REVISIONIST TRENDS IN THE ROMAN CHURCH

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WILL Roman Catholicism ever undertake the arduous task of adequate and drastic reform of her imposing institution? One may doubt the right of a non-Catholic to ask this question. Does it not appear to be a case of impertinent intrusion into the sacred precincts of another Faith? What about those in glass houses . . ? Let us emphasize at the outset that the question is put in all good faith with no intention of heaping gratuitous insult upon a Church that has had a glorious history. What happens to this powerful Church is of deep concern to all Christians. Note the significant statement of Dr. F. L. Cross in "The Church Quarterly Review," April, 1933, in which he voices his grave concern at the condemnation of liberal movements by Pius X, claiming that it constitutes "one of the greatest theological misfortunes of modern times," then adding ominously that "upon the development and success of a second Modernist Movement in the Roman Catholic Church the ultimate future of Christian culture in Western Europe, humanly speaking, depends."

A brief look into the recent past may give us a basis for reaching at least tentative conclusions. Perhaps they may support the hope of a Lamennais or a Dante that at some future time a "papa angelico" may appear who actually will accomplish the seemingly impossible — the radical alteration of the Roman Catholic Church into a real semblance to the Ideal. This hope received dramatic representation in Fogazzaro's "Il Santo" where the actual Pope, however, could not quite see the feasibility of adopting the radical changes which he admits are necessary. In arguing with the Saint he states that he must needs set his pace to suit the speed of the slowest, to the plodding millions rather than to the few advanced scholars. Some day, perchance, the rigid immovability of the imposing institution may give way — or is the hierarchy of Romanism definitely and irretrievably committed to an unchanged and unchanging Traditionalism?

The average historian usually finds evidence of changes in the development of the historic Church, but his Roman Catholic critic will plead that the modifications referred to must be regarded as fuller elucidations of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, that is, the Apostolic Saints who originally gave the complete ecclesiastical and doctrinal blue-print of the Church that was to be. The origins of all so-called later developments are to be found in germ form in the original constitution of the Church. Thus Transubstantiation, definitely set forth by Paschasius Radbertus in the ninth century, and defined as dogma in the Lateran Council of 1215, is of the essence of the Eucharist as instituted by Christ. And Papal Infallibility, only dimly glimpsed by the Ancient Church, more clearly discerned by Medieval theologians, held true of the popes from the very beginning, Peter having been as infallible as Pius IX.

Millions of people are and, perhaps, always will be attracted to a hoary institution, "semper eadem," to something changeless, abiding, tangible that alters not amid the disconcerting changes of the world — a Light that shines constant "amid the encircling gloom." It must be granted that the Roman Church has remained surprisingly and steadfastly true to certain so-called fundamentals in spite of changing environments. The historian is sometimes amazed at the unchangable front that the Church has maintained, even though

temporary adjustments have been made and momentary expedients adopted. Some of these, it is true, were incorporated to become part of the permanent structure. The Church has been blessed or cursed, according to one's point of view, in being guided by the ancient Roman genius for order, law, unity, uniformity, and comprehensiveness which usually acted as a stabilizing factor against the adoption of alien innovations which might have been fatal to the life of the institution. Again the Roman apologist would demur in his contention that Divine Providence was the chief stabilizing factor. Without ignoring relevant theological implications in our present study, we might better stick to mundane historical factors.

Practically all historians are agreed that the original Church, when treading upon Gentile soil, became more or less Hellenized, decidedly Romanized (in the West) and then progressively colored by the various social and mental climates through which she passed as she gradually became European and Western. In the process a number of reform waves arose, some like Montanism or Donatism, to be cast out, others like Monasticism to be absorbed and utilized for the purposes of ecclesiastical aggrandisement. Early efforts toward the establishment of episcopalism or the founding of provincial or 'national' churches were invariably suppressed. Witness the victory of Rome's universalism over the Keltic Church and over the upsurge of Episcopal autonomy under Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims. In the modern era the spirit of Gallicanism arose to challenge papal dictatorship but met with only temporary success; Febronianism in Germany with even less; and Americanism with least of all. As a result of these "victories" a strongly centralized papal universalism won the field and now can be said to be definitely in the saddle.

