

NOTES

POPE LEO XIII AND "AMERICANISM"

The Americanist controversy which engaged the Catholic Church both in the United States and in France during the last decade of the nineteenth century was terminated by a direct intervention of Pope Leo XIII in 1899.¹ The factors which contributed to this episode in Church history are many and complex. The issue has been characterized as a "conflict of civilizations," a clash of personalities, a clash of social, political, and economic ideologies.² Any theological content has generally been either denied or overlooked by most historians of the crisis. Recently, however, it has been suggested that Americanism, far from being a phantom heresy, was rather the specifically American reaction—conditioned by specifically American problems and history—to the wholesale transformation of men's lives involved in the world's passing into a new phase of its history. "The changing face of the world meant economic, social, political, intellectual change," and "that meant theological change."³ Aligned with this approach, the thesis of this paper is that the Americanist conflict was at root an ecclesiological one.

What was it that the Americanists—Father Isaac Hecker, founder of the Paulist Fathers; Bishop John J. Keane, first Rector of the Catholic University of America; Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul; and Monsignor Denis J. O'Connell, Rector of the American College in Rome—envisioned for the American Church that had a broad enough appeal to capture the imagination and enthusiasm of some Americans and of Europeans as well? It was their vision of the Church remodeled along democratic lines, the outgrowth of their own American experience. They recognized that the old political order was changing and that this demanded real material changes in the ecclesial order as well. They reasoned that

¹ For brevity's sake, neither the French connection nor Leo XIII's support of the *railllement*, though important aspects of this issue, will be treated here.

² AASP, O'Connell to Ireland, Rome, Dec. 2, 1897; Vincent Holden, "A Myth in 'L'Américanisme,'" *Catholic Historical Review* 31 (1945) 154–70; Thomas McAvoy, "The Catholic Minority after the Americanist Controversy, 1899–1917: A Survey," *Review of Politics* 21 (1959) 54; John Tracy Ellis, *The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons* 2 (Milwaukee, 1952) 78.

³ James Hennessey, S.J., "American History and the Theological Enterprise," an address delivered at the twenty-sixth annual convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America, June 15, 1971 (*Proceedings of the CTSA* 26 [Bronx, N.Y., 1972] 113 f.). Michel de Certeau, S.J., picked up his suggestion in an article entitled "Culture américaine et théologie catholique," *Etudes*, Nov. 1971, pp. 561–77. It should be noted that Albert Houtin, first historian of the crisis, also saw it as a theological one. However, his *L'Américanisme* (Paris, 1904) was regarded with suspicion because Houtin later became a Modernist.

the Church would meet the needs of the age only if it could embrace and bless the modern advances of science and technology, and thus prove itself a friend of the people.⁴

There was an ironic twist to the fate of the Americanists. Each had chafed under the European (Roman) inability to understand or appreciate things American. With Leo XIII's accession they believed that this would change. They hailed him as the "Pontiff of the Age," rejoiced in his progressive spirit, and were heartened by his seeming comprehension of the unique situation of the Church in the United States.⁵ They thought that their own ecclesial aspirations were in harmony with those of their sovereign pontiff. Then suddenly it was all over. Leo XIII fixed his signature to *Testem benevolentiae*, a censure of certain aspects of Americanism.⁶ What happened? What went wrong? Had the Pope failed to grasp the real significance of the Americanists' desires for the Church? Or was it rather that he found their ideas at variance with his own?

THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE AMERICANISTS

The historical factors of the Americanist conflict are well known and need not be rehearsed here.⁷ This paper will focus on the ecclesiological substrata of the controversy, with special emphasis on the thought of Hecker. He is not usually numbered among the Americanists; he had died in 1888, before the movement gained momentum. He is included here not only because it was the French edition of his biography which ultimately precipitated Roman intervention, but especially out of the conviction that his thought undergirded the entire development.⁸ Hecker so directly influenced Keane that their ecclesiolgies can be considered as a unit.⁹ Ireland and O'Connell were also familiar with Hecker's ideas,

⁴This idea is found scattered throughout their writings, particularly in Hecker's *The Church and the Age* (New York, 1887) pp. 7-64; Ireland's *The Church and Modern Society* (New York, 1897) pp. 87-113; Keane's "America as Seen from Abroad," *Catholic World* 66 (1898) 721-30; O'Connell's "A New Idea in the Life of Father Hecker," reprinted in Félix Klein's *Americanism: A Phantom Heresy* (Atchison, 1951) pp. 71-75.

