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Modernism and the American Catholic Church: Two Unpublished Essays by William Laurence Sullivan

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In 1907, Pope Pius X officially condemned “modernism” in the syllabus of errors *Lamentabili sane* (3 July) and in the lengthy encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* (8 September).¹ The encyclical represented modernism as a single, coherent system, “the synthesis of all heresies” (*Pascendi*, section 39), but with a number of facets: post-Enlightenment philosophical and theological ideas that were at variance with the Thomism advanced by Pius X’s predecessor, Leo XIII; the application of historical criticism to matters of faith and religion (Christian origins, the nature of dogma, sacraments, hierarchy) and what was perceived as a concomitant privileging of the natural, the inductive, the evolving, and the relative; historically grounded biblical criticism, which was reaching conclusions at odds with the traditional understanding of Scripture; and the advance of democracy and liberalism, which might challenge established Church polity as they continued to champion separation of church and state.

It was modernism within the Roman Catholic Church that chiefly concerned Pius X, but he contended that “[the modernists’] system means the destruction not of the Catholic religion alone but of all religion” (*Pascendi*, section 39). The modernists, who did not form the monolithic camp suggested by *Pascendi*, held a different view, of course. They saw themselves as engaging an ancient faith in necessary and fruitful dialogue with contemporary culture, convinced, as one of them put it, of “the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truth of [their] religion and the essential truth of modernity.”²

The modernism condemned by Pius X was a European phenomenon, but some American Catholics were touched by it. One of these was William Laurence

¹ The bibliography on Roman Catholic modernism is extensive. See, in English, A. R. Vidler, *The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church* (Cambridge, England, 1934); M. Ranchetti, *The Catholic Modernists: A Study of the Religious Reform Movement 1864–1907*, trans. I. Quigly (London, 1969); A. R. Vidler, *A Variety of Catholic Modernists* (Cambridge, England, 1970); B. M. G. Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism* (London, 1970); G. Daly, O.S.A., *Transcendence and Immanence: A Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (Oxford, 1980); L. R. Kurtz, *The Poli-*

tics of Heresy: The Modernist Crisis in Roman Catholicism (Berkeley, Cal., 1986); D. G. Schultenover, S.J., *A View from Rome* (New York, 1992). An English translation of *Lamentabili* may be found in Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism*, 242–48; *Pascendi* is translated into English in C. Carlen, I.H.M., ed., *The Papal Encyclicals 1903–1939* (Wilmington, N.C., 1981), 71–97.

² George Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* (London, 1910), 5.

Sullivan (1872–1935).³ Born in East Braintree, Massachusetts, of Irish Catholic immigrant parents and educated at the Jesuits' Boston College, Sullivan entered the diocesan seminary, St. John's, in Brighton, Massachusetts. But the diocesan priesthood was not to be his vocation. In September 1897 he joined the Paulists at their house of study at Catholic University in Washington, D.C.⁴ He was awarded the S.T.B. and ordained in 1899. After another year of study for the S.T.L. he began his varied career as a Paulist with mission preaching in the South.

Over the next years Sullivan became troubled by some aspects of historical and official Roman Catholicism and came more and more under the influence of the European Catholic modernists. He supported the founders of *The New York Review*, tellingly subtitled *A Journal of the Ancient Faith and Modern Thought*, and contributed three articles to it in 1905 and 1906. "Our purpose," Sullivan wrote much later in life of that short-lived review, "was . . . to bring to the knowledge of intelligent priests and lay-folk some of the critical and philosophical questions, which, sooner or later, they would have to face anyhow, and to give to these questions such solutions as a liberal and loyal Catholic scholarship could discover."⁵ But Sullivan was not able to combine liberalism and loyalty for very long. In May 1909, while assigned to a church in Austin, Texas, he decided to leave the Paulists,⁶ an inevitable step, given the intellectual and religious position he had reached. The encyclical *Pascendi*, Sullivan wrote in 1910, "would arrest the whole movement of the modern spirit." Pius X's campaign against modernism "is irreconcilable with civilization and is destructive of the religion of Jesus Christ."⁷

The 1907 assault on modernism was not the first papal condemnation that had disturbed Sullivan. In 1899, shortly before Sullivan's ordination, Pope Leo XIII had condemned a number of errors, "which some comprise under the head of Americanism," in *Testem benevolentiae*, a letter addressed to James Cardinal Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore.

In its larger sense, the term "Americanism" refers to a set of attitudes characteristic of a party of progressive American Catholics in the late nineteenth century: admiration of the American civil and social order and a desire to participate fully in American life, an eagerness to reduce the tensions that existed between Catholicism and American society, an openness to adapting Catholicism to its American milieu (and, more generally, to the new age that the United States heralded), and the conviction that Catholicism could thrive in the United States and that

³ On Sullivan's life and thought, see, in addition to his unfinished and posthumously published autobiography *Under Orders* (New York, 1944), the fundamental study by John Ratté in his *Three Modernists* (New York, 1967), where Sullivan is discussed in conjunction with two major European Catholic modernists, Alfred Loisy (1857–1940) and George Tyrrell (1861–1909); Warren E. Duclos, "Crisis of an American Catholic Modernist: Toward the Moral Absolutism of William L. Sullivan," *Church History* 41 (1972): 369–84; Michael B. McGarry, C.S.P., "Modernism in the United States: William Laurence Sullivan, 1872–1935," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 90 (1979): 33–52; Margaret Mary Reher, "Americanism and Modernism—Continuity or Discontinuity?" *U.S. Catholic Historian* 1 (1980–81): 87–103; R. Scott Appleby, "Modernism as the Final Phase of Americanism: William L. Sullivan, American Catholic Apologist, 1899–1910,"

Harvard Theological Review 81 (1988): 171–92. There is also much material to be exploited in the Sullivan papers at the Andover–Harvard Theological Library, Cambridge, Mass. In 1982 transcripts of Sullivan's letters of 1906–1910 to Estelle Throckmorton, whom he married in 1913, were added to the Andover–Harvard papers. For modernism generally in the United States, see now R. Scott Appleby, "Church and Age Unite!" *The Modernist Impulse in American Catholicism* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1992); he discusses Sullivan in chapter 5.

⁴ For the date see *Under Orders*, 56, and Sullivan's seminary diary, Sullivan papers, bMS 467/11 (32).

⁵ See Sullivan, *Under Orders*, 105–8.

⁶ For the date of his leaving the Paulists, see now his letters to E. Throckmorton of 1 May and 23 September 1909, from Kansas City, Sullivan papers, bMS 467/13.

⁷ *Letters to His Holiness Pope Pius X*, 2d ed. (Chicago, 1911), 7, 48.

European Catholics could learn something from the experiences of the American Church. Americanism had supporters and opponents in Europe as well as in the United States. When a French version of a laudatory American biography of Isaac Hecker (1819–1888) appeared in Paris in 1897, equipped with approving opening remarks by the Americanists John Ireland, archbishop of St. Paul, and the French editor Félix Klein, discussion and controversy heightened. Hecker, the American founder of the Paulists, was an Americanist hero. To Americanism's opponents, he was an advocate of wrong-headed compromise with the age. Leo XIII intervened, having decided that it was time to issue a warning against progressive excess. In *Testem* he delineated and condemned an erroneous Americanism that consisted of the following tendencies: the slighting or glossing over of "difficult" doctrines as a means of encouraging conversions to Catholicism; a desire for greater individual freedom within the Church; a belittling of the need for external spiritual direction; the favoring of natural and active over supernatural and passive virtues; and disparagement of the religious orders and their vows.⁸