In the realm of thought the attempt to retain an unchanging status quo was less successful. Latin Christianity, as we know, came to terms with ancient learning and achievement, adopting to its own uses much of the Graeco-Roman culture. During the Renaissance, at least up to the time when Protestant "connivance" with certain Humanists made it a thing to be viewed with suspicion, the late Medieval Church took on considerable humanistic color. In the period following, after the temporary humanistic relapse, the Tridentine Church, now definitely Roman, exhibited a pronounced trend toward ancient and medieval Traditionalism, eager to repudiate any attempts to force her to come to terms with the spirit of emerging modernism. Of official Romanism it can be said that she now poses as the sole depository of the original "Depositum Fidei." This deposit includes the sacraments, dogmas, and the essential elements of the hierarchy. This deposit was transmitted intact and whole to the successor of St. Peter, St. Linus, and then on through an unbroken succession. Nowhere was it altered in its essentials. However, at certain providential occasions it has been more fully defined, explained, or illustrated. What was implicit in the beginning was made more explicit. Fuller explication, it must be understood, does not mean innovation, nor is it to be equated with an historical process of evolution which involves an additional substantial increment to the Faith.

With this set type of ecclesiastical mind the Roman Church entered the modern scene with its scientific spirit, its Biblical criticism, its theories of evolution and of development, its pragmatism, and its relativism. Roman Catholicism and the spirit of modernity were fated to meet in a head-on collision. Since one cannot shoot an idea, liberal ideas in some form were bound to penetrate the walls erected by a frightened Curia to keep them out.

Moreover, since these liberal trends largely constitute whatever efforts toward reform were instituted, we must consider them in an attempt to answer our question: "Will the Roman Church reform?"

I. Liberal Catholicism

In an illuminating article in The Harvard Theological Review (July, 1922) George La Piana asserted that nothing new has been added to the science of Scholastic Theology since Bellarmine and Suarez. But that attempts of a revisionist nature were made to modify the theological status quo cannot be denied. Descartes cast his spell upon some Roman Catholic thinkers. Others were influenced by Kant. George Herme (Catholic Faculty at Bonn) for instance, used Kant and Hegel to support his opposition to Scholastic rationalism, while Antonius Guenther of Vienna boldly asserted that the self-consciousness of the individual and not Church dogma must be regarded as the basis of religion. The never failing ecclesiastical censure for those who depart from the beaten path, was duly meted out to both thinkers.

One of the first group attempts to bring Romanism into closer harmony with modern culture arose, curiously enough, in a setting where one would least expect it, stimulated as it was by the intransigent Ultramontanism of Joseph de Maistre's famous book, "Du pape" (1817). Here we are admonished that the sole cure for the evils of modern society, an outgrowth and inevitable result of license and excessive liberty, was to be found in a thorough-going application of absolute papal power. An early and ardent exponent of this strange theory was Felicite de Lamennais who reasoned that the new aspirations for popular liberty would find their true and best support in the Roman hierarchy. How naive! Instead of papal approval, condemnation ought to have been expected. It came, including in its scope two notable supporters of Lamennais, the fiery preacher, Lacordaire, and the eminent Catholic laymen, Montalembert. The latter two ultimately submitted, but the former, a disillusioned man, died (1854) outside the Roman fold.

One result of liberal activities was the founding of Catholic universities presumably to sponsor free inquiry and liberal education. One of these institutions, the Institute Catholicque of Paris, actually became the stronghold of later liberal trends. But the real problem was not solved because the issue was not met. The Achilles heel of the movement was its failure to recognize that the theological liberalism must undergird political liberalism. Perhaps Vidler* is right in suggesting that "the gulf between the Catholic faith on the one hand and Rationalist philosophy and criticism on the other seemed so immense that the possibility of trying to bridge it was not even considered."

The impact of the modern spirit was more pronounced in Germany, where world famous Protestant theological scholars could not fail to exert some influence upon their Roman conferees. Thus the Catholic Faculty at Tuebingen began the task of theological reconstruction along lines similar to the epoch-making work of Schleiermacher. Religion, it was asserted, was to be centered more precisely in experience and less in dogma or in moral conduct. The Catholic theologians appeared to maintain a better balance between cognition, feeling, and morality than the Protestant Scheiermacher, whom they highly esteemed. Headed by the historian Moeller, they freely entered the Biblical critical field, declaring that Roman Catholics had less to fear from it than Protestantism which emphasized

* Alec R. Vidler, *The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church, p.* 31. A reliable, fair-minded, scholarly account.

the letter of Scripture. One reason why Moeller and his friends were not summarily thrown out was due, perhaps, to their unobtrusive ways, their submission to Church authority, and to the emergence of another and more dangerous group under the dynamic leadership of Doellinger of Munich.