⁵Hecker, "Leo XIII, 1837-1887," *Catholic World* 46 (1887) 291-98; Keane, "The Providential Mission of Leo XIII," a sermon delivered in Washington, D.C., in October 1888; Ireland, "The Pontiff of the Age," *The Church*, pp. 379-407.

⁶*Acta sanctae sedis* 31 (1899) 470-79.

⁷For the standard study of Americanism, see Thomas McAvoy's *The Great Crisis in American Catholic History: 1895-1900* (Chicago, 1957).

⁸*Le père Hecker, fondateur des "Paulistes" américains, 1819-1888*, par le Père W. Elliott, de même Compagnie. Traduit et adapté de l'anglais avec autorisation de l'auteur. Introduction par Mgr. Ireland. Préface par l'abbé Félix Klein (Paris, 1897). Hereinafter called Klein, *Vie*.

⁹Keane called Hecker his "father in the spiritual life" (APF, Americanism Papers, O'Connell to Klein, Rome, Oct. 18, 1897). In Keane's memorial article "Father Hecker," *Catholic World* 49 (1889) 2-9, he touched upon almost every point of Hecker's ecclesiology.

and the extent of his influence on these two men ought not to be underestimated.¹⁰

Central to Hecker's concept of the Church was the historical fact of the Incarnation, which consequently required that Christianity exist "in the concrete in organic vitality."¹¹ This incarnational emphasis gave his ecclesiology an anthropological orientation and his elevated appreciation of human nature a theological foundation. His respect for the role of intelligence and especially of liberty in the development of the full human personality was strongly colored by his own experience of democracy. He argued that man, heir to the accumulated wisdom of the past and equipped with new freedom, was better prepared than ever to respond to a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This divine action would "elevate the human personality to an intensity of force and grandeur productive of a new era to the Church and to society...difficult for the imagination to grasp."¹²

Hecker described the function of the Spirit in the Church as twofold: external and internal. The exterior aspects, sacraments, worship, the practice of virtue, and the exercise of authority, were to be subordinated to, and never substituted for, the interior and final aim of the Church. This was the deepening of the individual interior life and the immediate union of the soul with Christ.¹³ The essential elements, the "eternal principles of justice, right, and truth," the Church contains within itself and these are unchangeable.¹⁴ It was the accidental, contingent elements, the Americanists agreed, which could and should be changed if the Church would meet American expectations. As Ireland phrased it, the application of principle, "even in the divine," changes with the environment and circumstances. Thus an interpretation of Church principle can be new simply because the emergency calling for it has not arisen before.¹⁵ Since the situation of the Church in the United States was uniquely new, it was inevitable that it should develop differently.

The four Americanists shared the common and deep-rooted conviction that the destiny of the world had been laid at the feet of America, and with it the future of the Catholic Church. After all, they argued, America

¹⁰ In his introduction to Walter Elliott's *The Life of Father Hecker* (New York, 1891) viii, Ireland wrote that the flow of Catholic affairs in America in the last quarter of a century was largely due to Hecker. Ireland added that he himself was indebted to Hecker "for most salutary impressions." O'Connell's "New Idea in the Life of Hecker" follows very closely chaps. 2 and 3 of Hecker's *Church and Age*, pp. 64-112.

