

THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IN
FRANCE.

BY JEAN CHARLEMAGNE BRACQ, LITT. D., PROFESSOR OF
ROMANCE LANGUAGES IN VASSAR COLLEGE.

The great religious conflict now going on in the land of Calvin and Voltaire is far from new; it is the culmination of a movement which has lasted centuries, whereby France has endeavored to enfranchise herself from clerical domination. Even Saint Louis, Philip the Fair and other devout kings took part in this work of liberation. If the Huguenots fought for pure religion they also aimed to lessen the political hold of the Church upon the country. If the philosophers of the eighteenth century contended for the supremacy of human reason, demanded its freedom, they also aimed to relieve political institutions from theocratic sway. The Liberals of the nineteenth century, ever asserting the non-religious character of the State, did their utmost to oust the Catholic clergy from all privileges not strictly religious, and to free the State from all sacerdotal interference. During the last few years the question has been taken up again by the anti-Clericals who, as a whole, wish to compel the Church to become simply a religious body. Obeying a principle of social differentiation which tends to prevail everywhere she must cease to be a political power to become exclusively religious. The people have a brief formula to express their ideal in their own way, "The priest in his church," whereby they mean, let the priest attend to his church and to that only. Had the clergy of France heeded this national wish the question of separation would not at this time have been forced upon the country. Now that the Chamber of Deputies has voted it, and the Senate will soon endorse the decisions of the lower house, it is worth while to study the positions of the two parties, their character, their ideals and their

probable relations after the divorce of Church and State has been consummated.

The most important factor, on the Church side, is a body of two hundred thousand persons, living professionally in a state of celibacy, who claim divine right to the intellectual, moral and religious guidance of the nation. An association of celibatists, regardless of its profession, will always be difficult to manage. As a rule, it will be narrow, irritable, dogmatic and doctrinaire. It will be in society like an infusible crystal rather than like a healthy member of an organism. If it has a long history it will have the characteristics of a caste in which the ruling ideas are those of the older members in whose hands resides the authority. Thus a Cardinal Richard of Paris can always reduce to silence a brilliant and modest young scholar like Abbé Loisy, and a Bishop Rumeau can always seal the lips and break the pen of a learned young priest like Abbé Houtin, not by good reasons, but by a mere command. In addition to the celibacy of the members of this body, and the prevalence of the senescent spirit among them there is the further fact that they speak for God, they are his substitutes, his lieutenants, and as such are accustomed to be obeyed by every one about them. Obedience to the Church, which is the law of their conduct, seems to them the law for all. They would bend the neck of every human being under the yoke which is to them divine. They cannot see the reason why non-Catholics reject their claims. Untaught in the noble art of reasoning from facts, they pass judgments upon questions in which they only distantly touch the points at issue. A man who opposes them—even in secular matters—opposes the Church, opposes religion and opposes God. In this way the least attack against a political privilege long enjoyed by the clergy becomes a virtual war on religion. It is easy to see that men and women with such psychological traits will view an energetic movement of opposition as a stupendous persecution.

Over this whole body, organized like the most perfect army, are the bishops. By the celebrated treaty between Pius VII. and Napoleon I., known as the Concordat, they are State officials; but by their spiritual office, they claim divine authority over the people of France. While the Pope reserved to himself certain prerogatives in dealing with the French Episcopate, Napoleon could deal with them as if they were army officers. They might not leave their diocese without the permission of the government. They were forbidden to assemble of their own accord, to take any form of collective action or to interfere in any way with politics. Above all there was a pledge of loyalty to the government. They have taken strange liberties with this compact, and during the last few years they who were to abstain from politics have been the prime movers in the clerical opposition. Outside of the political sphere they have exhibited a spirit which has aroused all independent thinkers against them. When Littré, a man as remarkable for his scholarship as for the signal beauty of his life, was received in the French Academy, Bishop Dupanloup haughtily left that assembly because the new member was a Positivist, and above all an Evolutionist. When the philosophers and scientists ventured to criticize Catholic tenets bearing upon philosophical speculations or scientific facts they were either disdainfully ignored by the bishops or were met by rhetorical generalities which excited contempt. At times they so lost the sense of reality as to become ridiculous. When Jules Simon abolished, in the secondary schools, the writing of dumb Latin verses, a reform demanded by every progressive educator, Bishop Dupanloup published a letter in which he represented fathers in tears, asking in great distress what was to become of France. The consequence of their attitude was that they lost the respect of many of their followers, and called forth all possible antagonism from their opponents.