Americanists responded to *Testem* by insisting that they did not hold the condemned views, that Leo XIII's encyclical attacked a misunderstood or misrepresented Americanism or Heckerism. Sullivan, one of those who regarded the Americanism of *Testem* as a "non-existent heresy," saw the pope's action as "a direct hit at the Paulists, for this terrible Americanist heresy was said to have originated in their founder, Father Hecker. The *Testem benevolentiae* was to me an abominable document, sufficiently snaky and insinuating to bring lasting reproach upon my beloved Paulists. . . . I interpreted it as the revenge of Latin ecclesiastics for our country's recent defeat of Catholic Spain."⁹ By 1910 Sullivan had come to regard the papal acts *Lamentabili*, *Pascendi* and *Testem* as manifestations of heavy-handed "Romanism," which was not to be equated with "Catholicism."¹⁰

In 1909–1910, while in retirement in Kansas City after leaving the Paulists, Sullivan was led to Unitarianism. In a letter of 4 September 1910 to Charles W. Wendte from Kansas City, the ex-Paulist writes: "While here I have attended the Unitarian church. . . . To all inquiries as to my religion I answer that I am a Unitarian; and indeed to this brotherhood of worshippers I feel the sense of filial attachment."¹¹ In 1912 Sullivan entered the Unitarian ministry and served the Unitarian Church with distinction until his death in 1935.¹²

During the transition years 1909 to 1912, Sullivan published the two works that have given him significance in the history of American Catholic modernism. The

⁸ See T. T. McAvoy, *The Great Crisis in American Catholic History 1895–1900* (Chicago, 1957), 379ff., for an English version of *Testem*.

⁹ *Under Orders*, 58, 62–63. McAvoy's *The Great Crisis* is the classic study of Americanism and the *Testem* affair. For a brief but excellent discussion of the European response to Americanism, see R. D. Cross, *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America*, 2d ed. (Chicago, 1968), 182–205. Much has been written on Catholic Americanism. I restrict myself to noting the following post-McAvoy works: T. E. Wangler, "The Birth of Americanism: 'Westward the Apocalyptic Candlestick,'" *Harvard Theological Review* 65 (1972): 415–36; G. P. Fogarty, S.J., *The Vatican and the Americanist Crisis: Denis J. O'Connell, American Agent in Rome, 1885–1903* (Rome, 1974); id., *The*

Vatican and the American Hierarchy from 1870 to 1965 (Stuttgart, 1982), *passim*; R. J. Daly, ed., *Rising from History: U.S. Catholic Theology Looks to the Future* (Lanham, Maryland, 1987), 49–100. For a good entrée into Hecker studies proper, see the recent J. Farina, *An American Experience of God: The Spirituality of Isaac Hecker* (New York/Ramsey, N.J., 1981), and Farina, ed., *Hecker Studies: Essays on the Thought of Isaac Hecker* (New York/Ramsey, N.J., 1983).

¹⁰ See, e.g., *Letters to His Holiness*, 5, 84, 190.

¹¹ Sullivan papers, bMS 467/10 (18).

¹² For a brief appreciation of Sullivan's role in American Unitarianism, see D. Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists* (Westport, Conn., 1985), 146–47, 324–25.

first of these anonymous publications, *Letters to His Holiness Pope Pius X*, which appeared in May 1910, was designated simply as “by a modernist.” In this work, imbued with the spirit of modern historical and biblical criticism, Sullivan rejected the orthodox doctrines of the atonement and the divinity of Christ; no wonder, then, that several reviewers described the author as a Unitarian.¹³ The second anonymous publication, “by the author of ‘Letters to His Holiness, Pope Pius X,’” was a novel titled *The Priest: A Tale of Modernism in New England*. In this work, which appeared about a year after *Letters to His Holiness*, Unitarianism is an explicit motif: the chief characters are a Catholic priest who becomes “modernized” and a Unitarian minister who respects Roman Catholicism, and a vision is offered of a church of the future that would combine the best elements of Catholicism and Unitarianism.¹⁴

In addition to the two published books, there are also two unpublished short essays from the same period in Sullivan’s religious evolution; these are preserved among the Sullivan papers at the Andover–Harvard Theological Library in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Like *The Priest*, they were intended to be published as “by the author of ‘Letters to Pius X.’” They continue to display that “mood of indignation” that Sullivan admitted was a feature of *Letters*.¹⁵ Several students of Sullivan’s life and thought have referred to and quoted briefly from these two essays, “The Final Phase of Modernism” (Sullivan papers, bMS 467/6 [11]) and “The Need of a Liberal Catholicism in America” (bMS 467/6 [19]).¹⁶ They are published here, in full, for the first time.

“The Final Phase of Modernism” makes an ironical point: by crushing modernism as a reformatory movement within the Roman Catholic Church, Pius X has actually awakened the modernists to a new sense of vocation and a full appreciation of the implications of their position. They must and can carry on their work. But in the final phase of modernism the movement is growing towards an “intellectually nobler and spiritually simpler outlook”; and modernists are turning “from serving a sect” — which has rejected them — “to the ministry of the spirit of man,” even if some of them elect to remain within the Catholic Church.¹⁷ This essay does display optimism of a sort, but Ratté may well be right in suggesting that “a good part of the optimism of this piece was self-encouragement in a time of trial,”¹⁸ that is, shortly after Sullivan’s abandonment of Catholicism and during his search for a new religious identity.

¹³ *Letters to His Holiness* is listed in the 14 May 1910 issue of *The Publishers’ Weekly*. See *Letters to His Holiness*, 86–87, 242, 272, 275–76. Reviews: C. W. Harvey, *New Church Review* 17 (1910): 471; *The Pacific Baptist*, 1 December 1910, 4; *The Sun* (New York), 28 May 1910, 7; F. K. N[o]yes, *Volta Review* 12 (1910–11): 228. The reviewer for the *Chicago Daily News*, 10 June 1910, wrote that “there is nothing more radical and destructive [than the book’s modernism] in any body calling itself Christian, not in unitarianism itself.”

¹⁴ *The Priest* is listed in the 1 April 1911 issue of *The Publishers’ Weekly*. On Sullivan’s novel, see Ratté, *Three Modernists*, 297–316; on fiction inspired by the modernist movement, see Vidler, *A Variety of Catholic Modernists*, 153–55. For anonymity (and pseudonymity) among modernists, see E. Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique dans la crise moderniste*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1979), 621ff.

¹⁵ Letter of Sullivan to C. W. Wendte from Kansas City, 4 September 1910, Sullivan papers, bMS 467/10 (18).

¹⁶ See Ratté, *Three Modernists*, 261–63; McGarry, *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 90 (1979): 41; Reher, *U.S. Catholic Historian* 1 (1980–81): 96 with n. 53, 99 with n. 72, 100 with n. 73, and n. 55; Appleby, *Harvard Theological Review* 81 (1988): 186, 191; id., “*Church and Age Unite!*” 183 with n. 42 and 188 with n. 54.

¹⁷ Cf. *Letters to His Holiness*, 84: “It is the lesson of the history of all attempted reform: No hope! All that is left to spiritual men is to . . . [work] as best they can for that unseemly unity of spirit which is not to be bodied forth in visible form until every travesty of religion . . . shall have passed away. . . .”

¹⁸ *Three Modernists*, 263.

The essay "The Need of a Liberal Catholicism in America" is an Americanist statement. The Americanism of Sullivan's Paulist period was a call to American Catholics to be patriotic and involved in all aspects of their nation's life, to avoid separatism and to identify with their country's common interests, to regard their democratic republic and its constitution as a providential work of God.¹⁹ Some of these themes appear in the essay under consideration, which supports separation of church and state and opposes separate Catholic labor unions, rash Catholic criticism of non-Catholic public officials and "the sneering attacks of the Catholic papers" on the public school system.²⁰ But "The Need of a Liberal Catholicism," echoing *Letters to His Holiness*,²¹ goes beyond the Americanism found in the published writings of Sullivan the Paulist. In this essay Sullivan laments the fact that the Vatican governs the Church in a non-representative way, that no American holds a seat in the Curia. This flaw in polity, as Sullivan sees it, keeps American Catholics from having a legal way of letting Rome know their wishes. The remedy he advises is "an independent and fearless public opinion." Inspired by recent instances of independence among European Catholics, liberal American Catholics should speak out when necessary as a body.²² Such modernist calls for democratizing the Catholic Church had been inveighed against by Pius X in the encyclical *Pascendi* (sections 23, 25, 38).