The most theological of historians, as Doellinger has been called, found himself unable to tolerate the Church's legendary presentation of early church history. At the famous Munich Congress of 1863 he advanced still farther in his declaration that the Roman Church could no longer escape her obligation of coming to terms with the best in modern thought. The Encyclical of Errors was regarded with lofty disdain. The Vatican decrees, however, elicited violent oppostion on his part and brought excommunication. Oddly enough, he never joined the schismatic Old Catholic Church, perchance sensing the essential weakness of its negative protest. He might have become the spearpoint of a new vitalizing "Reformskatholizismus," had he so desired, in association with Moeller and Kraus the church historians and Schell the theoligian.

In England Lord Acton, writer and historian, advocated thorough-going critical research irrespective of the results it might have upon the Church. In other words, historical facts, if well authenticated, were to be accepted as such even though they "supplied arguments against the Church." After all, he claimed, we can and ought to make some distinction between the great defined dogmas of the Church and all sorts of loose doctrines floating around. Aided by liberal friends he published "The Rambler" to promote his views, contending that Science and Faith were in two distinct fields and therefore need not be in conflict. Dogmatic Orthodoxy, however, would not accept this over-simplified solution. Although eventually receiving papal condemnation, the movement helped to create a mental climate which looked with favor upon some rapprochment with modern culture. Thus ended in an inglorious anti-climax the attempt of liberal leaders to change the attitude of Roman Orthodoxy toward what they considered to be legitimate demands of the scientific mind.

II. Modernism

Ultramontanism sensed the approach of a more serious foe, relegated the liberal Catholics to oblivion, and began to consolidate its positions to prevent greater injury to the Holy Sanctuary. The man who has been called the "father of Modernism" would have repudiated the ascription of the term to himself, for he considered himself a loyal upholder of traditional orthodoxy. John Henry Newman unwittingly became the sponsor of a hated and feared modernity because his own questioning mind brought him to some original conclusions which later Modernists felt constituted grist for their own mills. His theory of development in particular was a germinal thought of great value eliciting from Loisy the fulsome praise that in Newman he saw the most open-minded theologian since Origen. One can easily imagine how a Modernist would acclaim the happy phrasing of Newman: "to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often," or again "one cause of corruption in religion is the refusal to follow the course of doctrine as it moves on."

Although later Modernists saw much more in these words than Newman ever contemplated, it is not difficult to interpret his own meaning. As a student of doctrinal development the English mystic could not accept the old Vicentian formula of doctrinal orthodoxy as that which was believed always, everywhere, and by all. Neither could he accept Harnack's concept of change, which, according to Pfleiderer

was a "progressive obscuration of the truth" originally given in the Apostolic age. Instead, his approach to Christian history demanded the acceptance of an original absolute truth communicated once for all by Jesus and the first inspired Teachers, the seed or germ of which gradually grew as a plant, and as a plant needing time for its fuller growth. Although a fungus growth may attach itself to the Church tree, it is alien and to be cast off. That is the meaning of the Church's condemnation of heresies. What the Montanists, the mystic sects, Quakers and others implied in their conceptions of progressive revelation or personal inspiration was equally to be condemned. For the Church has in her keeping the original "depositum fidei" to which nothing that is radically different can ever be added.

Notwithstanding Newman's desperate attempt to remain orthodox and in harmony with the traditional faith, his theory of development served as a green light for those of a reformist interest. To have of man of his prestige to whom one could appeal for moral and intellectual support was an asset eagerly to be grasped. Then when Leo XIII, in contrast to Pius IX, began to show a decided bent toward free inquiry, the liberals rejoiced. At this stage they did not realize that behind Leo's urbanity and his interest in learning, he masked a deep desire to defend papal prerogative since at heart he always was a consistent Ultramontanist. To be sure, wider research was permitted, the Vatican Library was opened to all, and a greater impetus was given to the revival of the Thomist philosophy. But everything was to be done under the watchful eye of the Curia, as the Modernists found out to their grief. At the time, however, an atmosphere of hope was created in which Loisy and other liberals felt constrained to do something. The time seemed opportune to bring about a real reform within the Church, a reform that would transform the traditional institution into a dynamic spiritual agency capable of coping with all pressing problems of the modern age.