Among the causes which have profoundly affected the

present situation are the acts of the Pope. The Sovereign Pontiff has lost, in French eyes, the mystical halo of former days. The railroad, the telegraph, the telephone and the newspaper have brought him nearer, and pontifical fictions tend to disappear. The papal election is no longer viewed as a divine selection, for the Pope is an Italian, chosen by Italians who have the majority in the sacred college. Even this majority is not absolutely free in its choice, inasmuch as, at the last hour, Austria vetoed the possible election of Cardinal Rampolla on the ground of his friendliness to France. Hence for many Frenchmen the Pope is not only a foreigner, but one elected to office by an act unfriendly to their country. He is the general-in-chief of the clergy. He finds his loudest supporters among the French noblemen, drawn to clericalism more by class interests and by their social affinities than by their religious loyalty. There are also with them those who formerly considered the altar as the best support of the throne and now view it as the best prop of plutocracy. On this side are also the Militarists and the anti-Semites. There are, indeed, some eminent thinkers among them, but their greatest strength comes from people who have but little education. As a whole the supporters of the clergy sympathize with their theocratic ideals, have a similar violent and aggressive spirit, repeat their stereotyped accusations against modern education, modern culture and modern science, are opposed to liberal reforms when the Church is materially affected by them and consider any movement in the direction of secularization as impious and sacrilegious. It is not astonishing that they should have called forth tremendous forces of antagonism from the anti-Clericals.

The anti-Clerical party has also in its ranks men of an extreme temperament who pretend to be the custodians of reason, the defenders of science and the representatives of progress, whereby they simply mean that they are agnostic and irreligious. Some of the lodges of Free

Masons are as intolerant as the Orders. Still on this side are the vital, progressive and constructive forces of the country. Its adherents are friendly to independent thought, to scientific research, to liberal education, to gradual reform and to evolution. The scientists are mostly anti-Clericals. The one hundred and sixty thousand teachers of the land are the greatest force of resistance against the efforts of sacerdotalism. The unjust and unscrupulous attacks of the clergy have made them bitterly hostile and not infrequently irreligious. They describe the priests as "formidable and tenebrous," as "deceiving the masses" and in kindred terms. Were the manufacturers, the business men and the farmers divided into two classes, the larger one would be found with the opponents of the clergy. The Socialists are the most uncompromising anti-Clericals of the land. In the Chamber of Deputies, Buisson, de Pressensé, Jaurés, Bourgeois, Brisson, Doumer, Delcassé, Trouillot, Hubbard, Millerand and Briand constitute an anti-Clerical group which in ability, statesmanship and popularity cannot be equalled by the twenty-five barons, dukes and counts of the other side, even including Count de Mun, Abbé Lemire and Denys Cochin. The same is true of the Senate. A study of the geographical distribution of anti-Clericalism shows that it has taken possession of the most educated and the most advanced sections of the country. The preponderance of strength and the determination to use it are on this side. Right or wrong, the anti-Clericals view the State Church as a source of constant perturbation and for some years they have been decided to put an end to it. Combes and Rouvier have only obeyed this tremendous power. Upon no national issue is there so much unanimity as upon the necessity of separation.