Sullivan makes clear that the "liberal Catholic group" he hopes for would have to be very different from the "American Catholic Federation," i.e., the American Federation of Catholic Societies. Organized in 1901, the Federation's stated aims were "the cementing of the bonds of fraternal union among the Catholic laity and Catholic Societies of the United States; the fostering of Catholic interests and works of religion, piety, education and charity; the study of conditions in our social life; the dissemination of the truth, the encouragement and spread of Catholic literature, and the circulation of the Catholic press."²³ Although clergy did serve on committees and in an advisory capacity, the Federation was a lay movement. But Sullivan perceived it to be under the control of ecclesiastics who were "more likely to display the spirit of Rome than the spirit of America." In his neglected article on American Catholicism in the *Revue moderniste internationale*, he described the Federation as "sous la direction de trois ou quatre de nos évêques les plus ardamment ultramontains." Sullivan's post-Paulist Americanism finds expression in this article. The problem, in his opinion, is not merely that most American bishops isolate themselves from "la vie nationale et civique"; the government of the

¹⁹ See Sullivan, "The Tenth Anniversary of Non-Catholic Missions," *Catholic World* 78 (1903): 230-31; W. L. S. [i.e., Sullivan], "Some Causes and Lessons of the French Crisis," *ibid.* 80 (1905): 744; *id.*, "Catholicity and Some Elements in our National Life," *The New York Review* 1 (1905-1906): 266-67. The Americanist Isaac Hecker, founder of the Paulists, also founded *Catholic World*.

²⁰ Cf. Sullivan's remark on the public schools in a letter of 6 November 1908, to E. Throckmorton from Palestine, Texas: "I am a public school product, you know, including the High School, and I have a high veneration for the common schools of our country—and indeed on the vexed school question I have a good many ideas that I find it well to keep to myself" (Sullivan papers, BMS 467/13). Cf. W. S. [Sullivan], "Le catholicisme aux Etats-Unis,"

Revue moderniste internationale 2 (1911): 349; on this article, see below, n. 28.

²¹ Cf. *Letters to His Holiness*, 9, 58-69.

²² Cf. Sullivan's optimistic remarks about the role of an independent public opinion within the Church in "Catholicity and Some Elements in our National Life," *The New York Review* 1 (1905-1906): 263-66.

²³ From the Federation's constitution, as quoted in Sr. M. Adele Francis Gorman, O.S.F., "Federation of Catholic Societies in the United States, 1870-1920" (Diss. Notre Dame, 1962), 113. For something more than this bland constitutional language, see, e.g., the remarks of Bishop James A. McFaul, one of the Federation's founders, in his *Pastoral Letters, Addresses and Other Writings*, 2d ed. (New York, 1916), 285-94.

Church, “non-représentatif et despotique,” and “toute la pompe, tout l’apparat du catholicisme” are at variance with the American mind. Sullivan fears that ultramontane prelates will soon try to “romaniser nos institutions.”²⁴

The pair of essays illustrate the close association of Americanist and modernist concerns in Sullivan’s thinking, an association also found in *Letters to His Holiness*. Sullivan came under the influence of the European modernists with their largely, though not exclusively, philosophical and critical preoccupations, but he was formed in the more pragmatic milieu of Americanism. The man who called himself a modernist on the title page of *Letters* could just as easily be designated an Americanist—indeed, he was so designated in a version of the preface of the first edition of *Letters* published in *The Open Court*.²⁵ Whatever one thinks about the historical connection between Americanism and modernism, it is clear that Sullivan regarded the former as “Modernism’s precursor.”²⁶ “We know what the American spirit is in the political and social order,” he wrote in the preface to the first edition of *Letters*; “[t]ranslate it into the religious order, and you have Modernism at its best and purest.” In the longer version of the preface to *Letters* that appeared in *The Open Court*, Sullivan urged that “the man who sets himself to that sore need of progress—the teaching of Modernism to Roman orthodoxy in this country—should put in the forefront of his work the contrasting attitudes of America and Rome toward . . . liberty of conscience, separation of church and state, and freedom of opinion and research.” Such Americanist musings will prepare a person “for the discussion of the graver questions of historical criticism which form the central fortress of Modernism. To have seen the need of change in the lesser, is but one step short of acknowledging the necessity of improvement in the greater.”²⁷

The evidence for dating “The Final Phase of Modernism” and “The Need of a Liberal Catholicism” may now be considered. Sullivan identifies himself in both essays as “the author of ‘Letters to Pius X.’” That book appeared by the middle of May 1910. Therefore the two essays were not written before that time—or if they were, it was on the assumption that they would not appear in print before the book.

For “The Final Phase of Modernism” we can move the *terminus post quem* somewhat forward. In this essay Sullivan refers to Pierre Dabry’s (1862–1916) renunciation of his priesthood and Catholicism. That was announced in an open letter in the *Paris-Journal* of 29 May 1910. The letter was reprinted in the June 1910 issue of the *Revue moderniste internationale*. Sullivan was American correspondent for the *Revue*, and he may have first learned of Dabry’s action from that source.²⁸ In the

²⁴ W. [Sullivan], *Revue moderniste internationale* 2 (1911): 348–51. Sullivan is probably responsible for the news items, critical of the Federation, in *Revue moderniste internationale* 1 (1910): 304, 466–67; see below, n. 28. Sr. M. Adele Francis Gorman, O.S.F., writes that “throughout the twenty years of its influence, the Federation never undertook anything of a major character without first consulting its advisers who were members of the hierarchy” (“Evolution of Catholic Lay Leadership, 1820–1920,” *United States Catholic Historical Records and Studies* 50 [1964]: 156–57, 164–65).

²⁵ 24 (1910): 259–64.

²⁶ *Letters to His Holiness*, xiv. See M. V. Gannon, “Before and After Modernism: The Intellectual Isolation of the American Priest,” in J. T. Ellis, ed., *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Historical Investigations* (Collegeville, Minn., 1971), 337–38; McGarry, *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 90 (1979): esp.

33–34, 46–47; Reher, *U.S. Catholic Historian* 1 (1980–81): 87ff.; Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy*, 193–94; Appleby, *Harvard Theological Review* 81 (1988): 171ff.; id., “Church and Age Unite!” 169ff.

²⁷ *Letters to His Holiness*, xviii; *The Open Court* 24 (1910): 263.

²⁸ A brief, typed anonymous biographical sketch of Sullivan from the late 1920s preserved in the Sullivan papers (BMS 467/12 [13]) calls Sullivan American correspondent for the *Revue*. A. Houtin, *Histoire du modernisme catholique* (Paris, 1913), 434 (cf. 287–88), calls him one of the principal collaborators of the *Revue*. Sullivan had agreed to “contribute, and send an occasional article or batch of news” to the *Revue* (letter of 17 January 1910 to E. Throckmorton from Kansas City, Sullivan papers, BMS 467/13). He appears to have contributed only one article, on American Catholicism, in *Revue* 2 (1911): 347–54. Written in French, it is signed “W.S.” Note esp. the American news in *Revue* 1 (1910): 467 and *ibid.* 2 (1911): 91.

upper right hand corner of the title page of “The Final Phase” there is a notation in now brownish ink and, I believe, in Sullivan’s hand: “Author’s address/ William Sullivan/ Box 299, Kansas City, Mo.” (Below that, there is written, in pencil, “1909–1910,” a reference to the period of Sullivan’s retirement in Kansas City after leaving the Paulists in May 1909.) “The Final Phase,” then, was written after 29 May 1910, but before Sullivan left Kansas City for Cleveland, Ohio, at the very beginning of the fall of 1910.²⁹

The subject matter of “The Need of a Liberal Catholicism” and the manner in which its author is identified would alone suggest that this essay was written not long before or after “The Final Phase of Modernism.” It is worth noting that both essays are on longish paper (“The Final Phase”: ca. 8½ by 13¾ inches; “The Need”: just short of 8½ by 13 inches), identically watermarked (“Berkshire Bond U.S.A.”), and were both typed on the same machine. An *ex silentio* argument may be offered that seems to put the writing of “The Need” before Sullivan’s departure from Kansas City. In this essay, Sullivan mentions the German resistance to the diocesan vigilance committees or councils that had been prescribed by *Pascendi*, section 55, in 1907 to watch for any local signs of modernism and take action against it. He does not refer to the German resistance to the anti-modernist oath prescribed by the *motu proprio Sacrorum antistitum* of 1 September 1910.³⁰ If that resistance had already been under way and reported in the United States when Sullivan was writing “The Need,” he would doubtless have mentioned it in connection with German resistance to the vigilance councils.

