

THE NEW DOGMA.

Text of the Infallibility Decree. The following is the full text of the decree of infallibility, translated from the Latin:—

Præ, Bismar, Servant of the Servants of God, with the Approbation of the Holy Council, for an Everlasting Remembrance of the Event.—The eternal pastor and bishop of our souls, to make perpetual the salutary work of his redemption, resolved to build up the holy Church, in which, as in the house of the living God, all the faithful should be united by the bond of one faith and one charity. Therefore, being glorified, he asked the Father, not only for the Apostles, but also for those who through their word would believe in Him, in order that all might be one as the Son himself and the Father are one. Therefore in the same way as he had sent the Apostles whom he had chosen from the world as he himself had been sent from the Father; thus he wished pastors and teachers to remain in his Church until the consummation of the age. But in order that the Episcopate itself might be one and undivided, and in order that the multitude of the faithful, through priests in communion with each other, might be preserved in the oneness of faith and communion, he placed the Blessed Peter above the other Apostles, and instituted in him the perpetual principle and visible foundation of this double unity, in order that upon his fortitude the everlasting temple might be built, and that upon the firmness of his faith might rise the Church, the loftiness of which shall even touch the skies. And because the gates of hell are standing upon all sides, with a hatred ever day increasing against the divinely-laid foundation of the Church, in order to overthrow it if it were possible, Therefore we, with the approbation of the Holy Council, deem it necessary for the preservation, the salvation, and the increase of the Catholic flock to propound, in accordance with the ancient and constant faith of the Universal Church, the doctrine concerning the institution, the perpetuity, and the nature of the Holy Apostolic Primacy, in which consists the strength and solidity of the whole Church, as a doctrine which must be believed and held by all, and to proscrib and condemn the contrary errors so pernicious to the flock of the Lord.

CHAPTER I.

On the Institution of the Apostolic Primacy in the Person of the Blessed Peter. We therefore teach and declare in accordance with the testimonies of the Gospel that the primacy of jurisdiction over the universal Church of God was immediately and directly promised to and conferred upon the blessed Apostle Peter by our Lord Jesus Christ. For to Simon alone, to whom he had said:—Thou shalt be called Cephas, after he had publicly made his confession—to Simon alone the Lord addressed the words:—Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona because flesh and blood did not reveal this to thee, but my Father who is in Heaven; and I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I shall build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her; and to thee I shall give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in Heaven. And upon Simon Peter alone, Jesus conferred after his resurrection the jurisdiction of the chief pastor and ruler over his whole sheep-fold, saying, Feed my lambs; feed my sheep. To this so clear doctrine of the sacred Scriptures, as it has always been understood by the Catholic Church are openly opposed the wicked opinions of those who, perverting the form of government instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ in His Church, deny that Peter alone was invested by Christ with a veritable and proper primacy of jurisdiction above the other apostles, whether viewed individually, or all taken together; or who assert that this same primacy was not immediately and directly conferred upon the Blessed Peter, but upon the Church, and that the latter transferred it to him as the minister of the Holy Church.

If, therefore, any one should say that the Blessed Apostle Peter was not constituted by our Lord Jesus Christ the Prince of all His Apostles, and the visible chief of the whole Church Militant, or that the same Peter has received directly and immediately from our Lord Jesus Christ only a primacy of honor and not a veritable and proper jurisdiction—let him be anathema.

CHAPTER II.

On the perpetuity of the Primacy of Peter in the Roman Pontiffs. It is necessary that that which the Prince of Pastors and the Supreme Pastor of the Sheep, Our Lord Jesus Christ, has established in the person of the Blessed Apostle Peter, for the everlasting salvation and the permanent good of the Church, should, through him, remain forever also in the Church, which is founded upon a rock, and is to remain firm even to the end of ages; for it is not doubtful for any one, yea, it was known in all centuries that the Holy and Most Blessed Peter, the chief and head of the Apostles, and the pillar of faith and the foundation of the Catholic Church, who from Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race has received the keys of the kingdom, lives, reigns, and judges even down to our times, and forever, in his successors the bishops of the Holy Roman See, who are established by him, and consecrated by his blood. Whosoever, therefore, should deny that Peter in this See receives, according to the institution of Christ himself, the primacy of Peter over the whole Church. The economy of truth therefore remains, and the blessed Peter, always retaining the firmness of the rock, which has not relinquished the helm of the Church which had been given to him. For this reason it has always been necessary that every church, that is to say, all the faithful, scattered in all places, should put themselves in communion with the Roman Church, because of its greater pre-eminence, in order that this See, from which flow upon all the rights of the venerable communion, they may all coalesce into the structure of one body, as the limbs are united in the head.