¹¹ Hecker, *Church and Age*, pp. 247 ff.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 39 ff. See also his "Mission of Leo XIII," p. 3, where he cites Keane's similar assessment.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 137, 219.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

¹⁵ Ireland, *The Church*, pp. 390 ff.

had been founded on Christian principles—Catholic in origin. The war for independence had been “a struggle for man’s sacred rights and liberties [guaranteed by] the Magna Charta.” The American colonists had received those rights “as a legacy from our Catholic ancestors.”¹⁶ In this way America had been providentially prepared to fulfil its “manifest destiny.”¹⁷ More than this, the form of government which obtained in the United States was the best one, for it guaranteed the Church its full free exercise to be the spiritual power it must be.¹⁸

In 1895 Leo XIII made it quite clear that he was not in accord with at least this aspect of the Americanists’ creed. Although *Longinqua oceani* praised the American nation and its young, vigorous Church, it warned that it was erroneous to conclude that the situation in the United States presented “the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced.”¹⁹ In deference to the Pope, Keane modified his subsequent assessment somewhat, but neither he nor Ireland nor O’Connell was totally disabused of the conviction that democracy would ultimately be the form of government all civilized nations would embrace; the American victory over monarchical (and Catholic) Spain in 1898 only confirmed it.²⁰ Concomitant with this was the belief that the Catholic Church in America would be paradigmatic of the Church universal.²¹

Thus it becomes clear that Americanism was concerned with more than political theory; it carried strong implications for Church life. Republicanism granted more freedom of individual participation than any other form, a share in self-government. Similarly, the new age of the Church demanded greater individual initiative among its members. Hecker and Keane had attributed this new freedom to the dogmatic definition of papal infallibility in 1870. This decree had ended an era of “siege

¹⁶ Hecker, *Church and Age*, pp. 81–83; Ireland, *The Church*, pp. 148–50, 171–73; O’Connell, “New Idea in the Life of Hecker,” pp. 71–73.

¹⁷ Hecker, “Reflessione sopra il presente e l’avvenire de cattolicisme negli Stati Uniti d’America,” *Civiltà cattolica* (3rd ser.) 8 (1857) 386. Typescript of the original manuscript, “The Present and the Future Prospects of the Catholic Faith in the United States of North America,” is preserved in APF, Hecker Papers.

¹⁸ Hecker, *Church and Age*, p. 113; Keane, “America as Seen from Abroad,” p. 725; Ireland, in *Figaro* (Paris), June 18, 1892; O’Connell, “New Idea in the Life of Hecker,” p. 74.

¹⁹ John J. Wynne, ed., *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (New York, 1903) p. 325.

²⁰ Ireland’s and O’Connell’s sense of “manifest destiny” is striking in their correspondence during the Spanish-American War. See John T. Farrell’s “Archbishop Ireland and Manifest Destiny,” *Catholic Historical Review* 33 (1947) 269–301.

²¹ Keane, “America as Seen from Abroad,” p. 730; O’Connell, “New Idea in the Life of Hecker,” pp. 74 f.

mentality" in the Church; the faithful could now return to a more "normal" spirituality. Catholics could assume greater individual initiative without threatening authority or orthodoxy, since it had been made secure.²² Ireland was in accord with their conclusion. In the present age, wrote the Archbishop of St. Paul, "Let there be individual initiative, layman need not wait for priest, nor priest for bishop, nor bishop for pope."²³

In the concrete, the Americanists advocated active involvement of the laity in Church and civic affairs; they should be co-operators with, and consultants to, their bishops.²⁴ Priests should not confine themselves to the sanctuary, but should participate in the social and political arena, show themselves as "priests of the people," mix with every assembly, and stand on every platform.²⁵ Because Hecker believed that the times demanded greater flexibility than monasticism allowed priests, he founded his institution as one without vows. He left the rule fluid so that it could incorporate features distinctive of American culture, yet at the same time preserve the essentials of religious life.²⁶ He also included the hierarchy in his dreams about the future. He speculated on the consequences of widespread democracy over Catholic nations. He wrote: "It would result in the College of Cardinals being made a representative body of all mankind. It would be the religious senate of the world. Its decisions would be the religious decisions of all humanity."²⁷