It must be borne in mind that a great change has taken place since the early days of the present republic. The anti-Clericals are now where the Clericals were then. Had they, in the days of their power, served the highest

interests of the country they would not have lost all political and moral credit. At one time every public official from the President of the Republic to the least village constable was under their control. Instead of helping the country to recover from her recent disasters, they endeavored to foment a war with Italy to regain the temporal power of the Pope, and one of the bishops advocated the project before the National Assembly. They carried on a most strenuous agitation to restore the old monarchical régime, and regain every privilege lost by and since the French Revolution. Every official had to be as zealous in the cause advocated by the Church as a Tammany devotee has to be to his. The bishops not only used all their influence with the Minister of Education against liberal professors, but branded them as "public poisoners." The Episcopate exercised a virtual control of education. In the common schools the Catholic catechism was the prominent book, and woe to the teacher who did not display religious zeal. Most severe measures were voted against any association which "would tend toward the abolition of religion," whereby was meant any opposition to Catholicism. Free-thinkers labored under great disabilities. They could not open schools, because a school without religious instruction was not allowed. Priests were *de facto* members of the boards of local charities. A law preventing priests who had left the Church from marrying was strictly enforced. The great pulpit orator, Father Hyacinthe, was not allowed to open a church, or even to preach, in Paris. Non-Catholic soldiers, Protestants, Jews and Free-thinkers, were compelled by their superiors, on some occasions, to attend the Catholic Church and to kneel before the altar at the command of their officers. An extensive and expensive system of chaplains was organized to bring the soldiers under their subjection. The civil funerals of Free-thinkers were practically not allowed in day time. They could take place no later than seven o'clock in the morning. Protestants, entitled by law to an honorable

burial, were relegated by the clergy to the *coin maudit*, or cursed corner, reserved for those who had committed suicide. Protestant chapels were closed under the pretext that speakers had attacked the Catholic Church. Protestant workers were brought before tribunals for holding meetings. The writer knew a Protestant missionary who was taken to the court of Draguinan, then to that of Aix, and finally to that of Nimes by a Catholic attorney bent on his condemnation for holding Protestant services. The circulation of Protestant books was opposed in a most vexatious manner. The popular publication, the "*Almanach des bons conseils*," had all passages referring to the errors of Catholicism removed by official censors. The Clericals did not conceal their unfriendliness to common law in religious matters. The majority of the National Assembly, which was Catholic, refused to vote a law of religious liberty for all. Bishop Dupanloup said that such a law would be subversive. They were on the side of liberty only when they opposed the bill on compulsory education. By their intolerance, their tactless aggressiveness and their unconcealed aims, they aroused the intelligence, the conscience and the patriotism of the country against them. The elections of February 22d, 1876, were the eloquent condemnation of the Clericals.

The Republicans had hitherto taken merely a defensive stand, now they assumed the offensive. A most active campaign was inaugurated—the Republicans had now freedom of speech—against the Orders and their friends. Gambetta was as indefatigable as he was eloquent. He gave some popular political mottoes such as "Clericalism is the enemy," and Paul Bert summed up the Republican program in the words, "Peace to the priest and war upon the monk." Jules Ferry, aiming to avert the peril to which Gambetta had given expression and Bert the formula of action, took steps which, in 1880, resulted in the expulsion of the Jesuits. The mortmain property of the Orders, which by its very nature paid no in-

heritance tax was forced by law to pay sufficiently every year to make taxation alike for property held by a monk or a layman. During the following year prayers on the occasion of the opening of Parliament were omitted. The friars and nuns, who had hitherto been allowed to teach without a diploma while common school teachers were not, were subjected to the same requirement. The teaching of the Roman Catholic catechism in the common schools was prohibited. In its place was substituted instruction in morals. Non-Catholic patients had been harshly treated by some of the nuns in the hospitals; the Parliament after extensive investigations, which more than sustained the charges, replaced the nuns by nurses. The bishops were excluded by Jules Ferry from the Superior Council of Public Instruction. The six faculties of Catholic theology supported by the State were closed, not through the opposition of the anti-Clericals, but because the bishops, suspecting the character of the theology taught, preferred to keep their students in their seminaries where they were absolutely under their influence. As a matter of fact the bishops, and not the anti-Clericals, gave the death blow to these faculties, but their closure was considered as another victory for the opponents of Rome. The Catholic and Protestant theological students were, like other Frenchmen, drafted for military service though for a shorter time. Religious processions were prohibited in many communities where a large number of inhabitants were opposed to them. The crucifixes over the entrances of cemeteries, in the schools or in the court houses were ordered to be removed. There was not one of these reforms, however just, which was not opposed by the Clerical party and viewed as a sacrilegious assault upon Church rights. The fanaticism shown by some of the monks during the Dreyfus trial called attention to the dangerous extension of monasticism. Waldeck-Rousseau proposed a law of association so framed that it would strike some of the most turbulent Orders. M. Combes,

