

## **BISHOP STROSSMAYER'S SPEECH IN THE VATICAN COUNCIL OF 1870**

### Roman Catholic Bishop Strossmayer, A Champion Against the Infallibility of the Pope

Among the 21 archbishops and 65 bishops of the Roman Catholic Church who voted against the Infallibility of the Pope at the 85th General Congregation of the Vatican Council, July 13, 1870, Bishop Jose Strossmayer was one of the greatest champions opposing the doctrine of Infallibility. THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, vol. XIV, gives the following information about the remarkable personality of Bishop Strossmayer, who for all his high rank in the Catholic hierarchy was not afraid to express his conclusions. The biographical sketch written by the Catholic Klemens Löffler and authorized by Catholic censorship will speak more eloquently than any commentary we may offer on this subject.

Strossmayer, Joseph Georg, Bishop of Diakovár, b. at Esseg in Croatia-Slavonia 4 Feb. 1815, d. 8 April 1905. He came from a family of German peasants who had immigrated into Croatia. He obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy when only twenty years of age. In 1838 he was ordained priest and was for two years vicar at Peterwarden. . . In 1842 he obtained the degree of Doctor of Theology . . . professor at Diakovar. . court chaplain, prefect in the Augustineum at Vienna and professor of Canon Law at the University of Vienna. On 18 Nov.1849 he was appointed Bishop . . . At the same time was Apostolic Administrator of Belgrade-Semandria in Servia. In 1898 the pope conferred the pallium upon him. At the Vatican Council he was one of the most notable opponents of papal infallibility, and distinguished himself as a speaker. The pope praised Strossmayer's remarkably good Latin. A speech in which he defended Protestantism made a great sensation. After the council Strossmayer maintained his opposition longer than all the other bishops and kept up a connection with Döllinger and Reinkens until October, 1871. Then he notified them that he intended to yield "at least outwardly" ... In politics he was an active supporter of the Croatian national party and Panslavism. He exerted himself to advance his people in civilization, yet he strengthened national hatreds by political agitation He sought to win the Servians who were not Uniat for Rome by the use of the Old Slavonic Liturgy.

(From the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. XIV. The Encyclopedia Press Inc. New York. Nihil Obstat July 1, 1912. Imprimatur by John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

#### **Strossmayer's Speech**

Venerable fathers and brethren: It is not without trembling, yet with a conscience free and tranquil before God who lives and sees me, that I open my mouth in the midst of you in this august assembly. From the time that I have been sitting here with you I have followed with attention the speeches that have been made in the hall, hoping with great desire that a ray of light descending from on high might enlighten the eyes of my understanding, and permit me to vote the canons of this Holy Ecumenical Council with perfect knowledge of the case.

#### **No Basis For Papacy**

Penetrated with the feelings of responsibility, of which God will demand an account, I have set myself to study with the most serious attention the Old and Testaments, and I

have asked these venerable monuments of truth to make known to me if the holy pontiff, who presides here, is truly the successor of St. Peter, vicar of Jesus Christ, and the infallible doctor of the church. To resolve this grave question I have been obliged to ignore the present state of things; and to transport myself in mind, with the evangelical torch in my hand, to the days when there was neither Ultramontanism nor Gallicanism, and in which the church had for doctors St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John — doctors to whom no one can deny the divine authority without putting in doubt that which the holy Bible, which is here before me, teaches us, and which the Council of Trent has proclaimed as the rule of faith and of morals. I have then opened these sacred pages. Well (shall I dare to say it?), I have found nothing near or far which sanctions the opinion of the Ultramontanes. And still more, to my great surprise, I find in the apostolic days no question of a pope, successor to St. Peter, and vicar of Jesus Christ, any more than of Mahomet who did not then exist. You, Monsignor Manning, will say that I blaspheme; you, Monsignor Fie, that I am mad. No, Monsignori, I do not blaspheme, and I am not mad. Now, having read the whole New Testament, I declare before God, with my hand raised to that great crucifix, that I have found no trace of the papacy as it exists at this moment. Do not refuse me your attention, my venerable brethren, and with your murmuring and interruptions do not justify those who say, like Father Hyacinthe, that this Council is nothing, and that our votes have been from the beginning dictated by authority. If such were the case, this august assembly, on which the eyes of the whole world are turned, would fall into the most shameful discredit. If we wish to make it great, we must be free. I thank his Excellency, Monsignor Dupanloup, for the sign of approbation which he makes with his head: this gives me courage, and I go on.