O'Connell, the Americanists' agent to the Vatican, was most explicit on the subject of the incompatibility of canon law with the principles governing the United States. He localized Rome's inability to "fully square" with America in two elements: the Curia Romana and canon law, that continuation of ancient Roman and medieval politics and disciplinary ideas.²⁸ O'Connell defended the superiority of British and American common law, which guarded man's God-given rights, over Roman law, in which man as man had no rights. In this context O'Connell remarked that his fellow countrymen could be converted "to Catholic truth quite easily, but their conversion to Roman political or public law [would be] utterly impossible."²⁹

This concern for the conversion of non-Catholic America was common to the four. They thought that the country was ripe for the harvest. Con-

²² Hecker, *Church and Age*, p. 138; Keane, "Father Hecker," p. 8.

²³ Ireland, *The Church*, p. 72.

²⁴ APF, Hecker Papers, untitled and undated fourteen-page typescript, pp. 12-14. Internal evidence places the composition sometime after April 1876.

²⁵ Ireland, *The Church*, p. 369.

²⁶ Elliott, *Life of Hecker*, pp. 251-80.

²⁷ *Church and Age*, p. 67.

²⁸ AASP, O'Connell to Ireland, Rome, Sept. 21, 1890.

²⁹ "New Idea in the Life of Hecker," p. 75.

sequently, the Americanists actively opposed anything which might have made their own church appear "foreign" to their fellow men.³⁰ The Americanists respected the American national character and the "portion of truth" possessed by their Protestant fellow citizens. In their ecumenical stance the Americanists were far in advance of the times.³¹ Consequently, their irenic exchanges with Protestants were often misunderstood and frowned upon by prelates both domestic and foreign.³²

At this point it is safe to assert that the Americanists were in unison on two major issues: the direction that the Church must take, and the ecclesial model which was best suited to meet the needs of the Church universal. They did differ, however, on the question of methodology. Hecker and Keane were content to let the action of Providence effect the implementation on a world-wide scale.³³ Ireland and O'Connell took a more pragmatic approach to the problem: they launched what they cryptically called "the movement." It was an active effort to export their own brand of ecclesiology through their lectures, writings, and personal contacts with influential "liberal" European churchmen.³⁴

Such ferment did not escape the notice of other and, as time would prove, more influential churchmen who strongly objected. Chief spokesman for the opposition was the avowed French monarchist Père Charles Maignen, author of *Etudes sur l'américanisme: Le père Hecker, est-il un saint?*³⁵ Maignen published his book in 1898 to debunk the mystique which *Le père Hecker, fondateur des "Paulistes" américains* had created. Maignen openly challenged Hecker's doctrinal orthodoxy and assassinated the character of his disciple, Bishop Keane. Nor were Ireland and O'Connell spared the venomous attack of Maignen's pen.³⁶ Whatever his pretext, it seems that the real root of Maignen's hostility towards

³⁰ Hecker, *Church and Age*, pp. 123, 161, 250; Ireland, *The Church*, pp. 63-75.

³¹ Keane and Ireland were actively involved in the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. See John Barrows, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions* 1 (Chicago, 1893) 123, 153.

³² In a letter to Herman Heuser, editor of the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Bishop Silas Chatard of Vincennes wrote re parliaments of religions: Catholics "are more likely to be compromised. It is . . . more conducive to our standing to hold aloof from all 'entangling alliances'" (ACHSP, Heuser Papers, CH 40, same to same, Indiana, Jan. 19, 1895).

³³ Hecker, private memoranda, 1874-75, quoted by Walter Ong, S.J., *American Catholic Crossroads* (New York, 1959) p. 57; Keane, "America as Seen from Abroad," pp. 725-30.

³⁴ For the movement, its programs, and its associates, see Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., *Denis J. O'Connell: Americanist Agent to the Vatican, 1895-1903* (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1969) pp. 236-44. (To be published under the title *The Vatican and the Americanist Crisis in the Miscellanea historiae pontificiae*, Rome, 1974.)

³⁵ Rome, 1898. Hereinafter called *Père Hecker*.