Into the dramatic and checkered career of Alfred Loisy we need not go. Suffice it to say that he originally thought that Roman Catholicism could be so modified that some sort of a "modus operandi" might be established between the Institution and the highest expressions of modern culture. The Roman Church, he averred, was not to be identified with an "unbending traditional orthodoxy," whose very finality defied all attempts at modification. In answer to Harnack's famous treatise, "Das Wesen des Christentums" (1900), Loisy wrote an equally trenchant brochure, "L'Evangile et l'Eglise" (1902) which later was to receive the Vatican's scorching denunciation as the "synthesis of all the heresies."

Loisy sought to refute Harnack's claim that the Church in its historical development constituted a "progressive abasement of religion." Against the Protestant historian the French theologian likewise asserted that the essence of faith could not be circumscribed within certain alleged norms originally given and then, according to Harnack, later debased. On the contrary, that essence is to be found in the whole historical process. Whatever common features have been preserved or developed in the Church in its historical development constitute the essence of the Christian Faith. In the process of time progressive transformation would take place in accordance with varying needs, but these, if arising in response to genuine spiritual needs, were to be considered in harmony with the essential core. In this connection the French Modernist daringly suggested that the extreme centralization of authority in the papacy, arising to meet the normal needs of the past, might be modified in

view of present or future needs. Doctrinal as well as institutional development and change was to be regarded as a normal and necessary process and not to be feared. Our appreciation of the past and its rich legacy ought not to check our efforts to adapt the Church to the ever changing conditions of the present, to the end that greater agreement be established between dogma and science, the Church and society.

Since this cautiously written and eminently fair presentation sought to disclose the weakness of liberal Protestantism, it deserved Vatican approval. This reasoning of the Modernists, however, received a rude shock, for the book was condemned by the Hierarchy. It was just a little bit too historical. It violated an inexorable law of Catholicity — historical fact was never to become the judge of dogmatic fact. The latter invariably stood as the supreme judge as to what was to be accepted or rejected. Loisy's subsequent battle in behalf of biblical criticism as an autonomous science which could brook no Church dictation as to its course of procedure, made his positions clearer but more untenable within the Roman Church. The question arose concerning what Leo XIII, the patron of learning, would do with this new prophet of learning and reform. Would he come to the defence of one who was writing in the higher interests of the Church against those within the fold who were sticklers for the ecclesiastical status quo? For one reason or another Leo always temporized when reactionaries, especially the Jesuits, demanded the ecclesiastical condemnation of the French iconoclast.

Pius X, on the contrary, far beneath his predecessor in learning and statesmanship, did not temporize. Where Leo may have seen some aspects of value in the contentions of the liberal thinkers, Pius saw none. Where Leo might have come to some terms with the forward looking minority using his rare gift of statecraft in fusing the conservatives and liberals into an enforced unity, Pius saw nothing but danger to Holy Church in such a policy. Activated by a natural conservative bent which the reactionary and dominant majority ardently promoted, the Pope had Loisy condemned and his books put on the Index. The fate of the latter took on the elements of tragedy. After a period of abject submission, he finally rebelled against committing "intellectual and moral suicide," retracting a partial submission he had sent to Cardinal Merry del Val. The final, definitive action came in the Papal Encyclical "Pascendi," 1907, which utterly condemned Modernism. With the inevitable decree of excommunication, Loisy left his Church and up to his death was a free-lance thinker and writer, making no claims that he still belonged to the true Catholic Church, as Tyrrell and others had done. Loisy was perhaps too violent. His methods were more after the manner of Luther than of Erasmus. But even if he had been more tactful and gracious, and less drastic in his proposals of reform, one could hardly expect the Roman Curia as then constituted to approve the advanced revisionist measures proposed by Modernism.

The English Jesuit, Father Tyrrell, went even farther than Loisy in his early proposals, in advocating the abandonment of part of the Church's traditional inheritance insisting that honest scholarship could not re-state the whole "depositum fidei" in conformity with the facts of historical criticism. Indeed, the Church's oracular principle of revelation was no longer tenable and stood in need of clarification. After all, the fixed center of Christianity was not to be found in dogma, but in spirit or idea embodied in a Person. Although the ultimate object of our Faith may be regarded as fixed and final, the theological explanations of the same must be

put in a different category, that of relativity.