### **The Testimony of Christ**

Reading then the sacred books with that attention with which the Lord has made me capable, I do not find one single chapter, or one little verse, in which Jesus Christ gives to St. Peter the mastery over the apostles, his fellow-workers. If Simon, son of Jonas, had been what we believe his holiness Pius IX to be today, it is wonderful that He had not said to him: 'When I have ascended to my Father, you should all obey Simon Peter as you obey me. I establish him my vicar upon earth.'

Not only is Christ silent on this point, but so little does He think of giving a head to the church, that when He promises to His apostles to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:38) He promises them twelve thrones, one for each, without saying that among those thrones one shall be higher than the others — which shall belong to Peter. Certainly, if He had wished that it should be so, He would have said it. What do we conclude from this sentence? Logic tells us that Christ did not wish to make St. Peter the head of the apostolic college. When Christ sent the apostles to conquer the world, to all He gave the promise of the Holy Spirit. Permit me to repeat it: if He had wished to constitute Peter His vicar, He would have given him the chief command over His spiritual army. Christ — so says the Holy Scriptures — forbade Peter and his colleagues, to reign or to exercise lordship, or to have authority over the faithful like the kings of the Gentiles (Luke 22:25). If St. Peter had been elected pope, Jesus would not have spoken thus; but according to our tradition, the papacy holds in its hands two swords, symbols of spiritual and temporal power.

### **The Testimony of the Early Church**

One thing has surprised me very much. Turning it over in my mind, I said to myself,

if Peter had been elected Pope, would his colleagues have been permitted to send him with St. John to Samaria to announce the gospel of the Son of God? What do you think, venerable brethren, if at this moment we permitted ourselves to send his holiness Pius IX and his Excellency Mons. Plantier to go to the Patriarch of Constantinople, to pledge him to put an end to the Eastern schism?

But here is another still more important fact. An Ecumenical Council is assembled at Jerusalem to decide on the questions which divide the faithful. Who would have called together this Council if St. Peter had been pope? St. Peter. Who would have presided at it? St. Peter, or his legate? Who would have promulgated the canons? St. Peter. Well, nothing of this occurred. The apostle assisted at the Council as all the others did, yet it was not he who summed it up, but St. James; and when the decrees were promulgated, it was in the name of the apostles, the elders, and the brethren (Acts 16). Is it thus that we do in our church? The more I examine, O venerable brethren, the more I am convinced that in the scriptures the son of Jonas does not appear to be first.

### **The Testimony of St. Paul**

Now, while we teach that the church is built upon St. Peter, St. Paul (whose authority cannot be doubted) says, in his epistle to the Ephesians 2:20, it is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. And the same apostle believes so little in the supremacy of St. Peter, that he openly blames those who would say, We are of Paul, We are of Apollos (1 Cor. 1:12), as those who say, We are of Peter. If therefore this last apostle had been the vicar of Christ, St. Paul would have taken great care not to censure so violently those who belonged to his own colleagues. The same apostle, counting up the offices of the church, mentions apostles, prophets, evangelists, doctors, and pastors. Is it to be believed, my venerable brethren, that St. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, would have forgotten the first of these offices, the papacy, if the papacy had been of divine institution? The forgetfulness appeared to me to be as impossible as if an historian of this Council were not to mention one word of his holiness Pius IX (Several voices — 'Silence, heretic, silence.') Calm yourselves, my brethren, I have not as yet finished. Forbidding me to go on, you show yourselves to the world to do wrong in shutting the mouth of the member of this assembly.

I continue. The Apostle Paul makes no mention in any of his letters directed to the various churches, of the primacy of Peter. If this primacy had existed, it, in one word, the church had in its body a supreme head infallible in teaching; would the great apostle of the Gentiles have forgotten to mention it? What do I say? He would have written a long letter on this all-important subject. Then, as he had actually done, when the edifice of the Christian doctrine is erected, would the foundation, the key of the arch, be forgotten? Now, unless you hold that the church of the apostles was heretical (which none of us would either desire or dare to say), we are obliged to confess that the church has never been more beautiful, more pure, or more holy, than in the days when there was no pope. (Cries of, 'It is not true; it is not true.') Let not Monsignor di Laval say, 'No,' since any of you, my venerable brethren, should dare to think that the church which has today a pope for its head is more in the faith, more pure in its morals than the Apostolic church, let him say it openly in the face of the universe, for this enclosure is the centre from which our words fly from pole to pole.