³⁶ See Klein, *Phantom Heresy*, chap. 12, "Maignen's Phantom Heresy," pp. 118-34.

Hecker and the Americans lay in his undying hatred for republicanism. A few years earlier he had given vent to his spleen in his *La soverainé du peuple est une hérésie.*³⁷ In the Americanist controversy there can be no doubt that it was Maignen and his camp who won the day. A careful comparison of his *Père Hecker* with *Testem benevolentiae* makes it abundantly clear that the papal letter was drafted from Maignen's point of view.³⁸ The slander has been deleted and the distortions somewhat corrected, but Maignen's basic accusations are all there in the Encyclical.

A number of efforts have been made to minimize both the intent and the impact of *Testem benevolentiae* on the American Church. Leo XIII himself reportedly said that the letter was intended only for "a few dioceses in France."³⁹ Félix Klein, editor of the *Vie*, later claimed that *Testem* had really attacked only a "phantom heresy."⁴⁰ It did not; *Testem* called into question some of Hecker's authentic teaching, tenets upon which he and the other Americanists had based their ecclesiology. Such an assertion demands an exhaustive analysis of *Testem*, but here a few examples will have to suffice.

TESTEM BENEVOLENTIAE AND THE AMERICANISTS' POSITION

An important issue both to the Americanists and to *Testem* is that of freedom and authority in the Church. But the approach of each differs radically. Paragraph 11 of *Testem* censures those "lovers of novelty" who hold that "allowance be granted the faithful, each one to follow more freely the leading of his own mind and the trend of his own activity."⁴¹ *Testem* added, rightly, that these "lovers of novelty" are of the opinion that "such liberty has its counterpart in the newly given civil freedom which is the right and foundation of almost every secular state."⁴²

Where the ramifications of liberty in the Church are delineated (pars. 13-15), the notion that the dogma of papal infallibility has ushered in a new era of individual freedom is attacked. On the contrary, Leo asserted,

³⁷ Paris, 1892.

³⁸ For a critical analysis of *Testem benevolentiae* and an evaluation of Maignen's and the Americanists' positions, see my *The Church and the Kingdom of God in America: The Ecclesiology of the Americanists* (Ph.D. diss., Fordham Univ., 1972) pp. 175-238.

³⁹ AASP, Keane to Ireland, Dubuque, Oct. 29, 1900.

⁴⁰ Klein, *Phantom Heresy*, p. 124.

⁴¹ Klein reprinted the official translation of *Testem benevolentiae* and divided it into numbered paragraphs; it is this numeration that is followed here. See *Phantom Heresy*, pp. 313-23.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 317.

the danger of the present age which confounds "license with liberty" demands even greater vigilance on the part of authority in order to "safe-guard the minds of the Church's children from the dangers of these present times."

A corollary of Hecker's interpretation of infallibility, a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit, also merited "some degree of suspicion" (par. 17). Dare we, *Testem* asked, measure our own times with those of the apostolic and nascent Church and "affirm that they received less of the divine outpouring from the Spirit of holiness?" It should be noted here that Hecker was comparing the new era with that of the post-Reformation "blind obedience" syndrome, not the apostolic Church. Yet he did insist that the modern age was one of greater activity of the Spirit. *Testem's* censure, therefore, would still seem to undercut Hecker's (and Keane's) entire ecclesiology. It was through the increased activity of the Holy Spirit in individuals that they believed the Church would come to embrace the modern world and its progress.

In the minds of the Americanists, the modern priest was one whose ministry should include more than the traditional functions. He should be one with his people and concern himself with all their concerns. *Testem*, however, defined the priestly ideal exclusive of any reference to "secular" concerns (par. 29). *Testem* also made it clear that vowless institutes (such as Hecker's Paulists) were in no way to be considered on a par with Church-honored monastic orders (pars. 29 f.). Hecker's priorities, flexibility and mobility for the clergy, were not shared by *Testem*.

