

violation of the divine law, since it sanctions and authorizes all violations of that law.

Liberalism is a heresy in the doctrinal order, because heresy is the formal and obstinate denial of all Christian dogmas in general. It sets aside dogma and replaces it with opinion. Consequently, it denies every doctrine in particular. If we were to examine all the doctrines of Christianity, which, within the range of liberalism, have been denied, we would find every Christian dogma rejected in one way or another, from the dogma of the Incarnation to that of Infallibility.

Nonetheless, Liberalism is in itself dogmatic; and it is in the declaration of its own fundamental dogma, the absolute independence of the individual and the social reason, that it denies all Christian dogmas in general. Catholic dogma is the authoritative declaration of revealed truth, or a truth founded upon revelation, by its infallibly constituted Church. This logically implies the obedient acceptance of the dogma on the part of the individual and of society. Liberalism refuses to acknowledge this rational obedience and denies the authority. It asserts the sovereignty of the individual and the social reason, and enthrones Rationalism in the seat of authority. It knows no dogma except the dogma of self-assertion. Hence, it is radical and fundamental heresy, the rebellion of human intellect against God.

Liberalism denies the absolute jurisdiction of Jesus Christ, who is God, over individuals and over society, and by consequence, repudiates the jurisdiction, which God has delegated to the visible head of the Church over the

faithful. It also denies the necessity of divine revelation and the obligation of every person to accept that revelation under pain of eternal damnation. In short, Liberalism sets itself up as the measure and rule of faith, and, so, shuts out revelation altogether. It denies everything which itself does not proclaim. It negates everything it does not affirm. The divinity of Jesus and the Church is beyond comprehension. Liberalism is the radical and universal denial of all divine truth and Christian dogma, and is the supreme rebellion against the authority of God and his Church. With the Evil One, its maxim is: "I will not serve."

Liberalism in the order of ideas is absolute error; in the order of facts, it is absolute disorder. It is therefore, in both cases a very serious and deadly sin, for sin is the rebellion against God in thought or deed, the elevation of the creature in the place of the creator.

Note: This article was adapted from *El Liberalismo es Pacado*: "Liberalism is a sin," by Don Felix Sarda y Salvany, a priest of Barcelona, Spain, published in 1886, translated into English and modified to American conditions. Sarda's work was carefully examined by the Congregation of the Faith, and found to be, "sound doctrine."

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Pamphlet 169

Is Liberalism a Sin?

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At any given time, disease germs seeking an environment in which to grow and destroy, assault our bodies. These germs look for people, whose immune systems have been weakened or depleted in order that they might propagate their own kind, undermining and sometimes destroying the health of its host. The only safeguard against the onslaughts of this enemy is a vigorous and healthy body with an adequate immune system to drive back the invader.

The same is true if we are subject to an infectious attack against the spiritual order. The Evil One and his minions are constantly looking to exploit our spiritual weaknesses; ready to destroy the weakened soul. To escape, our power to resist must be greater than the power of the attack. We must possess an interior spiritual strength to drive off the evil. There must be no place in the soul that is not filled by Christ.

Not only must we be alert to evils of the flesh, but the enemy will also try to make inroads through the intellect, disguised to deceive the unwary or imprudent. The Trojans open their city gates to their enemy under the impression that they were actually securing a valuable gift which would secure their safety and today their fatal experience has come down to us in the proverb:

"Beware of Greeks bearing gifts." Intellectual sluggishness, inexperience, ignorance, indifference, or even virtues such as

benevolence, generosity, and pity may be the unsuspecting way to open to the enemy. Then we are surprised when the adversary is in command of the castle.

We live in the midst of religious chaos. Protestantism with its sliding scale of creeds is simply an inclined plane into the abyss of positive unbelief. Our society is certainly not Christian. It has been estimated that over 130 million Americans have no religious affiliation. From this population of heretics and pagans, exudes an atmosphere filled with ideas poisonous to Catholic life, if allowed to take root in the heart and mind. To live securely among this population requires energy and a robust religious constitution.

It is natural that Protestantism and infidelity would find public expression. Our media is saturated with non-Catholic dogmatism. We cannot escape from this opposing spirit. It is constantly shoved in our faces, and enters through both eye and ear. It soothes and flatters; hates and curses, now threatens and now praises. But it is most dangerous when it comes to us under the guise of "liberality."

What is Liberalism?

Protestantism naturally gives way to toleration of error. Rejecting the principle of authority in religion, it has neither foundation nor clarity of faith. On the principle that every person may interpret the Scriptures according to the dictates of private judgment, it gives birth to endless contradictions and differences. Required by the law of its own powerlessness, because of the lack of any decisive authoritarian voice in matters of faith, it is

forced to recognize as valid and orthodox any belief that springs from the exercise of private judgment. Therefore it arrives at the conclusion that one creed is as good as another, and attempts to cloak this conclusion under the appearance of liberty of conscience. The individual interprets as he pleases, rejecting or accepting what he chooses. This is popularly called freedom of conscience. If one creed is as good as another, then no creed is as good as any. Taking the battlefield with the fatal weapon of Rationalism, infidelity has stormed and taken the very castle of Protestantism, which is helpless against the enemy of its own making.

We find as a result among the people of this country, with the exceptions of practicing Catholics, that authoritative and positive religion has met with utter disaster, and religious belief or unbelief have come to be mere matters of opinion. This is the heresy that constantly bombards us, flooding our current literature and our media. It is against this that we have to be always on guard. The more so as it insidiously attacks us on the grounds of a false charity or a false liberty.

Religion is the bond, which unites us to God, the alpha and omega of all-good. Infidelity, whether virtual as in Protestantism or explicit as in Agnosticism, breaks the bond, which binds men to God, and seeks to build a human society founded on the principle of man's independence.

In the assumption of the absolute sovereignty of the individual, that is, his entire independence from God, we find the common source of all evil. Secularization results when

Rationalism is made the measure and sum of all truth. Secularization denies any active intervention in the concerns of public and private life whatever they may be. This could also be defined as social atheism.

Rationalism finds its actions and expression in social and civil life in a thousand ways, and regardless of its diversification, there is always unity in its antagonism to Catholicism. Wherever it is found, Liberalism in its practical application is systematic warfare against the Church. Whether it calls itself liberty or government, or the state, or humanity, or reason, its fundamental characteristic is an uncompromising opposition to the Catholic Church.

Liberalism is a complex world in itself; it has its maxims, its fashions, its art, its literature, its diplomacy, its laws, its conspiracies, and its disguises. It is the world of the Evil One, disguised in our time under the name of liberalism, in radical opposition to the Church established by Jesus Christ.

Is Liberalism a Sin?

Liberalism, whether secular or religious, is a sin. In the doctrinal order it is heresy, and consequently a mortal sin against faith. In the practical order it is a sin against the commandments of God and of the Church, for it virtually transgresses all the commandments. To be more precise: in the doctrinal order, Liberalism strikes at the very foundations of faith; it is heresy radical and universal, because within it are all heresies. In the practical order it is a radical and universal