I go on. Neither in the writings of St. Paul, St. John, nor St. James, have I found a trace or germ of the papal power, St. Luke, the historian of the missionary labors of the

apostles, is silent on this all-important point. The silence of these holy men, whose writings make part of the canon of the divinely-inspired Scriptures has appeared to me burdensome and impossible, if Peter had been pope, and as unjustifiable as if Thiers, writing the history of Napoleon Bonaparte, had omitted the title of emperor.

I see here before me a member of the assembly, who says, pointing at me with his finger, 'There is a schismatic bishop who has got among us under false colors.' No, no, my venerable brethren, I have not entered this august assembly as a thief, by the window, but by the door like yourselves. My title of bishop gave me a right to it, as my Christian conscience forces me to speak and to say that which I believe to be true.

### **The Testimony of St. Peter**

What has surprised me most, and what moreover is capable of demonstration, is the silence of St. Peter. If the apostle had been what we proclaim him to be—that is, the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth — he surely would have known it; if he had known it, how is it that not once did he act as pope? He might have done it on the day of Pentecost, when he pronounced his first sermon, but did not do it; neither in his two letters directed to the church. Can you imagine such a pope, my venerable brethren, if St. Peter had been pope? Now, if you wish to maintain that he was the pope, the natural consequence arises that you must maintain that he was ignorant of the fact, Now I ask whoever has a head to think and a mind to reflect, are these two suppositions possible?

To return, I say, while the apostle lived, the church never thought that there could be a pope; to maintain the contrary; all the sacred writings must be entirely ignored.

But it is said on all sides, was not St. Peter at Rome? Was he not crucified with his head down? Are not the pulpits in which he taught, the altars at which he said the mass, in this eternal city? St. Peter having been at Rome, my venerable brethren, rests only on tradition; but, if he had been Bishop of Rome, how can you from this episcopate prove his supremacy? Scaliger, one of the most learned of men, has not hesitated to say that St. Peter's episcopate and residence at Rome ought to be classed with ridiculous legends. (Repeated cries, 'Shut his mouth, shut his mouth; make him come down from the pulpit.')

### **The Testimony of History**

Venerable brethren, I am ready to be silent; but is it not better, in an assembly like ours, to prove all things, as the apostle commands, and to hold fast what is good? We have a dictator, before whom we — even his holiness Plus IX himself — must prostrate ourselves, and be silent and bow our heads. That dictator is history. This is not like a legend, which can be made as the potter makes his clay, but is like a diamond which cuts on the glass what cannot be cancelled. Till I have only leant on her, and if I've found no trace of the papacy in the apostolic days, the fault is hers, not mine. Do you wish to put me into the position of one accused of falsehood? You may do it, if you can.

I hear from the right some one expressing these words — 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.' I will answer this objection presently, my venerable brethren; but, before doing so, I wish to present you with the result of my historical researches.

Finding no trace of the papacy in the days of the apostles, I said to myself, I shall find what I am in search of in the annals of the church. Well, I say it frankly — I have sought for a pope in the first four centuries, and I have not found him. None of you, I hope, will doubt the great authority of the holy Bishop of Hippo, the great and blessed St. Augustine. This pious doctor, the honor and glory of the Catholic church, was secretary

in the Council of Melvie. In the decrees of this venerable assembly are to be found these significant words —"Whosoever wills to appeal to those beyond the sea shall not be received by any one in Africa to the communion." The bishops of Africa acknowledged the bishop of Rome so little that they smote with excommunication those who would have recourse to an appeal. These same bishops, in the sixth Council of Carthage, held under Aurelius, Bishop of that city, wrote to Celestinus, Bishop of Rome, to warn him not to receive appeals from the bishops, priests or clerics of Africa: and that he should send no more legates or commissaries; and that he should not introduce human pride into the church.