After the theological aspects of Americanism had been treated, Leo granted that if all that was meant by Americanism were its political condition, the laws and customs by which the United States was governed, there was indeed "no reason to take exception to the name" (par. 31). It is this section of the letter that has led some commentators to conclude that "the Pope himself did not believe in the real existence of the errors which he judged appropriate to condemn according to theories."⁴³ However, before such an assessment can be accepted, the content of the entire document and of the entire Leonine corpus must be taken into consideration. Such a study shows that Leo XIII was not as sympathetic to the American scene as he has sometimes been judged. He was, after all, viewing the situation from his own perspective, a paternalistic, parochially Italian one.

The phrase "civil liberty" of *Testem's* paragraph 11 bears the same pejorative connotation that Leo had earlier attached to it in his Encycli-

⁴³ Houtin, *Américanisme*, p. 348, n. 1, quoting Georges Grappe, a talented young writer for the *Revue des deux Frances*.

cal *Immortale Dei* of 1885.⁴⁴ The historical perspective in which Leo had judged the democratic state focused exclusively on the situation of secular antinomian Europe. There the “sovereignty of the people” was defined with no reference to God—authority had as its origin and end the people alone.⁴⁵ Law made no provision for matters of a religious nature—such were consigned to the domain of individual conscience. The theory of separation between Church and state as worked out in practice on the Continent was one generally hostile to the interests of the Church. Its sphere of freedom, influence, and property was either diminished or destroyed. Consequently, the “civil liberty” advocated in such states could be understood by Leo only as synonymous with “unbridled license,”⁴⁶ and the separation of Church and state as an irreligious aberration, one ultimately leading to atheism.⁴⁷

The Christian Constitution of States, therefore, had been addressed to a reality which had little or nothing in common with the Americanist situation. However, Hecker and the Americanists had consistently interpreted Leo’s words and actions in light of their own concept and experience of democracy.⁴⁸ They seized upon *Immortale Dei*’s concession that “forms of government are contingent” and *Au milieu des sollicitude*’s support of the French Third Republic as a papal endorsement of democracy.⁴⁹ They failed to recognize that Leo was in no way ready to admit that the ideal form of government could be anything other than one in which the Catholic Church enjoyed a privileged position, protected and fostered by the state; indeed, one in which they were united.⁵⁰

Central to the diverse opinions about liberty held by Leo XIII and the Americanists is the degree of maturity each attributed to contemporary

⁴⁴ AAS 18 (1885) 161-80. For the English translation, see Wynne, *Encyclical of Leo XIII*, pp. 107-34. In this Encyclical, *The Christian Constitution of States*, Leo developed the ancient and medieval theory of two powers, *sacerdotium* and *imperium*, by adding that there were two distinct societies and two distinct orders of the law which differ in origins and ends (*op. cit.*, pp. 107 ff.).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 125.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 120 ff.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴⁸ See n. 5 above.

⁴⁹ For Ireland’s efforts to assuage the friction between Catholic royalists and their liberal opponents in France, see Adrien Dansette, *Religious History of Modern France* 2 (London, 1961) 138-44.

⁵⁰ Wynne, *Encyclical of Leo XIII*, pp. 118 ff., 111. In his article “La déclaration sur la liberté religieuse,” *Nouvelle revue théologique* 88 (1966) 62, John Courtney Murray, S.J., noted that Leo XIII frequently confused the “society” with the “state.” This was due to the word he used, *civitas*, which is of pre-Christian origin, when the society and the state were joined in ancient paganism.

man. Certainly, references to the dignity of the human person are not absent from the Pope's writings, but this is not the most luminous aspect of them either.⁵¹ Historically, it was the "unformed and illiterate masses" that Leo had in mind when he penned his encyclicals.⁵² Hecker and the Americanists, who understood democracy as the natural and ultimate expression of the authentic Catholic teaching about the worth of the individual, considered their peers possessed of an ever-expanding intellect with a concomitant fuller exercise of liberty.⁵³ They were prepared to share in the powers of government, whose role it was to facilitate and make more possible man's exercise of his rights and duties.