If, therefore, any one should say that the Blessed Peter had not by the institution of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, or by divine right, perpetual successors in the primacy over the whole Church; or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of the Blessed Peter in this same Primacy—let him be anathema.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Nature and Character of the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff. Therefore, supported by the manifest testimony of the Holy Scriptures, and adhering to the outspoken and clear decrees of our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs and the General Councils, we renew the definition of the Œcumenical Council of Florence, in virtue of which all the faithful of Christ are obliged to believe that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff have the primacy over the whole world; that the same Roman

Pontiff is the successor of the Blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, the true Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Chief of the whole Church, the father and teacher of all Christians, and that to him has been intrusted by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the person of the Blessed Peter, the full power to feed, to rule, and to govern the Universal Church, as is stated in the acts of the Œcumenical Councils and the Sacred Canons.

Therefore, we teach and declare that the Roman Church, by the institution of the Lord, has the pre-eminence of ordinary power over all the other churches; and that this truly episcopal power of the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff is immediate; that the pastors and the faithful, both individually and taken together, whatever may be their rite and their dignity, are subject to him by the duty of hierarchical subordination and of true obedience; not only in those things which concern the faith and the morals, but also in those which belong to the discipline and the government of the Church scattered throughout the whole universe; so that preserving the unity both of communion and of profession of the same faith with the Roman Pontiff, the Church of Christ is one flock under one Supreme Pastor. Such is the doctrine of the Catholic Truth, from which no one can deviate without losing faith and salvation.

This power of the Supreme Pontiff is far from injuring that ordinary and immediate power of episcopal jurisdiction, by which the bishops, who, instituted by the Holy Ghost, have succeeded the Apostles feed and rule as true pastors, each the particular flock which is assigned to him. Their episcopal power is proclaimed, confirmed, and corroborated by the Supreme and Universal Pastor, according to the Word of Saint Gregory the Great: My honor is the honor of the Universal Church. My honor is the solid strength of my brethren. I am truly honored, when the honor due to every one is not refused to him.

From this supreme power of the Roman Pontiff to govern the Universal Church results for him the right to communicate freely in the exercise of his functions with the pastors and flocks of the whole Church in order that they may have the privilege of being instructed and directed by him in the way of salvation. Therefore we condemn and censure the opinion of those who say that this communication of the supreme head with the pastors and flocks may lawfully be hindered, or who make it subject to the secular power, claiming that the things provided by the Apostolic See, or in virtue of his authority for the government of the Church, have force and authority only when they are confirmed by the agreement of the secular power.

And as the Roman Pontiff, by the divine right of the apostolic primacy, is placed over the Universal Church, we also teach and we declare that he is the supreme judge of the faithful and that recourse may be had to his judgment in all things which belong to ecclesiastical jurisdiction; that on the contrary, the judgment of the Apostolic See, above which there is no other authority, cannot be modified by any one, and that no one is permitted to judge its judgment. Those therefore deviate from the right way of truth who assert that it is lawful to appeal from the judgment of the Supreme Pontiff to an Œcumenical Council as an authority superior to the Roman Pontiff.

If any one, therefore, shall say that the Roman Pontiff has only the charge of inspection and direction, but not the universal and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole Church, not only in things which pertain to faith and morals but also in matters which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church Universal, or that he has only the greater part and not the plenitude of this supreme power; or that this power which he possesses is not ordinary and immediate, whether it be over all the churches or over each of them, or over all the pastors and all the faithful, or over each of them—let him be anathema.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Infallible Authority of the Roman Pontiff.