That the Patriarch of Rome had from the earliest times tried to draw to himself all the authority is an evident fact; but it is an equally evident fact that he had not the supremacy which the Ultramontanes attribute to him. Had he possessed it, would the Bishops of Africa —St. Augustine first among them — have dared to prohibit the appeals of their decrees to his supreme tribunal? I confess without difficulty that the Patriarch of Rome held the first place. One of Justinian's laws says, 'Let us order, after the definition of the four Councils, that the holy pope of ancient Rome shall be the first of the bishops, and that the most high Archbishop of Constantinople, which is the new Rome, shall be the second.' 'Bow down then to the supremacy of the pope,' you will say to me. Do not run so fast to this conclusion, my venerable brethren, inasmuch as the law of Justinian has written on the face of it, 'Of the order of the patriarchal sees.' Precedence is one thing, the power of jurisdiction is another. For example, supposing that in Florence there was an assembly of all the bishops of the kingdom, the precedence would be given to the Primate of Florence as among the Easterns it would be accorded to the Patriarch of Constantinople, as in England to the Archbishop of Canterbury. But neither the first, nor the second, nor the third, could deduce from the position assigned to him a jurisdiction over his colleagues.

The importance of the bishops of Rome proceeded not from a divine power, but from the importance of the city in which they had their seat. Monsignor Darboy (in Paris) is not superior in dignity to the Archbishop of Avignon; but, in spite of that, Paris gives him a consideration which he would not have, if, instead of having his palace on the bank of the Seine, he had it on that of the Rhone. That which is true in the religious order is the same in civil and political matters: the prefect of Rome is not more a prefect than one at Pisa; but civilly and politically he has a greater importance.

I have said that from the very first centuries the Patriarch of Rome aspired to the universal government of the church. Unfortunately he very nearly reached it; but he had not succeeded assuredly in his pretensions, for the Emperor Theodosius II made a law by which he established that the Patriarch of Constantinople should have the same authority as he of Rome (*Leg. cod. de sacr.*, etc.) The fathers of the Council of Chalcedon put the bishops of the new and the old Rome in the same order on all things, even ecclesiastical (Can. 28). The sixth council of Carthage forbade all the bishops to take the title of prince of the bishops, or sovereign bishop. As for this title of universal bishop, which the popes took later, St. Gregory I, believing that his successors would never think of adorning themselves with it, wrote these remarkable words, 'None of my predecessors has consented to take this profane name; for when a patriarch gives himself the name of Universal, the title of patriarch suffers discredit. Far be it from Christians to desire to give themselves a title which brings discredit upon their brethren!'

## The Testimony of the Church Fathers

The words of St. Gregory are directed to his colleagues of Constantinople, who pretended to the primacy of the Church. Pope Pelagius II calls John, Bishop of Constantinople, who aspired to the high priesthood, 'Impious and profane.' 'Do not care,' he said, 'for the title of universal, which John has usurped illegally. Let none of the patriarchs take this profane name; for what misfortunes may we not expect, if among the priests such elements arise?' They would get what has been foretold for them — He is the king of the sons of pride.' [*Pelagius II, Lett. 13*]. 13.) Do not these authorities prove (and, I might add, an hundred more of equal value), with a clearness as the sun at mid-day, that the first bishops of Rome were not till much later recognized as universal bishops and heads of the church? And on the other hand, who does not know that from the year 325, in which the first Council of Nice was held, down to 580, the year of the second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, among more than 1,109 bishops who assisted at the first six general Councils, there were not more than nineteen Western bishops? Who does not know that the Councils were convoked by the Emperors without informing and sometimes against the wish of the bishop of Rome? — that Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, presided at the first Council of Nice, and edited the canons of it? The same Hosius presided afterwards at the Council of Sardica, excluding the legates of Julius, Bishop of Rome.