The attention of *Immortale Dei* is always directed to the "prince" or ruler, who acts as a "father" towards his "infant-subjects." Those governed are understood almost exclusively as "subjects," whose chief characteristic is obedience.⁵⁴ Leo delineated the ruler's role in ethical rather than juridical terms. It is the duty of the "prince" to form and direct his subjects towards virtue, for he knows what is right and wrong for them.⁵⁵ It is in this paternalistic context that Leo cedes to a ruler the exercise of "civil tolerance" towards various "sects" which might exist in his realm. This attitude can be adopted only out of necessity and in view of a greater good: the peace of his subjects.⁵⁶

Given Leo's understanding and experience of the liberty advocated in the political order, one could hardly expect that he would encourage its transferral to the religious domain. To Hecker and the Americanists, however, there was nothing unchristian about their advocacy of individual initiative in the Church with a consequent de-emphasis on its authoritarian aspects. They did not reason from the liberty granted in a democracy to a greater liberty which should be allowed in the Church. Rather, it was the reverse that they held: democracy was so congenial to Christianity because, as Ireland expressed it, "the principles of Catholic teaching are at the core of civil liberty."⁵⁷

Testem benevolentiae's subsequent emphasis on the virtue of obedi-

⁵¹ Murray, *art. cit.*, p. 54. See Wynne, *Encyclicals of Leo XIII*, pp. 123 ff.

⁵² Wynne, pp. 120 ff.

⁵³ Walter Elliott, Hecker's biographer and devoted friend, wrote that "there are those who think that the future of America is that of the whole civilized world and that the destiny of a christianized humanity everywhere is to live in a democratic state" ("A Critic of the Great Republic," *Catholic World* 40 [1884] 250). Elliott shared this view with the Americanists.

⁵⁴ Wynne, *Encyclicals of Leo XIII*, pp. 109 ff.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 118 ff.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 126 ff.

⁵⁷ Ireland, *The Church*, p. 35. See Hecker, *Church and Age*, pp. 83 ff., for a parallel treatment.

ence in the religious order flows logically from Leo XIII's theory of the subject in the political order. If man is ill-fitted to judge for himself in the civil realm, he is even less competent to do so in matters which pertain to a superior and supernatural one. The Americanists, on the other hand, were equally logical in their encouragement of initiative in religious matters, since they saw it as a function of the Holy Spirit given freer rein in man's developed nature. The tragedy of the controversy is rooted in the diverse historical contexts out of which Leo and the Americanists operated. Although they often used the same words, the meaning attached by each was necessarily different.

The effects of *Testem benevolentiae* on the prelates and priests involved were deep and far-reaching. Ireland and O'Connell quickly and quietly laid to rest their drive for Church "Americanization."⁵⁸ In 1900, when Keane was appointed to the See of Dubuque, Leo XIII enclosed an exhortation to keep in mind his letter on Americanism; "for many reasons, which we mentioned there, [showed that] the piety of the faithful was endangered."⁵⁹ That same year the Paulist staff of the *Catholic World* confessed that they were "under a scare...and afraid of...[their] own shadows...near to a veritable panic...."⁶⁰ Fifty years later Félix Klein still felt constrained to explain away the bugaboo called "Americanism."⁶¹ Meanwhile, less than a decade after *Testem benevolentiae* had been signed, Pope Pius X issued his global condemnation of Modernism. This, following so quickly in the wake of *Testem*, had the effect of a one-two punch on the American Church. It quelled any innovative spirit which had survived in the Catholic Church of the United States.

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⁵⁸ Fogarty, *Denis J. O'Connell*, pp. 279 ff.

⁵⁹ Quoted by Patrick H. Ahern, *The Life of John J. Keane* (Milwaukee, 1955) p. 285.

⁶⁰ APF, Americanism Papers, Elliott to Klein, St. Thomas College, Catholic Univ., Jan. 24, 1900.

⁶¹ Klein dedicated one entire volume of his four-part *souvenirs* to this task.