One suggestion coming from him was to be repeated in a remarkable document which we have reserved for final consideration — the suggestion namely that in the coming creation of a still "unformulated Catholicism" the present Church like Judaism might "have to die in order that it might live again in a greater and grander form? Has not every organism its limits of development after which it must decay, and be content to survive in its progeny?" This idea is not unlike the relativistic liberalism in Protestantism as noted by Prof. E. E. Aubrey:* "There can be no final Christian belief in a changing world. The search for the essence of Christianity was therefore abandoned, and truth was identified with greatest probability."

Tyrrell's opposition to the concept of an unchanging dogmatic system, however, did not imply a desire on his part to equate Christianity with an evolutionary process that had no permanent content. Christianity presented certain objective, once-for-all ultimates, such as God and the Incarnation. What he objected to was the ascription of unchanging finality of absolute truth to our theological formulas. Unlike Protestant liberalism, Tyrrell consistently maintained that reformation must be one within the Mother Church, seeking the preservation of essential Catholicism. On the other hand, the Church must consciously and continually try to meet the world's deepest current needs. Official Catholicism, he averred, failed in both respects.

"Christianity at the Cross Roads" has been aptly called the swan-song of Modernism for in it Tyrrell bequeathed a dilemma which apparently could not be solved within the Roman Church, unless, perchance, that Church were to undergo a violent revolution. Loisy felt that the death of his English co-worker really ended the Modernist attempt to reform the Church. With all his splendid ardor and high idealism Tyrrell was, so Loisy thought, too much of a Protestant in his mystical individualism to warrant any hope for a successful issue in his conflict with the Roman Hierarchy. And yet, Tyrrell died professing faith in true Catholicism against its Ultramontane aberrations. Unfortunately for him, the "Aberrations" had the last word.

Taking its cue from Leo XIII the Roman Hierarchy earlier had tried to smother the growth of protests by a re-emphasis and a modernized re-statement of Scholasticism particularly in its Thomistic version. Great hopes were entertained for the future with the Angelic Doctor as a revived Dante's Virgil to guide men through the labyrinthian paths and by-ways of the modern purgatorial intellectual world with its disconcerting confusions and dangerous errors. One good result was the revival of Medieval historical studies; another was the attempt to understand modern science and the scientific method to which, presumably, scholastic thought was to be adapted. However, to keep out vagaries of the human mind, Leo XIII had created the Biblical Commission which was supposed to differentiate the spurious from the genuine results of Biblical and critical studies. This Commission might have been of greater service had not Pius X added a larger number of reactionary members.

Although not a Modernist the great Cardinal Mercier, who had been professor in the neo-Thomistic University of Louvain, spoke in behalf of a larger freedom within the confines of a sound orthodoxy. His words bear repeating;*

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* "Religious Bearings of the Modern Scientific Movement," p. 373, in *Environmental Factors in Christian History.*

* Quoted by George la Piana in The Harvard Theological Review (July, 1922).

"We must not handle the problems of chemistry, of biology, those of history or of social economy, with the preconceived purpose of finding in them confirmation of our religious beliefs." As a reward for his sensible demand in behalf of free and unhampered religious inquiry the Cardinal was flooded with protests from the Ultramontane wing. Obviously the Church at large was not ready for an allopathic dose of the scientific method.

La Piana furnishes a brilliant interpretation** of the basic difficulties involved in any attempted revision of Romanism. "It (the program of the reformists) rests on an implicit acknowledgment that Catholic theology is in need of a radical revision in the light of history and of a philosophy more flexible than the rigid Thomistic intellectualism; but at the same time that such a revision is not to be made with open frankness, as the Modernists attempted to do, and that it must neither appear as a break with the past nor as a surrender to the claims of modern science." This was obviously an order too large for even the astute leaders of the Roman Church.

We have thus seen that attempts to give Roman Catholicism a modern orientation failed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The imposing and absolutist Hierarchy, fearful of innovation and of independent research, was victorious all along the line. Where a mild liberalism of the Lacordaire type was barely able to survive, denatured and clipped of real significance. Modernism obviously had no chance. All clergy were compelled to take the anti-Modernist oath. In a recent revision of Canon Law, all powers are definitely and irrevocably centered in the Papacy. The Catholic Church today is, consequently, an absolutist, Roman, Ultramontane Papalism.