I say no more, my venerable brethren; and I come now to speak of the great argument — which you mentioned before — to establish the primacy of the Bishop of Rome by the rock (*pétra*). If this were true, the dispute would be at an end; but our forefathers — and they certainly knew something — did not think of it as we do. St. Cyril in his fourth book on the Trinity, says, 'I believe that by the rock you must understand the unshaken faith of the apostles.' St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, in his second book on the Trinity, says, 'The rock (*pétra*) is the blessed and only rock of the faith confessed by the mouth of St. Peter;' and in the sixth book of the Trinity, he says, 'It is on this rock of the confession of faith that the church is built.' 'God,' says St. Jerome, in the sixth book on St. Matthew, 'has founded His church on this rock, and it is from this rock that the apostle Peter has been named.' After him St. Chrysostom says in his fifty-third homily on St. Matthew, 'On this rock I will build my church — that is on the faith of the confession.' Now, what was the confession of the apostle? Here is it — Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Ambrose, the holy Archbishop of Milan (on the second chapter of the Ephesians), St. Basil of Seleucia, and the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon, teach exactly the same thing. Of all the doctors of Christian antiquity St. Augustine occupies one of the first places for knowledge and holiness. Listen then to what he writes in his second treatise on the first epistle of St. John: 'What do the words mean I will build my church on this rock? *On this faith*, on that which said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' In his treatise on St. John we find this most significant phrase — 'On this rock which thou hast confessed I will build my church, since Christ was the rock.' The great bishop believed so little that the church was built on St. Peter that he said to the people in his thirteenth sermon, 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock (*pétra*) which thou has Confessed, on this rock which thou hast known, saying, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, I will build my church — upon Myself, who am the Son of the living God: I will build it on Me, and not Me on thee.' That which St. Augustine thought upon this celebrated passage was the opinion of all Christendom in his time.

Therefore, to resume, I establish: (1) That Jesus has given to His apostles the same power that He gave to St. Peter. (2) That the apostles never recognized in St. Peter the vicar of Jesus Christ and the infallible doctor of the church. (3) That St. Peter never thought of being pope and never acted as if he were pope. (4) That the Councils of the first four centuries, while they recognized the high position on which the Bishop of Rome occupied in the church on account of Rome, only accorded to him a pre-eminence of honor, never of power or of jurisdiction. (5) That the holy fathers in the famous passage, 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,' never understood that the church was built on Peter (*súper Pétrum*) but on the rock (*súper pétram*), that is, on the confession of the faith of the apostle. I conclude victoriously, with history, with reason, with logic, with good sense, and with a Christian conscience, that Jesus Christ did not confer any supremacy on St. Peter and that the bishops of Rome did not become sovereigns of the church, but only by confiscating one by one all the rights of the episcopate. (Voices — 'Silence, impudent Protestant! Silence!')

No, I am not an impudent Protestant. History is neither Catholic, nor Anglican, nor-Calvinistic, nor Lutheran, nor Armenian, nor schismatic Greek nor Ultramontane. She is what she is — that is, something stronger than all confessions of faith of the Canons of the Ecumenical Councils. Write against it, if you dare! But you cannot destroy it, any more than taking a brick out of the Coliseum would make it fall. If I have said anything which proves to be false, show it to me by history, and without a moment's hesitation I will make an honorable apology; but be patient, and you will see that I have not said all that I would or could; and even were the funeral pile waiting for me in the place of St. Peter's, I should not be silent, and I am obliged to go on. Monsignor Dupanloup, in his celebrated *Observations* on this Council of the Vatican, has said, and with reason, that if we declared Pius IX infallible, we must necessarily, and from natural logic, be obliged to hold that all his predecessors were also infallible.

### **The Testimony of Papal Contradictions**

Well, venerable brethren, here history raises its voice to assure us that some popes have erred. You may protest against it or deny it, as you please, but I will prove it. Pope Victor (192) first approved of Montanism, and then condemned it. Marcellinus (296-303) was an idolater. He entered into the temple of Vesta, and offered incense to the goddess. You will say that it was an act of weakness; but I answer, a vicar of Jesus Christ dies rather than become an apostate. Liberius (358) consented to the condemnation of Athanasius, and made a profession of Arianism, that he might be recalled from his exile and reinstated in his see. Honorius (625) adhered to Monothelism. Father Gratry has proved it to demonstration. Gregory I, (785-90) calls any one Antichrist who takes the name of Universal Bishop, and contrary-wise Boniface III, (607, 9) made the parricide Emperor Phocas confer that title upon him. Paschal II, (1088-99) and Eugenius III [1145-53] authorized dueling; Julius II (1509) and Pius IV (1560) forbade it. Eugenius IV (1432-39) approved of the Council of Basle and the restitution of the chalice to the church of Bohemia; Pius II (1458) revoked the concession. Hadrian II (867-872) declared civil marriages to be valid; Pius VII (1800-23) condemned them. Sixtus V (1585-90) published an edition of the Bible, and, by a bull recommended it to be read; Pius VII condemned the reading of it. Clement XIV (1769-1774) abolished the order of the Jesuits, permitted by Paul III, and Pius VII re-established it.

