

**THE PROGRAMME OF MODERNISM; A
REPLY TO THE ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS
X., PASCENDI DOMINICI GREGIS;
WITH THE TEXT OF THE ENCYCLICAL
IN AN ENGLISH VERSION**

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The programme of modernism; a reply to the encyclical of Pius X., *Pascendi dominici gregis*;
with the text of the encyclical in an English version by George Tyrrell & A. Leslie Lilley

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GEORGE TYRRELL & A. LESLIE LILLEY

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THE PROGRAMME OF MODERNISM

A REPLY

TO THE ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS X., *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*
WITH THE TEXT OF THE ENCYCLICAL IN AN ENGLISH VERSION

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

REV. FATHER GEORGE TYRRELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

A. LESLIE LILLEY

VICAR OF ST. MARY'S, PADDINGTON GREEN, LONDON

“That that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off.”—*Zechariah*, xi, 9.

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not: lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall possess the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”—*Isaiah*, liv, 2-3.

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INTRODUCTION

THOUGH written for Roman Catholics by Roman Catholics, the message of the following pages concerns a far wider world than that of even the largest Christian communion. Obviously it concerns every Christian body, without distinction, for they are all in some measure pressed by those problems which have now become so acute in the Roman Church—problems whose roots are in an age prior to the Protestant Reformation, prior to the schism of East and West, and whose fibres run up through all the diverging branches into which Christendom has been divided. Nay, more, those very divisions are, to a large extent, the result of a failure to appreciate the problems in question, and of a superficial estimate of the radical principles at issue. Such failure was perhaps inevitable before the accumulating evidence of historical and biblical criticism had lit up the darkness of the past with a brilliancy previously unattainable. In that light, the controversies that divide Christians seem trivial beside that in which they are forcibly united to-day for the defence of their common presuppositions. It seems more and more likely every day that this

great controversy of faith with unfaith may drive them to seek refuge on a higher and firmer ground, where doctrinal and institutional differences will diminish if not vanish altogether. If such a ground is to some extent sketched out in this *Programme of Modernism*, it is not because that programme is less deeply and distinctively Catholic than that of Mediaevalism, but because it is more so. And similarly, in the measure that other denominations "look unto the rock whence they were hewn"; in the measure that they search back to the root of their doctrinal and institutional life, namely, to those experiences of faith—of the Fatherhood of God, the atoning power of Christ, the consolation of the indwelling spirit—of which outward religion is but the instrument and expression, they will cease, not to value, but to over-value those differences of form and formula which may continue to separate them from the ancient and world-wide Catholic tradition. Heretofore re-union has been sought through the very principle of division—through a forced and artificial agreement on questions, not of faith, but of theology or observance viewed as of primary and essential importance. And such unity, bearing the seed of division in its heart, has always been short-lived. "Except the Lord build the house their labour is but lost that build it." No council, however universally representative, could effect more than a tempor-

ary and unstable compromise. No stable unity can be effected but by the slow self-revelation of irresistible Truth, whose forward march, like that of a glacier, none can withstand. "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." This unity, which the pressure of accumulating evidence is forcing upon Christians, is not so much sought as found. A fog has lifted, and we who deemed ourselves far asunder find ourselves close together.

But the problems handled in this *Programme* affect not only Christianity, but religion in general. God wills, and wills effectively, that all men should be saved and should come to a knowledge of such truth as is needed for their salvation. When men knew but a corner of the world, and but a page or two of its voluminous history, it was possible to believe that God willed all men to be formally Christians, and not merely Christians in spirit. That is no longer possible. A knowledge and comparison of the countless religions of the present and of the past, a recognition of the psychological incapacity of all but a fraction of humanity to apprehend the theological conceptions of one particular race and epoch, force us, under pain of scepticism and pessimism, to acknowledge in every religion an effort of the all pervading Word to reveal the Father in forms and symbols suited to the mental and moral conditions

of its votaries. It is Christ who has taught us that if salvation is pre-eminently of the Jews it is also in due measure of the Samaritans and the Gentiles. And the same note has been struck even more clearly by S. Paul, S. Justin, S. Clement of Alexandria, S. Augustine. To feel this relation of fraternity between the various members of the religious family is to be a Catholic; to deny it is to be a sectarian. Yet it can never be felt so long as we confound those inward experiences, which are the substance of faith, with their outward doctrinal and institutional expressions, and try to see in these latter the embryonic forms of Christian dogma and observance. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." It is in the inward experiences, not in their outward manifestations, that the parentage of religions is to be sought. Here, undoubtedly, the *Programme* penetrates the deeper and better mind of Christian Catholicism in a way that was hardly possible for scholastic theology with its narrow aprioristic outlook upon history. If no man can come to the Father but through Christ, if there is no other Name given under Heaven through which men may be saved, yet Christ is an ineffable Spirit who, under a thousand ever unworthy names, strives ceaselessly with every human soul and conscience, however ignorant of His historical manifestation as Jesus of Nazareth.

If, then, Modernism opens a possible way to a more or less explicit unity of spirit, and even uniformity of expression, among the severed branches of Christendom, it acknowledges among all the religions of the world a certain unity in variety as of many mansions in the House of the Universal Father. He who is scandalised at this would have been scandalised at Christ.

But though this movement in the Roman Church towards a higher and truer expression of Catholicism interests religion directly, it is also inspired by a wider and deeper interest to which that of the various religious institutions is subservient; and its bearings on public life and civilisation, if more remote, are not less important and not less real. It is now many years since one of our leading sociologists pointed out the disaster threatening a civilisation entrusted solely to the competing forces of man's self-regarding instincts, unchecked and unqualified by those altruistic self-sacrificing ideals for which a practical and theoretical materialism finds no room or justification. It is manifest that selfishness is not less, but even more, effectual than selflessness in setting man's wits to work in its service, and that it can build up a civilisation that tends to become a veritable Kingdom of Self or Kingdom of Satan. But such a civilisation is essentially parasitic; and, if wholly victorious over its host, must prey upon itself