriage is one of the weightiest points of agreement between strict Compteanism and Catholic morality.

66. — The Sacrament of marriage is just an accessory of the contract and can be separated from it; the Sacrament itself consists merely in the nuptial blessing.

67. — As far as natural law is concerned, the marriage bond is not indissoluble; and in various cases divorce properly so-called can be sanctioned by the civil authority.

68. — The Church does not have the power to establish dirimant impediments to marriage; this power belongs rather to the secular authority, by which the existing impediments should be lifted.

69. — Over the course of the centuries, the Church began to introduce dirimant impediments, not by her own right, but by using a right she had borrowed from the civil power.

70. — The canons of the Council of Trent which anathematize those who dare to deny the Church's power to impose dirimant impediments are not dogmatic, or else should be understood in the sense of this borrowed power.

71. — The form prescribed by the Council of Trent is not obligatory on pain of nullity, when the civil law establishes a different form to be followed and wills that the marriage be valid by virtue of this form.

72. — Boniface VIII was the first to declare that the vow of chastity, pronounced at ordination, renders [a subsequent attempt at] marriage null.

73. — By the force of the purely civil contract, a true marriage can exist between Christians; it is false to say either that the marriage contract between Christians is always a Sacrament, or that the contract is null apart from the Sacrament.

74. — By their very nature, marriages and engagements belong to the civil sphere.

N. B. Two other errors can be placed here: abolition of clerical celibacy, and giving preference to the married state over consecrated virginity.

In *Une campagne royaliste au Figaro*, I showed the moral and political inconvenience of forming a new Tribe of Levi. To speak of the matter only in a serious vein, such a step would be the stuff of a religious revolution. But to look at it in a light vein, one should read again the *Ainée* of Jules Lemaître.

IX. — Errors on the Civil Principality of the Roman Pontiff

75. — The Catholic Church's children dispute among themselves whether the Pope's temporal rulership is compatible with his spiritual power.

76. — Abrogation of the civil sovereignty which the Holy See has would advance, even greatly advance, the Church's freedom and well-being.

Could one possibly fail to mention here the convergence between France's interest and the Catholic interest on the Roman question? The temporal power of the Pope was a providential European obstacle to achieving unity in Italy. Between 1854 and 1870, we did everything we could to circumvent this precious obstacle; and now, after letting it be destroyed, we devote ourselves to depriving the Holy See of our help — so as to throw it into the arms of Savoy. What idiocy (and they wouldn't have committed it at Versailles)!

N. B. Besides the errors explicitly noted here, many other errors are implicitly condemned by the doctrine which has been expounded and maintained on the Roman Pontiff's civil principality — a doctrine which all Catholics must profess firmly.

X. — Errors Dealing with Modern Liberalism

77. — In our time, it is no longer expedient for the Catholic religion to be considered the sole religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship.

On the contrary, it would be quite expedient wherever it would be possible, in the general interest of civilization, equally menaced as it is by Protestantism and democracy, anarchy of mind and barbarism of the heart.

78. — It is also well and good that, in certain Catholic countries, the law has provided that foreigners who immigrate there should enjoy the public exercise of their own forms of worship.

The translation "well and good" [which Maurras finds in the French version he has been following] does not do justice to the '*laudabiliter*' of the original. The Latin word means "laudably," or "in a manner giving rise to congratulations." The Pope — let us understand him well — rightly, for good reason, *iure* — does not want a makeshift mistaken for a Good worthy of praise. It would certainly have been better for the foreign cults to have enjoyed a bare *licet* in secret, while public status, legality and glory remained rightly reserved to the religion of the State.

79. — It is false to say that civil liberty for all forms of worship and full empowerment granted to all to proclaim all their thoughts and opinions openly and publicly leads peoples towards the corruption of minds and morals and spreads the plague of indifferentism.

Liberalism leads people to scepticism and corruption. The Pope forbids one to hold the contrary. So does common sense.

80. — The Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile himself and come to terms with progress,

liberalism, and modern civilization.

Everyone should realize that the Roman Pontiff represents a principle superior to liberalism. Modern civilization, progress, everything *positive* about the contemporary world, has the Pope himself as its living image.