For “The Need of a Liberal Catholicism” we have what may be a clue to Sullivan’s intention for publication. At the bottom of the last page of the typescript there is a notation in pencil: “William Sullivan./ From Open Court Pub. Co.,/ La Salle, Ill.” The Open Court Publishing Company was the publisher of Sullivan’s *Letters to His Holiness*. The May 1910 issue of the Company’s periodical *The Open Court* opened with a brief excerpt from *Letters*. Commenting on the publication of Sullivan’s book in the June 1910 issue of the periodical, its editor Paul Carus published a brief, anonymous statement of purpose by Sullivan. And in the December issue of the same year, Sullivan commented anonymously on the severe criticisms of his book that had been discussed by Carus in an article in the November issue of *The Open Court*.³¹ It is possible that Sullivan had intended “The Need of a Liberal Catholicism” for *The Open Court*, and that at some point the journal was intending to publish it. If so, there is no clue in the Sullivan papers as to why it never appeared there (or apparently anywhere else).

Sullivan is a significant figure in the history both of American Catholicism and of American Unitarianism. The essays published here shed new light on what he was thinking about modernism several years after its condemnation by Pius X and show the expression his Americanism took in his modernist period. They will be of more interest now than they might have been to an earlier generation in light of

²⁹ The chronology of Sullivan’s career provided by the editor of Sullivan’s *Under Orders*, 199, indicates only that he moved to Cleveland in the fall of 1910. I have not been able to determine precisely when Sullivan left Kansas City, but the fact that his frequent letters to E. Throckmorton from Kansas City apparently ceased after 25 September 1910 (Sullivan papers, bMS 467/13)

suggests that his departure occurred at the very beginning of the fall.

³⁰ Houtin, *Histoire*, 218–19, 223, 229, 332–38; Vidler, *The Modernist Movement*, 202–3, 219. German resistance to the oath was reported in the October issue of *Revue moderniste internationale* 1 (1910): 387, in part on the basis of a news item of 24 October.

³¹ *The Open Court* 24 (1910): 384–85, 762–63.

the renewed relevance of late nineteenth-century Catholic progressive thought occasioned by the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965).³²

THE FINAL PHASE OF MODERNISM.
BY THE AUTHOR OF "LETTERS TO PIUS X".

Modernism as a movement wholly confined within the Roman Catholic church may perhaps be dead. But modernists still live, and whether they will consent to perpetual silence and to the quiet of an early grave is quite another question. By the concession—the most extraordinary concession—of the very papal document that condemned them, modernists are men of blameless lives and of a moral integrity beyond suspicion.³³ By the consensus of competent opinion, they have produced the most remarkable and brilliant literature that has come from Catholicism in this generation at least. And every one at all acquainted with the movement will acknowledge that they have shown a zeal for religion which is one of the freshest and purest manifestations of the apostolic spirit in our time. The question then arises: Will such men abandon their zeal at the bidding of an encyclical? will such a movement disappear from the face of the earth because of Committees of Vigilance? will modernists answer sadly to a bewildered world which is craving for every possible ray of light upon ultimate and eternal problems: 'We have nothing to give you. We have ceased to write or to study. Our sympathy has been paralyzed by the *Lamentabili*, our missionary spirit done to death by the *Pascendi*. Go elsewhere or go nowhere. Keep your faith or abandon it; save your souls or lose them; it is nothing to us now or for all time to come'.

Most assuredly modernists will not commit suicide so complacently. It is not in the nature of science to stop dead in its tracks; and enthusiasm for the highest interests of humanity rests on another foundation than cowardice or despair. Whatever the present position or the future fate of modernism as we have known it up to this, the men behind the movement have neither forgotten what the studies of a lifetime have taught them nor lost their devotion to mankind. They will, because morally and conscientiously they must, continue to work for truth and faith and charity. They are under a responsibility to a higher law than any contained in canons and decrees—the responsibility devolving upon all who have been fitted by meditation and study to become in high or low degree, guides and teachers of their age. To this responsibility modernists have no intention of proving recreant. Let the corporate activities associated with their names be declared officially dead and pontifical medals struck to commemorate the dissolution, yet the originating souls

³² In the typescripts of both essays there are a number of corrections of punctuation, spelling and wording in pen, apparently by Sullivan, and I have in general incorporated them into my text of the essays. In the second essay there are also alterations of punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and wording in pencil. I doubt that these alterations were made by Sullivan and have therefore ignored them. (If my doubts are justified, the pencil alterations might have been made at The Open Court Publishing Company at a time when the staff was intend-

ing to publish the piece in *The Open Court*.) In the text of the essays, I report a number of the alterations in pen that have more than a formal or stylistic interest; a set of vertical arrows ↑↓ indicates an addition, and a set of angular brackets (< >) indicates a cancellation. In general, I have reproduced the punctuation of the typescripts. Accents on French words have been tacitly supplied twice and some typing or spelling errors tacitly corrected. The footnotes are all mine.

³³ See Pius X, *Pascendi*, section 3.

and hearts and brains are not dead, and within them stir impulses of life, productivity, and service, as eager, powerful and generous as ever. The dilemma indeed which expresses the present situation looks formidable. On the one hand modernists are condemned and cannot carry on their work; and on the other hand modernists are men of conscience and must carry on their work. But the dilemma will be solved and on the manner of solving it depend the future form and final phase of modernism. It is the purpose of this article to point out certain indications now emerging into light which seem to forecast what that final phase shall be, and to call attention to the way in which modernism is reorganizing its energies after the shock of condemnation, and is addressing itself to the work which lies before it.

Let us see precisely what called modernism into being. For essentially the same forces that produced it will control it in the new avenues into which it has been driven. Modernism as has been suggested, sprang fundamentally from religious zeal, the zeal to win the modern world to religion, and specifically to the Roman Catholic religion. There is not a prominent modernist living or dead who did not enlist himself in the movement from the single motive of serving and saving the Church. Murri, Dabry, Viollet, and Fogazzaro addressed themselves to divers phases of the social evolution in the hope of making democracy Catholic and Catholicism democratic. Loisy and Minocchi began their biblical studies with the purpose of proving that theology need not fear higher criticism, and that criticism required the control and even confirmed the claims of the Church. Blondel, Laberthonnière, Le Roy, Fonsegrive, and Tyrrell, gave themselves to religious philosophy to convince this age that it should not be distressed by the terminology of an antiquated philosophy in which the official dogmas are formulated, since Catholicism is a life not a speculation, an incomparable spiritual power and not a set of inept and inconclusive syllogisms.³⁴ Turmel and Ermoni undertook the study of the history of dogma to show that in this field too Catholicism was not in conflict with scholarship,³⁵ and that where Harnack, Réville, and Sabatier stood, Catholics might also stand and retain the perfect integrity of their faith.³⁶ So with modernists of humbler name and less achievement, every one of them entered upon the discipline of study which made him a modernist in the ambition which in the last decade of the nineteenth century seemed to be a contagious enthusiasm in Catholicism, to reconcile the Church and the age, to prove that in the Roman communion was the purest expression of religion and the true home of human souls. The idea that modernism issued from a subversive and separatist tendency, from mere itch for novelty, or from the desire of reckless men to mitigate an authority which irked them, is utterly false and grievously unjust.³⁷ How false and unjust it is may be seen at this hour when the majority of modernists are clinging so pathetically to a church which has silenced, outlawed and disgraced them. "If they will not let me enter

³⁴ A typically modernist hit at scholastic intellectualism.