A few indications of a contrary trend cannot materially alter the picture as presented. Grandmaison, for instance, has shown commendable open-mindedness to certain phases of the critical movement without receiving eclesiastical censure. Duchesne, on the other hand, after giving to the world one of the best histories of the Ancient Church, was condemned, we might add, for being too historical. Karl Adam may be cited* as an independent thinker who boldly criticizes some of the old methods and who shows some respect for non-Catholic thinkers, maintaining that the Roman Church is not an enemy to sober criticism, since she welcomes the assured results of the so-called histrico-critical method.

III. A New Catholicism

Of greater significance than the aforementioned hesitant gestures in the direction of progressive thinking is the trumpet blast of reform advocated by a number of Roman clergy and laymen in the book, "Der Katholizismus," published in 1937. It makes one feel that at long last we have some signs of an awakening from Medieval slumbers and of a possible change for the better within the inner confines of the Roman Church. This remarkable and truly significant book was to have appeared under the name of Rudolph Otto, who was preparing a Preface just before his untimely death. It is edited by Gustav Mensching of the University of Bonn. The names of the authors are not mentioned for obvious reasons.

The argument runs somewhat as follows. We are facing a profound spiritual crisis. But the panaceas so far proposed by Roman Catholicism are deemed woefully inadequate, such as Neo-Thomism, a revived liturgical symbolism, Catholic Action, or more pronounced asceticism. Barnacles have fastened themselves upon the structure of the Church and too often are represented as being of the essence of Christianity.

** Ibid.

* In his notable contribution — *Das Wesen des Katholizismus.*

The Church is in desperate straits. She is in need of a drastic operation for the removal of extraneous growths permitting the proper functioning of spiritual organs and agencies which have lost their vitality through disuse. The eternally valid essence of the Church can emerge and thrive only after the temporally relative aspects and forms have perished. To bring about this transformation may require a catastrophic revolution, a change in the very heart and structure of the Church. It demands a willingness on the part of the Church to consider whatever sound historical science may have to offer on the founding of the Church, on belief in miracles, on the critical study of the Bible, on clerical celibacy and other burning questions of the day. The authors' comprehensive treatment and cogent argumentation presents a challenging appeal to the Hierarchy to act before it is too late.

That they might be linked up with the Modernists or even with the Protestants, the writers categorically deny. Both of these movements, it may be added, receive extensive and critical appraisals. Toward Protestantism, indeed, the authors are refreshingly fair, recognizing its aspects of value and strength. The members of their own Church are admonished that they need the pioneering spirit and the radical thought trends found in the sister Faith. Into the social and philosophical problems, ably discussed in the book, we need not enter; nor into the scholarly presentation of the great teachings of the historic Church.

Of special interest to our present study are the proposals of reform. Briefly stated, the book proposes: the employment of the vernacular in the liturgy; the creation of a "Volksbibel," an authentic version of the Scriptures for all the people; a greater emphasis upon preaching as organic to the worship service; utilization of the laity in preaching and teaching missions; granting to them more extensive rights and larger authority in church councils; and the abrogation of clerical celibacy as a mandatory canon (a refreshingly frank discussion). Finally, the suggestion is made that the papacy be limited by the introduction of greater episcopal authority and more frequent conciliar pronouncements. The Church, in short, is to become the vitalizing spiritual agency she was intended to be, freeing herself from political aspiration and from secular motives leading to institutional aggrandisement.

The book closes on a high prophetic note with a clarion call to all Christians to unite on the supreme fundamentals of the Faith, making possible a truly great Christian synthesis. This, however, is not to be confused with organic union. Each of the great denominations has something to contribute. Though changes may come and outward forms perish, essential Christianity, the authors triumphantly proclaim, will always persist.

Basing our judgment upon past performances, we can easily conjecture what will happen to this most recent "Reform the Church in Head and Members." These twentieth century 95 Theses, unfortunately ,came at a most inopportune time. However that may be, can we not say that so long as the Vatican is dominated by the Ultramontane party and the Jesuits, reforms that really matter will go a-begging. Unfortunately for the world, the long hoped for reform within the Roman Church must wait for more propitious times. The exigencies of the War and the rise of Nazi tyranny seemed to offer grounds for hope that the Curia might be willing to cooperate with Protestantism and perhaps, in time, recognize it as a branch of world Christianity. That hope has come and gone. The old mother Church with its center in the Eternal City still confronts the world in a spirit of proud defiance, non-cooperative, unchanging, intransigent, aloof.