But why look for such remote proofs? Has not our holy Father here in his bull which

gave the rules for this Council, in the event of his dying while it was sitting, revoked all that in past times may be contrary to it, even when that proceeds from the decisions of his predecessors? And certainly, if Pius IX has spoken *ex cathedra*, it is when, from the depths of his sepulchre, he imposes his will on the sovereigns of the church, I should never finish, my venerable brethren, if I were to put before your eyes the contradictions of the popes in their teaching. If then you proclaim the infallibility of the actual pope, you must either prove — that which is impossible — that the popes never contradicted each other, or else you must declare that the Holy Spirit has revealed to you that the infallibility of the papacy only dates from 1870. Are you bold enough to do this?

Perhaps the people may be indifferent, and pass by theological questions which they do not understand, and of which they do not see the importance; but though they are indifferent to principle, they are not so to facts. Do not then deceive yourselves. If you decree the dogma of papal infallibility, the Protestants, our adversaries, will mount in the breach, the more bold that they have history on their side, whilst we have only our own denial against them. What can we say to them when they show up all the bishops of Rome from the days of Luke to his holiness, Pius IX, we should triumph on the whole line; but alas! it is not so. (Cries of 'Silence, silence; enough, enough!')

Do not cry out, Monsignori! To tear history is to own yourselves conquered; and moreover, if you made the whole waters of the Tiber pass over it, you would not cancel a single page. Let us speak, and I will be as short as it is possible on this most important subject — Pope Vigilius (538) purchased the papacy from Belisarius, lieutenant of the Emperor Justinian. It is true that he broke his promise and never paid for it. Is this a canonical mode of binding on the tiara? The second Council of Chalcedon had formally condemned it. In one of its canons you read that the bishop who obtains his episcopate by money shall lose it and be degraded. Pope Eugenius III (IV in original) [II45] imitated Vigilius. St. Bernard, the bright star of his age, reproves the pope, saying to him, 'Can you show me in this great city of Rome any one who would receive you as pope if they had not received gold or silver for it?'

My venerable brethren, will a pope who establishes a bank at the gates of the temple be inspired by the Holy Spirit? Will he have any right to teach the church infallibility? You know the history of Formosus too well for me to add to it. Stephen XI caused his body to lie exhumed, dressed in his pontifical robes; he made the fingers which he used for giving the benediction to be cut off, and then had him thrown into the Tiber, declaring him to be a perjurer and illegitimate. He was then imprisoned by the people, poisoned, and strangled. Look how matters were re-adjusted; Romanus, successor to Stephen, and after him, John X, rehabilitated the memory of Formosus.

But you will tell me these are fables, not history, Fables! Go, Monsignori, to the Vatican Library and read Platina, the historian of the papacy, and the annals of Baronius [A.D. 897]. These are facts which, for the honor of the Holy See, we should wish to ignore; but when it is to define a dogma which may provoke a great schism in our midst, the love which we bear to our venerable mother church, Catholic Apostolic, and Roman, ought it to impose silence on us?

I go on. The learned Cardinal Baronius, speaking of the papal court, says (give attention, my venerable brethren, to these words), "What did the Roman church appear in those days? How Infamous"! Only all-powerful courtesans governing in Rome! It was they who gave, exchanged, and took bishoprics; and horrible to relate, they got their

lovers, the false popes, put on the throne of St. Peter" (Baronius, A.D. 912). You will answer, these were false popes, not true ones: let it be so; but in that case, if for fifty years the see of Rome was occupied by anti-popes, how will you pick up again the thread of pontifical succession? Has the church been able, at least for a century and a half, to go on without a head, and find itself acephalous?

Look now: The greatest number of these anti-popes appear in the genealogical tree of the papacy; and it must have been this absurdity that Baronius described; because Genebardo, the great flatterer of the popes, had dared to say in his Chronicles (A.D. 901). 'This century is unfortunate, as for nearly 150 years the popes have fallen from all the virtues of their predecessors, and have become *apostates* rather than *apostles*.' I can understand how the illustrious Baronius must have blushed when he narrated the acts of these Roman bishops. Speaking of John XI (931), natural son of Pope Sergius and of Marozia, he wrote these words in his annals — 'The holy church, that is, the Roman, has been vilely trampled on by such a monster.' John XII (956), elected pope at the age of eighteen, through the influence of courtesans, was not one whit better than his predecessor.