³⁵ Those mentioned here who have not already been fully identified are: Romolo Murri (1870–1944), Paul Viollet (1840–1914), Antonio Fogazzaro (1842–1911), Salvatore Minocchi (1869–1943), Maurice Blondel (1861–1949), Lucien Laberthonnière (1860–1932), Edouard Le Roy (1870–1954), Georges Fonsegrive (1852–1917), Joseph Turmel (1859–1943) and Vincent Ermoni (1858–1910).

³⁶ Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930) and presumably Auguste, not Paul, Sabatier (1839–1901). Is Sullivan referring to Albert Réville (1826–1906) or to his son Jean

(1854–1908)? All these men were liberal Protestants. Harnack is memorably represented in Sullivan's novel *The Priest* as the bête noir of the obscurantist Bishop Shyrne, who persists in misnaming the great German scholar (pp. 10–11, 54, 136–37, 180, 182).

³⁷ Such representations may be found in Pius X's *Pascendi*, sections 1–3, 13, 17–18, 27, 37–38, 40–43. Cf. H. Woods, S.J., in a review of Sullivan's *Letters to His Holiness in America*, 4 June 1910, 212–13: "... the profession of the Catholic Faith for the purpose of undermining it, belong[s] to [modernism's] essence."

the temple”, said Tyrrell; “then I will stand in the vestibule or on the steps.”³⁸ No; modernism proceeded not from revolutionists, but from men whose whole-hearted hope was to serve the highest interests of men, and to be permitted to give the Church the labors of their life. Never was a more sincere and filial movement born within the bosom of the Catholic faith; and when from 1895 to 1905 appeared those brilliant productions of modernist scholarship in every department of religious thought, some were fain to believe that modernists had brought the iron age to an end; that under their leadership the old Church was about to exhibit the most marvellous of her renovations; and that it would be no longer senseless fanaticism to hope for the winning of the world to the ancient centre of religious unity.

How the structure of those hopes and endeavors collapsed in chaos is known to the world. To-day Fogazzaro and Viollet are on the Index. Murri is suspended by act of the Pope himself. Dabry, after twenty-one years of conspicuously devoted priesthood, has †recently‡ in a noble and sorrowful letter announced his renunciation of Catholicism. Loisy is under the most tremendous of all excommunications—if any are tremendous—and has made it known that henceforth he will not concern himself with defending or apologizing for the Church. Minocchi, also in a public statement, has told the world that he has ceased to be a Catholic. Laberthonnière is condemned. So is Turmel. Ermoni, expelled from his order for modernism, died the other day practically of neglect if not of starvation in a wretched lodging in Paris. Tyrrell died last year and rests in an Anglican cemetery, Catholic burial having been refused him; and his friend the abbé Bremond was suspended for having said a few simple words at his grave.³⁹ The defeat is complete. To all appearances it amounts to annihilation; and such as think it a service to God to slay the prophets, and deem it a triumph that Catholicism has either driven forth her brightest sons or, in case they refuse to be driven forth, reduced them to perpetual silence and to intellectual and spiritual sterility, may take their fill of rejoicing, for the field is theirs. Never again in our generation will scholarship weary the Church with importunities nor democracy disturb the echoes with its robust and ringing call. The entire procession of modern ideas and modern men has gone another way, and over the schools and sanctuaries of Catholicism broods in Buddhistic calm the new Pax Romana.

And yet it is amid just these conditions that modernists are feeling the awakening of a new vocation, the breath of a second spring. Precisely when they are most

³⁸ A similar remark is ascribed to Tyrrell in Sullivan, *Under Orders*, 105. Cf. also Tyrrell's letter of 6 March 1907, to Rev. J. M. Lloyd-Thomas in M. D. Petrie, *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell*, 2 vols. (London, 1912) 2:409. In a postcard of 11 March 1906, to Herbert Thurston, Tyrrell wrote: “We are all to be crushed and driven out of the Church. We shall never go out; and if sent will hammer at the door as long as we live” (Archives of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, Farm St., London, MS no. CD/4.39; I owe this quotation and reference to David G. Schultenover, S.J.)

³⁹ Fogazzaro's novel *Il Santo* (Milan, 1906) and Viollet's *L'infailibilité du pape et le syllabus, étude historique et théologique* (Besançon, 1904) were put on the Index in 1906. Works by the “condemned” Laberthonnière and Turmel were also on the Index when Sullivan was writing this article. See *Index librorum prohibitorum* (Vatican City, 1948). Suspended *a divinis* in April 1907, the priest Murri was then excommunicated in March 1909; see

Houtin, *Histoire*, 155–56, 235–36, 252–53. Dabry's twenty-one years of priesthood extended from June 1889 to May 1910. Sullivan seems to be echoing Dabry's open letter: “Après vingt-et-un ans de sacerdoce ma conscience. . .” See Dabry, *Mon expérience religieuse* (Paris, 1912), 1, 105; cf. above, pp. 53–54. Loisy was declared *excommunicatus vitandus* on 7 March 1908: Loisy, *Choses passées* (Paris, 1913), 367–69, 397–98. Minocchi's break with the Church occurred in 1908: Houtin, *Histoire*, 254; A. Agnoletto, *Salvatore Minocchi, Vita e opera (1869–1943)* (Brescia, 1964), 180–83. The Lazarist Ermoni died on 19 March 1910; see Loisy's obituary notice in *Revue historique* 105 (1910): 457–58. In *Under Orders*, 41, Sullivan refers to Ermoni's “starv[ing] to death . . . in Paris”; cf. the remarks of Houtin, *Histoire*, 263. Tyrrell died on 15 July 1909. For his burial and the role of Henri Bremond (1865–1933), see Petrie, *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell*, 2:436–46; D. G. Schultenover, S.J., *George Tyrrell: In Search of Catholicism* (Shepherdstown, West Virginia, 1981), 356–58.

coerced they are beginning to enter into ways of large liberty; and when they are forbidden to work at all they are becoming conscious of their widest opportunity and worthiest service. There is in point of fact no small number of their sympathizers who rejoice at the policy of Pius X, believing it the most efficacious means possible for opening the eyes of modernists to all the implications of their position, and for leading an arrested development into full and perfect growth. From the beginning of the movement many clear-sighted men have felt that modernists were setting forth two terms of a syllogism and refusing to draw the conclusion; that they still wore chains which they professed, not always gracefully or convincingly, to have cast off; that they were laboring at a partial and comparatively paltry synthesis, forgetting the greater and essential one; and that efforts like those of Tyrrell at constructing a new philosophy of conformity to the traditional statements of the creed, were talents wasted by a good half.⁴⁰ In the words of Minocchi, "A genuinely reformatory modernism within the Roman Catholic church is hopeless and impossible."⁴¹ It is the perception of this that is leading modernism into its final and noblest phase. This phase may be thus described.