This Holy See has always held, the unbroken custom of the Church proves, and the Œcumenical Councils themselves—those especially in which East and West came together in a union of faith and charity—have declared, that the supreme power of mastership was comprehended by that Apostolic Primacy which the Roman Pontiff received as the successor of Peter, the chief of the apostles. The fathers of the fourth Council of Constantinople, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, put forth this solemn declaration. Safety lies above all in guarding the formula of the true faith, and as the declaration of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be overlooked, who said:—Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church; these things are said to be borne out by results, since in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been kept immaculate, and the sacred doctrine spread abroad. Wishing, therefore, to depart as little as possible from his faith and doctrine, we hope to merit being in the unity of communion which the Apostolic See preaches, in which is the unbroken and real solidity of the Christian religion. With the approbation of the Second Council of Lyons the Greeks have declared that the sacred Roman Church has the sovereignty and complete primacy, and pre-eminence over the Catholic Church Universal, pre-eminence which she truly and humbly acknowledges having received in the person of the blessed Peter, the head or chief of the Apostles, of whom the Roman Pontiff is the successor. And, inasmuch as he is bound more than others to defend the truth of the faith, when any questions of faith are raised these questions ought to be decided by his judgment. Finally, the Council of Florence has determined:—That the Roman Pontiff stands forth as the true Vicar of Christ, the head of the whole Church, and the father and teacher of all Christians, and that to him, in the person of the blessed Peter, the full power of nourishing, ruling, and governing the Church Universal, has been transmitted from our Lord Jesus Christ.

To fulfil the pastoral function our predecessors have always labored unweariedly, that the doctrine of Christ's salvation might be propagated among all the nations of the earth, and they have watched with equal care that wherever it was once received it might be preserved in sincerity and purity. Wherefore the bishops of the whole world, singly and in synods, following the long custom of the Church and the form of the ancient laws, have referred to this Apostolic See those dangerous questions which arose in matters of faith, that the injuries suffered by faith might be especially made good there, where faith cannot experience diminution. On the other hand, the Roman Pontiffs, as they were admonished by the condition of the times and of affairs, have declared, now in convoking Œcumenical Councils, now in asking the opinion of the Church dispersed throughout

the world, sometimes by particular synods, at others when employing the other aids furnished by Divine Providence, that those things must be preserved which, by the aid of God, they have found to be conformable to the Sacred Scripture and the Apostolic traditions. The Holy Spirit has not, in effect, been promised to the successors of Peter, in order that a new doctrine, according to his revelations, but with His assistance to sacredly preserve them and faithfully expound the revelation transmitted by the Apostles, that is to say, the deposit of faith. All the venerable fathers have embraced and all the holy orthodox doctors have venerated and followed their apostolic doctrine, knowing clearly that this see of Peter remains always exempt from error, according to the divine promise of our Saviour, made to the prince of His disciples, who have prayed for them, in order that they [faith fall] not, and that when thou art converted, confirm thy brothers.

The gift of the truth and of the faith which falls not has therefore been divinely accorded to Peter and to his successors in the chair; in order that acquitting themselves of their eminent charge for the salvation of all; in order that the flock drawn by them from the baneful passage of error, to be nourished by heavenly doctrines; and in order that all cause of schism being removed the Church may be united in charity by the unity and sanctity by her foundation, she may maintain herself invulnerable against the gates of hell. Now at the epoch we are in, there is more need than ever of the salutary efficiency of the apostolic charge, and so many men are found who seek to reduce its authority, we think that it is entirely necessary to solemnly affirm the prerogative that the only Son of God has deigned to join to the supreme pastoral office.

It is because we, holding faithfully to the tradition which ascends to the commencement of the Christian faith, for the glory of God, our Saviour, for the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and the salvation of Christian peoples, we teach and define, with the approbation of the Holy Council, that it is a dogma divinely revealed—that the Roman Pontiff when speaking ex cathedra, that is to say, when fulfilling the charge of pastor and doctor of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines that a doctrine regarding faith or morals ought to be held by the Universal Church; enjoys fully, by the Divine assistance which has been promised him in the person of the blessed Peter, that infallibility which the Holy Ghost, our Saviour, for the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and the salvation of Christian peoples, we teach and define, with the approbation of the Holy Council, that it is a dogma divinely revealed—that the Roman Pontiff when speaking ex cathedra, that is to say, when fulfilling the charge of pastor and doctor of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines that a doctrine regarding faith or morals ought to be held by the Universal Church; 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