I grieve, my venerable brethren, to stir up so much filth, I am silent on Alexander VI. father and lover of Lucretia; I turn away from John XXIII (1410) who, because of simony and immorality, was deposed by the holy Ecumenical Council of Constance. Some will maintain that this Council was only a private one; let it be so; but if you refuse any authority to it, as a logical sequence you must hold the nomination of Martin V (1417) to be illegal. What then, will become of the papal succession? Can you find the thread of it?

I do not speak of the schisms which have dishonored the church. In those unfortunate days the See of Rome was occupied by two competitors, and sometimes even by three. Which of these was the true pope? Resuming once more, again I say, if you decree the infallibility of the present bishop of Rome, you must establish the infallibility of all the preceding ones, without excluding any. But can you do that, when history is there establishing with a clearness equal to that of the sun, that the popes have erred in their teaching? Could you do it and maintain that avaricious, incestuous, murdering, simoniacal popes have been vicars of Jesus Christ? Oh, venerable brethren! to maintain such an enormity would be to betray Christ worse than Judas. It would be to throw dirt in His face. (Cries, 'Down from the pulpit, quick; shut the mouth of the heretic!')

### **Save the Church**

My venerable brethren, you cry out: but would it not be more dignified to weigh my reasons and my proofs in the balance of the sanctuary? Believe me, history cannot be made over again; it is there, and will remain for all eternity, to protest energetically against the dogma of papal infallibility, you may proclaim it unanimously; but one vote will be wanting, and that is mine! Monsignori, the true and faithful have their eyes on us, expecting from us a remedy for the innumerable evils which dishonor the church; will you deceive them in their hopes? What will not our responsibility before God be, if we let this solemn occasion pass which God has given us to heal the true faith? Let us seize it, my brethren; let us arm ourselves with a holy courage; let us make a violent and generous effort; let us turn to the teaching of the apostles, since without that we have only errors, darkness, and false traditions. Let us avail ourselves of our reason and of our intelligence to take the apostles and prophets as our only infallible masters with reference to the

question of questions, 'What must I do to be saved?' When we have decided that, we shall have laid the foundation of our dogmatic system firm and immovable on the rock, lasting and incorruptible, of the divinely inspired Holy Scriptures. Full of confidence, we will go before the world, and like the apostle Paul, in the presence of the free-thinkers, we will know none other than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 'We will conquer through the preaching of 'the folly of the Cross,' as Paul conquered the learned men of Greece and Rome; and the Roman Church will have its glorious '89. (Clamorous cries, 'Get down! Out with the Protestant, the Calvinist, the traitor of the church.') Your cries, Monsignori, do not frighten me. If my words are hot, my head is cool. I am neither of Luther, nor of Calvin, nor of Paul, nor of Apollos, but of Christ. (Renewed cries, 'Anathema, anathema, to the apostate.')

'Anathema? Monsignori, anathema? You know well that you are not protesting against me, but against the holy apostles under whose protection I should wish this Council to place the church. Ah! If wrapped in their winding sheets they came out of their tombs, would they speak a language different from mine? What would you say to them when by their writings they tell you that the papacy has deviated from the gospel of the Son of God, which they have preached and confirmed in so generous a manner by their blood? Would you dare say to them, we prefer the teaching of our own popes, our Bellarmine, our Ignatius Loyola, to yours? No, no! a thousand times, no! unless you have, shut your ears that you may not hear, closed your eyes that you may not see, blunted your mind that you may not understand. Ah! If He who reigns above wishes to punish us, making His hand fall heavily on us, as He did on Pharoah, He has no need to permit Garibaldi's soldiers to drive us away from the eternal city. He has only to let them make Plus IX a god, as we have made a goddess of the blessed Virgin. Stop, stop, venerable brethren, on the odious and ridiculous incline on which you have placed yourselves. Save the church from the shipwreck which threatens her, asking from the Holy Scriptures alone for the rule of faith which we ought to believe and to profess. I have spoken, may God help me!'