Religious criticism once begun is not worthy of itself if it stops half-way in its course. Its duty is to explore the basis of every belief, the natural history of whole religions as well as of individual dogmas, the foundation of morals and the idea of God. It must study not merely in what manner the Church is one with Christ, but after what fashion we must conceive Christ himself both as a figure in the history of religion, and in his relation to the eternal Ideal of the spirit. It involves retraversing the ground across which the religious history of the race has passed from the earliest days of magic to a worship which is in spirit and in truth. It requires us to search out in the religion of to-day both what is native to it and what deposits have been left there by past superstitions which possess such tenacious if not indeed an immortal vitality. In a word it obliges us to stop in our speculation at nothing short of the Ultimate, and to include in our historical survey every past manifestation of religion whether in savage or saint. Out of such a study the majority of men emerge having undergone a change and enlargement in their conception of the world-order comparable to that which opened infinite vistas to human intelligence in passing from Ptolemaic to Copernican astronomy. A religious thinker who has passed through such a discipline sees the will of Deity as manifested in the vast purposeful process of things, and not as localized in Vatican palaces or Delphic caves. He perceives the generic resemblance of all theologies and the similar natural history of all hierarchies, and he becomes less and less disposed to look upon any one system as an exhaustive expression of the infinite Truth-Ideal, or to believe that the Eternal Absolute has delegated as its single oracle any Pontifex Maximus whether of old Rome or new. Likewise he ceases to fancy that the highest vocation of a religious teacher and philosopher is to coax a recalcitrant Curia to smile pleasantly once in a while upon democracy and science. Rather do there arise in his mind the sense of the indestructibility of the spiritual and of the extreme caducity of the merely theological; the sentiment of solemn responsibility

⁴⁰ Commenting on F. von Hügel in a letter of 5 June [1913] from Schenectady, New York, to C. W. Wendte, Sullivan writes "[h]e seems to fancy that we must sacrifice independence, and even rationality, in order to hold fast to his pet idol, i.e., the solidarity of a universal church and the sacramentalism of an institutional system. Any creative movement, striking out into new worlds of the

spirit, he seems unable to comprehend. It was Tyrrell's position too—and it looks very much like a last stand for what is doomed" (Sullivan papers, BMS 467/10 [18]).

⁴¹ Cf. Houtin, *Histoire*, 254; Agnoletto, *Salvatore Minocchi*, 193, 196; Minocchi's letter to the editor, dated 28 February 1910, in *Revue moderniste internationale* 1 (1910): 111–14.

to an infinite Ideal which with reverent reticence he presumes not to blaspheme with one more impudent detailed definition; and the conviction that the holiest service he can do his brother men is to lift their eyes from the selfish and the material to the feeling of brotherhood with one another and of kinship with the eternal realities of the spirit, which make life worth while and human existence a cosmos not a chaos.⁴²

It is toward this intellectually nobler and spiritually simpler outlook that modernists are growing. Disappointed in the hope of winning the age to a particular theology, they are studying the validity of all theologies. Having failed in inducing what they thought was the ultimate religion to adapt itself to the requirements of progress, they are forced to inquire whether after all, it is the ultimate religion. Having been refused work in one vineyard they are asking whether they should stand all the day idle, or seek, if haply there may not be a richer vineyard and a less churlish master. The result is that from serving a sect they are turning to the ministry of the spirit of man. From futile efforts at “reconciling” the age to that one of a hundred theologies which most resents the process, they are ascending to the higher station and truer vocation of teachers and heralds of the simple spiritual, of an Ideal too great to be tied up in categories and too holy to be profaned by a vast system of dogmatic conjecture. Plainly witnessing to this new development are certain articles in the late review *Il Rinascimento*, the spirit pervading the pages of *La Revue Moderniste Internationale*,⁴³ and the letters already mentioned of Dabry and Minocchi. It need not however follow necessarily that modernists of this temper will leave the Church. They may remain even though they share the despair of Tyrrell that Catholicism will ever lift its anathema from “reformatory modernism”. But if they remain, they will work for a synthesis that goes far beyond the boundaries of the Roman communion, and for a union of believers that has its seat “neither in Jerusalem nor on this mountain”,⁴⁴ but in our human kinship with that All which we call God. In or out of the Church they will, in increasing numbers, follow the broader vision which is now dawning upon them, and instead of wasting themselves in the foredoomed endeavor to restore the modern world to the obedience of the Roman Pontiff, they will apply their great gifts and rich spiritual experience to the task of teaching <the> an age that is threatened with materialism, that there is something left to worship, and that human life has transcendental values and august responsibilities. And it will be a fruitful ministry. Alfred Loisy has told us that henceforth he ceases to be an apologist for Catholicism and becomes only a student and critic. Yet his spiritual influence was never greater than to-day. From his chair of the history of religions in the Collège de France, he delivers lectures that are coldly critical and scrupulously scientific.⁴⁵ But the audience of the elite that listens to him sees in this man whose intellectual conscience is so chaste and whose researches into the meaning of religion have been so profound, a reverent believer in all that is essential to religious faith—all perhaps that is legitimately possible to it. He stands before them a witness to the one worthy reconciliation of faith and scholarship, and probably for every one inquirer whom his former work induced to look favorably upon Catholicism, there are ten times

⁴² The themes enunciated in this sentence would be developed in Sullivan’s Unitarian preaching, over 150 unpublished samples of which are included among the Sullivan papers.

⁴³ *Il Rinascimento* was published from 1907 through 1909,

Revue moderniste internationale from January 1910 through May 1912.

⁴⁴ Cf. John 4:21.

⁴⁵ Loisy gave his inaugural lecture in the Collège on 3 May 1909. For Loisy’s view of his intellectual task at the Collège, see his *Choses passées*, 369ff.

as many now who by his present life and example are fortified against the temptations of a desolating scepticism and are confirmed in that simple belief and trust toward which the highest intelligence of mankind is growing irresistibly. If Catholicism, by rejecting the modernists has thus given them over to the spiritual service of all humanity, we may be grateful for the rejection, and feel under obligations to Pius X for every one of his prodigal condemnations.

THE NEED OF A LIBERAL CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA.
BY THE AUTHOR OF "LETTERS TO PIUS X"

If non-representative governments there must be in this age of ours, the sole safeguard and protection against their degenerating into intolerable absolutism is an independent and fearless public opinion among the subjects of them. When the interests of the people governed are neither brought to bear upon administrative acts in the making, nor are allowed to express legitimate criticism after those acts are made, we have an autocracy which is a menace to freedom and cannot be regarded without apprehension by every nation that has outgrown the cradling and coddling stage of tutelage. The Vatican government is wholly non-representative. Not an American holds a seat in the Papal Curia. And the official among us whose business is to keep Rome informed of American conditions, is a man whose origin, language, training and cast of thought, are not of this soil.⁴⁶ The situation is aggravated by the fact that the obedience and submission which this group of Italian ecclesiastics demand for their decrees are absolute. For they represent divinity, these *purpurati* of the Curia, and whoso of their subjects murmurs against them is guilt of *lèse majesté* to God. The present Pope has declared excommunicated, cut off from divine favor, and under a curse, any Catholic who openly remonstrates against his Syllabus "Lamentabili", or his anti-modernist encyclical "Pascendi". The walls are built without crack or fissure. The immuring is complete. On the one hand American Catholics have no legal representative to let Rome know their wishes; and on the other hand if ↑ as individuals, ↓ they rebel against the policies of their church, they cut themselves off from the man who they believe holds the keys of the kingdom.

It is not a graceful position; nor is the awkwardness of it lessened by the well-known teachings of the Roman rulers in condemnation of such fundamental principles of Americanism as religious toleration and separation of church and state. Short of open revolt there is only one way out of the *impasse*—the formation of a liberal Catholic <body> group in the United States which shall keep a watchful eye on the acts and tendencies of intransigent orthodoxy, and shall not be afraid to speak out ↑ as a body, ↓ in criticism and admonition when occasion calls for it. This is the single safeguard both against dangerous Roman blunders, and against the revival in this country of a deplorable anti-Catholic agitation. For assuredly if legitimate criticism of unwise Vatican policies be not voiced by liberal Catholics, it will be expressed with far less fortunate consequences by the more violent wing of non-Catholic sectaries. This brief article has been written largely for the purpose of helping however little toward the formation of such a body of outspoken Catholics in the United States.

⁴⁶ Sullivan is referring to the Italian-born Diomedede Falconio, apostolic delegate to the United States, 1902–1911. He had been preceded in that office by the Italians Francesco Satolli (1893–1896) and Sebastiano Martinelli

(1896–1902). For Sullivan's view of apostolic legates as agents of Roman absolutism, see his *Letters to His Holiness*, 69–75.

