

[1946. *And Still Our Ancient Foe, The Witness Oct., 6, 12*]

## **And Still Our Ancient Foe**

Gordon H. Clark

IN THE month of October Protestants sometimes celebrate Reformation Sunday. Perhaps the Lutherans observe this day more faithfully than the other denominations, though it is to be hoped that no Protestant has forgotten the events of the sixteenth century. Romanism is with us yet; its evils are the same; and its power is great. Both in the popular magazines and in the movies the Roman church obtains frequent and favorable publicity. During and since World War II, the pope, following the custom of his predecessors through history, has tried to insert himself into international politics, while his bishops and priests reach down into the local politics of every city ward. Therefore instead of foolishly ignoring this powerful organization, Protestants ought to observe the day of their birth, remember why they came into being, and remain alert to the significance of the opposing principles.

In so short a space only a few of the principles, political and religious, can be mentioned; and while the strictly religious matters are the more important, a little must first be said about politics.

Notorious is the history of popish meddling in affairs of state. The Jesuits at one time in the past became so obnoxious that they were expelled from one country after another. At present the Roman hierarchy is forming political parties in the countries of Europe; and a slight acquaintance with Argentina and French Canada, not to mention Spain, gives evidence that the papal system is not only religious, but is also a political organization.

A clear statement of some of the basic, Romish political principles is found in the papal encyclical, *Imortale Dei*, published by Leo XIII in 1885. Among many other things it says:

“There once was a time when the priesthood and the government were happily united by concord and a friendly exchange to offices. And the state composed in that fashion produced in the opinion of all more excellent fruits . . . ”

To say that such was *the opinion of all* is ludicrously tragic when we remember the fifty or seventy thousand Huguenots whom a Roman Catholic government massacred on St. Bartholomew's eve. To some people the religious wars, the persecutions, the Holy Inquisition, may seem like ancient history that ought to be forgotten. But let it be borne in mind that the pope in these latter days was not averse to having Mussolini capture Ethiopia for him and that a determined effort has been made to prevent Protestant missionaries from going to South America. Rome is still in politics.

The encyclical, after speaking of the “dreadful and deplorable zeal for revolution which was aroused” by Luther and Calvin, makes this assertion about government:

“The uncontrolled power of thinking and publicly proclaiming one’s thoughts has no place among the rights of the citizens, and cannot in any way be reckoned among those things which are worthy of favor or defense.”

Here are the words of a pope who is supposed to be infallible. Infallible or not, he assuredly voices the views and hopes and principles of Romanism. And in the clearest terms the pope repudiates the freedom of religion and the freedom of speech of the press. Rome is in politics, and its aim is to suppress Protestant freedom.

Although it is not necessary to quote from other writers on a matter where the pope has spoken, it is none the less instructive to consider a volume, *Catholic Principles of Politics*, republished in 1940 by John A. Ryan and F. P. Bowland. This book carries the *Imprimatur* of Archbishop (now cardinal) Francis J. Spelman, and is consequently an authoritative source of information. The authors teach (pp. 298-300) that it is a fatal error to exclude the Romish church from the power of making laws. This seems to imply that priests should sit in Congress, and it involves all the evils of clericalism that have plagued Europe for centuries. The book also teaches that, while unbaptized persons (i.e. Protestants) may worship secretly in their homes, the State should prohibit public preaching in Protestant churches (p. 316).

These are the avowed aims of Roman politics; this is their program for the United States of America; comment is hardly necessary.