Let me give an instance or two of what is meant by the independent Catholicism which is here advocated. When Rome recently refused even to give a trial to the separation-law in France, the most eminent laymen of the French church, including Brunetière, d'Haussonville, de Vogüé, and Thureau-Dangin, drew up a manifesto to the Pope in which they frankly informed him that his action was disastrous; reminded him that the law was a legitimate expression of their country's government, and was worthy of being fairly tried; and besought him to recede from his unwarrantably severe *non-possumus*.⁴⁷ The manifesto changed Rome not a whit of course; but its moral effect in France was of immense value. It assured the country of the honorable and patriotic attitude of Catholics; and it placed the blame where it belonged, on the haughty ecclesiastics of the Papal court. Again when Leo XIII condemned the raising of a fund in Ireland to pay the indebtedness on Parnell's estate in Wicklow, the Irish Catholics, indignant at this intolerable interference from the Vatican, straightway opened their purses with such generosity, that the contributions which up to that time had fallen far short of the amount required, overtopped the needed sum by some thousands of pounds. Finally the German bishops gave Rome to understand recently that their country would not tolerate the inquisitorial spy-system of "vigilance committees" which the encyclical on modernism requires in every diocese; and in deference to their protest Rome has suspended the enforcement of this measure in Germany.⁴⁸ These are specimens of the self-respecting courage which is so much to be desired among the Catholics of the United States, but which has so far been inexplicably and disgracefully non-existent.

And it has been non-existent notwithstanding that there have been and are now repeated justifications for the exercise of it. The first rector of the Catholic University at Washington was perhaps the best-loved prelate in the country. His continuance in office was morally necessary for the success and development of the University in its early years. Yet he was removed from the position through the calumny of an Italian ecclesiastic. This is not conjecture but fact. Leo XIII himself afterwards acknowledged it. The bishops of the country were in despair; the laity were astounded—but nothing was done. They endured the degradation; they submitted to being overridden by a foreigner; they beheld the late rector visited with one species of persecution after another; and still not a voice expressive of American manhood was sent across the Atlantic.⁴⁹

Still more recently in the case of appointments to two of the greatest sees in the country, the will of the entire American episcopate and the wishes of the laity have been scornfully disregarded. In one of these two cases the man appointed distinguished himself by a public speech in which he expressed his contempt for the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon peoples, and laid the bouquet of his eloquence upon the Latin character, Latin civilization, and Latinism generally. Another bouquet—

⁴⁷ Cf. [Sullivan], *Letters to His Holiness*, 3, 68, 149. Pius X had condemned the Law of Separation of 9 December 1905 in the encyclical *Vehementer Nos* of 11 February 1906 and condemned it again in the encyclicals *Gravissimo officii munere* of 10 August 1906 and *Une fois encore* of 6 January 1907. For the four individuals mentioned by Sullivan, cf. L. V. Méjan, *La séparation des églises et de l'état* (Paris, 1959), 274.

⁴⁸ For the Irish incident of 1883, see F. S. L. Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell* (New York, 1977), 244–47. Cf. [Sullivan], *Letters to His Holiness*, 148–49. For the German resistance, see above, p. 54.

⁴⁹ Sullivan is referring to Bishop John J. Keane, first rector

of Catholic University, 1887–1896. For his dismissal, reactions and the aftermath, see P. H. Ahern, *The Catholic University of America 1887–1896, The Rectorship of John J. Keane* (Washington, D.C., 1948), 162–97; id., *The Life of John J. Keane, Educator and Archbishop, 1839–1918* (Milwaukee, 1955), 120–212. The Italian ecclesiastic whom Sullivan indicted was Satolli; cf. W. S[ullivan], *Revue moderniste internationale* 2 (1911): 353. For Sullivan's admiration of the progressive Keane, see his seminary diary under the date 15 May 1895 (Sullivan papers, bMS 467/11 [32]); cf. also the remarks on Keane and his dismissal from the University in Sullivan, *Under Orders*, 57–59.

a literal one this time—he took to the mother of Cardinal Merry del Val when the news of Dewey's victory at Manila arrived in Rome, expressed his condolences with Spain, and his horror at the crime of his country. Such a man not wanted by bishops, priests, or people, foreign in every fibre save for the unfortunate accident of American birth, is thrust into exalted office—and again there is dumb submission.⁵⁰

Recently there has been formed an American Catholic Federation the aim of which is to unite the Catholics of the country for the purpose of bringing their corporate influence to bear on certain moral and social problems, and for the redressing of the grievances with which Catholics are said to be burdened. These ends are innocuous and laudable, and no one can fairly find fault with them. But the danger is that the prelates and other ecclesiastics who now control the Federation will lead it to peril and disaster. Unfortunately these ecclesiastics are more likely to display the spirit of Rome than the spirit of America; and so completely voiceless are the liberal Catholics who dread their leadership, that these ambitious gentlemen are apt to compromise the entire Catholic body in the United States by committing it to policies which, however in accord with Vaticanism, are destructive of Americanism. A short time ago the bishop who has constituted himself the leading advocate of Federation,⁵¹ announced a proposition which is new to American ears. He said that Catholics ought to protest against retaining in the chairs of state colleges and universities such professors as utter sentiments contradictory to Christian faith or morals. Coming from a source which maintains and defends the Index—that Italian tribunal which began its history by anathematizing all books that taught that the earth goes round the sun, and has inscribed upon its list of prohibited writings practically every book which has marked an epoch in scholarship for the last three centuries, from Francis Bacon to Alfred Loisy⁵²—the proposal is rather disturbing. At the present hour of grace of this twentieth century, not a Catholic University in the world is permitted to teach that church and state should be separated, that Moses did not write the Pentateuch nor Isaiah the book attributed to him, and a score of other equally elementary positions of modern life and

⁵⁰ Is the prelate alluded to without further comment James E. Quigley, who became archbishop of Chicago in 1903 despite the considerable American support for the progressive John L. Spalding, Bishop of Peoria? (See D. F. Sweeney, O.F.M., *The Life of John Lancaster Spalding* [New York, 1965], 299–312.) The second prelate is surely the ultramontanist William H. O'Connell, who became archbishop of Boston in 1907. For the negative reaction to O'Connell's appointment to the coadjutorship of Boston, see D. G. Wayman, *Cardinal O'Connell of Boston* (New York, 1955), 131–34; J. Gaffey, "The Changing of the Guard: The Rise of Cardinal O'Connell of Boston," *Catholic Historical Review* 59 (1973–1974): 235–37. Note the unflattering remarks about Anglo-Saxons and Teutons in O'Connell's *Recollections of Seventy Years* (Boston and New York, 1934), 20–21, 29–30. I have been unable to find any other report of the incident involving the mother of Rafael Merry del Val, who was to become secretary of state to Pius X. But when Manila surrendered to Commodore George Dewey in 1898, O'Connell was rector of the American College in Rome and a friend of Merry del Val, whose father was Spanish ambassador to the Holy See, and O'Connell was accused of having favored Spain during the Spanish-American War. See Wayman, *Cardinal O'Connell*, 75–76, 83–84, 107–11; J. M. O'Toole, "That Fabulous Churchman": Toward a Biography of

Cardinal O'Connell," *Catholic Historical Review* 70 (1984): 32–34; for Merry del Val's father's ambassadorship, see M. C. Buehrle, *Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val* (Milwaukee, 1957), 51, 61. Cf. [Sullivan], *Letters to His Holiness*, 66–67, where the unnamed prelate accused of "taking sides against his country on more than one occasion" and of spending "six months in Rome to supervise the progress of his abominable ambition" is again O'Connell. O'Connell visited Rome in 1904–1905, being away from his diocese of Portland, Maine, from the fall until May. His "abominable ambition" was the coadjutorship of Boston, which he obtained in January 1906. See J. E. Sexton, *Cardinal O'Connell: A Biographical Sketch* (Boston, 1926), 38, 43; Wayman, *Cardinal O'Connell*, 114. D. Merwick, *Boston Priests, 1848–1910: A Study of Social and Intellectual Change* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), 142, suggests that Bishop Shyrme of Boston in Sullivan's novel *The Priest* was modeled on O'Connell. [I am grateful to the above cited James M. O'Toole for his comments on an early draft of this note.]

⁵¹ Probably Bishop McFaul of Trenton (see, e.g., *The Tablet* [Brooklyn, N.Y.], 15 August 1908, p.1). Or could Sullivan be referring to Archbishop O'Connell of Boston? (See R. H. Lord et al., *History of the Archdiocese of Boston*, 3 vols. [New York, 1944], 3:505–7; O'Connell, *Recollections*, 293.)

⁵² Cf. [Sullivan], *Letters to His Holiness*, 156–57.

scholarship which contradict “Christian faith and morals” as interpreted by the Vatican.⁵³ And if Roman prelates undertake in the spirit of this bishop’s threat, to put American schools under their censorship, we may find our academic institutions paying court to the Italian Index, and sinking to the degradation of the prescriptions of the “Pascendi”. Of course the proposition has not been made one of the definite aims of the Federation yet. But the suggestions of to-day will be the fixed programme of to-morrow; and as the Federation grows in numbers and influence, the Romanized ecclesiastics who control it will become increasingly bold in their purposes, increasingly perilous in their policies, unless before it is quite too late the liberal Catholics of the country discover themselves, and denounce the imprudent departures of the headstrong and ill-educated men who now hold the reins over American Catholicism.

At a meeting of the Federation a few years ago in New Jersey,⁵⁴ a certain prominent priest arrived on the scene with the intention of proposing that American Catholic workingmen withdraw from labor unions and form associations consisting of Catholics alone. Fortunately he was dissuaded from making his disastrous announcement, and the project never became public. This is another instance of how near the danger-line the Catholics of the country are being led by men whose Roman fever the free air of the <country> United States seems utterly unable to cure.

Then there is the instance of Catholic opposition to Judge Wilfley of the United States ↑court↓ in Shanghai. This brave and incorruptible judge was attacked bitterly and vulgarly by the Catholic press on the strength of charges proceeding from certain Catholics in China. Mr. Wilfley it will be remembered emerged most honorably from all accusations against him. Whereupon a complaint was sent from Shanghai to the American Catholic Federation, which charged that President Roosevelt in the course of the Wilfley matter had expressed disgust and contempt for Catholics generally. At once, with no attempt to verify what turned out to be a slander, the national secretary of the Federation gave the accusation to the Associated Press and lodged the complaint with the Papal delegate at Washington. Mr. Roosevelt wrote a characteristic letter to the delegate denouncing the falsehood and expressing his astonishment that a report which might have such grave and dangerous consequences should be intemperately flung into the public press before the slightest effort had been made to test its truth. Had this incident occurred during a presidential campaign it would have stirred up a hideous religious issue. Even as it was, it showed that the Catholic Federation as at present constituted and officered, is going about with a chip on its shoulder, delivering itself of challenges and provocations which cannot go much further without reprisals. Yet at the following convention of the Federation the man who committed this unpardonable blunder was reelected to office.⁵⁵

⁵³ Sullivan polemicizes against papal refusal to accept the principle of separation of church and state in *Letters to His Holiness*, 130–51. Pius X’s *Pascendi*, section 24, regards separation as a tenet of modernism. See esp. Pius X’s encyclical *Vehementer Nos* (1906), sections 3–4 (English trans. in Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1903–1939*, 46–47); Leo XIII’s *Longinqua* (1895), section 6 (Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903* [Wilmington, N. C., 1981], 364–65). For the precise views of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on the Mosaic authenticity of the Pentateuch and the unity and Isaiah authorship of the whole book of Isaiah—to which views Sullivan is alluding—see the English translations of the Commission’s decisions of 1906 and

1908 in *Rome and the Study of Scripture*, 5th ed. (St. Meinrad, Ind., 1953), 116–17, 118–20. Pius X made past and future decisions of the Commission binding on Catholics in a motu proprio of 1907: *ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁴ If Sullivan is referring to a national and not a regional meeting of the Federation, it can only be that of 1903 in Atlantic City (Gorman, “Federation of Catholic Societies”, 134ff.).

⁵⁵ Lebbeus R. Wilfley was judge of the U.S. Court for China, 1906–1909. The Court had its headquarters in Shanghai. For details of the incident referred to by Sullivan, see Wilfley to Roosevelt, 28 February 1908, in Library of Congress, Presidential Papers Microfilm,

Finally in nothing is there greater need for an outspoken liberal Catholicism than in the attitude of the Catholic press and prelacy toward the public schools. The sneering attacks of the Catholic papers upon our schools are incessant and very exasperating. Not content with setting up their own schools, as no one questions their right to do; not satisfied with demanding a share of public money for the support of these schools; this class †of Catholics‡ are forever casting contempt upon the institution which of all others of the social order is dearest to the American heart. “Godless” is the great word used. Our schools are “godless”; their pupils “godless”; the nation they are forming is “godless”. Only in Catholic education is there, we are told, safety for the moral law or for the state. But when we reflect that the chief leaders of the anti-Catholic agitation at the time of the French Revolution had been Jesuit pupils; and when we see that in the countries where the Church has complete control of education, it has almost wholly lost its hold on the intelligent classes; we may be permitted to think that our schools will meet with no worse a failure, and that if they are to be criticized, the criticism ought not to come from those whose own record is so dubious and whose incompetence so signal. Yet there are bishops in this country who will not allow Catholic parents who send their children to public schools to participate in the sacraments of the church. These parents are absolutely cut off from all practical and helpful union with Catholicism. A murderer, a thief, a profligate, may go to confession and communion and be welcomed. A God-fearing father or mother whose one sin is having a child in the public schools, is angrily turned away. Yet against such action, so tyrannical and so radically anti-American, not an authoritative voice is raised.⁵⁶

There exist then among the Catholic body of the United States clear and definite tendencies toward a slavish Romanism and away from a generous and independent Americanism. The remedy lies in the appearance of a liberal Catholicism which in the name of American character and American institutions, will dare to cry Halt! when either the Curialists on the Tiber or their submissive agents here attempt to violate the spirit of this Republic. Whatever book, whatever man, whatever organization, help toward calling this liberal Catholicism into being, will do a service to the Roman Catholic church, and what is more important, a service to our country.⁵⁷

Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Series 1; Roosevelt to Wilfley, 29 February 1908, *ibid.*, Series 2; Roosevelt to William Bourke Cockran, 16 March 1908, in E. E. Morison, ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, vol. 6 (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), 972–74; Gorman, “Federation of Catholic Societies,” 155–56. The national secretary of the Federation alluded to by Sullivan was Anthony Matre, the Papal delegate Archbishop Falconio. For treatment of the Wilfley incident in the Catholic press, see, e.g., *The Catholic News* (New York), 13 July 1907, p. 4; *ibid.*, 28 March 1908, pp. 3–4; *The Pilot* (Boston), 13 July 1907, p. 1; *ibid.*, 9 November 1907, p. 1; 21 December 1907, p. 5; 28 December 1907, p. 4; 22 February 1908, p. 1; 14 March 1908, p. 4; 21 March 1908, p. 4; 4 April 1908, p. 1. For Wilfley as a man of integrity and a

vigorous administrator of justice, see, e.g., “An American Court in Foreign Territory,” *The Outlook* 84 (1906): 501; “A Fearless Judge,” *ibid.* 88 (1908): 254–56; “Judge Wilfley Exonerated,” *ibid.* 88 (1908): 572–73; R. H. Murray, “The Most Hated American in China,” *Cosmopolitan Magazine* 45 (1908): 496–504.

⁵⁶ For the public schools issue in Sullivan’s day, see Cross, *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism*, 134ff.; Thomas T. McAvoy, C.S.C., *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1969), 289ff. On Sullivan’s opinion of the public schools, cf. above, n. 20.

⁵⁷ My thanks to Alan Seaburg of the Andover–Harvard Theological Library for facilitating my use of the Sullivan papers and to Mark S. Massa, S.J., for his interest and criticisms.