his successor, went much further. He not only gave this law a severer application than that contemplated in Parliament, but also led his followers to vote a bill excluding religious Orders from teaching. In their praiseworthy endeavors to place the Catholic Church upon an equal footing with other institutions, the anti-Clericals were bound to bring about the separation of Church and State. The Vatican unintentionally precipitated its consummation.

Had Leo XIII. lived to the present day he would have done much to avert what he considered a calamity. His task would have been arduous. The Vatican had so signally failed to meet the obligations of the Concordat that any attempt to return to its loyal execution would simply have revealed the extent to which its terms had been disregarded. Indeed, one is astonished at the unscrupulousness of some of the agents of the Papal court in evading its stipulations. In the case of a vacant bishopric the French government has the right to nominate an incumbent who then receives a bull of investiture from Rome. Now, in the most stealthy manner, the officials of the Vatican inserted in the bull of investiture the Latin word *nobis* which changed the whole character of the Franco-Papal relations. By writing the bull as it has been written for nearly a century, it is the President of the Republic that makes the appointment; with the insertion of *nobis* it is the Pope. When this stratagem was discovered the government declined to accept the letters of investiture. Both sides showed considerable tenaciousness. Two dioceses remained without a bishop for some time, but at last the Pope had to surrender the *nobis*, suffering a considerable loss of moral prestige. This incident was no sooner settled than the relations with the Vatican came to the breaking up point. Among the recent occurrences most popular in France was the reconciliation with Italy. The anti-Clericals have always sustained in the warmest manner the aspirations of the Italians for national unity. They rejoiced when the King

of Italy visited Paris, and when, later, M. Loubet went to Rome. All were glad that the mistrust cultivated between the two peoples by Bismark and by Crispi was at an end, when came the news of the letter of protestation of the Pope sent to all the Catholic governments of the world on account of that visit. The anti-Clericals, with their usual fervor, were soon up in arms. They insisted that Catholicism was not only the storm center of the political life of France, but also of her relations abroad. Public opinion was such that M. Delcassé was compelled to recall at once M. Nisard, the French ambassador at the Vatican. A new incident soon after had even more serious consequences.

The hostility of the bishops toward the government, to which we have referred, was not without exceptions. Several of the eighty-four prelates of the country avoided signing a violent protest against those in power which two years ago created a great commotion. Their moderation seemed to cast reflection upon the course followed by their peers. Their attitude pleased the Republicans, but had the contrary effect upon Clericals. The whole body of celibatists was against them. In two dioceses a regular boycott was organized against the bishops. Their antagonists did not shrink from making the most serious charges against them in Rome. They were summoned thither to justify themselves, but when they failed to go, threatening letters were sent and a virtual deposition of the bishops took place. This action, just from the point of view of ecclesiastical discipline, was contrary to the terms of the Concordat; for, if the Pope cannot nominate a bishop to office he cannot depose one without a previous agreement with the government. This again led to remonstrances by M. Delcassé. He and his colleagues felt that the action of the Vatican had been determined much more by the liberalism of the bishops than by their moral or ecclesiastical deviations. When he failed to obtain immediate satisfaction from Cardinal Merry del Val the strained relations were broken. The

French embassy to the Vatican was closed, and the nuncio in Paris was informed that his diplomatic functions were ended. This was the virtual rupture of the Concordat. Thus the irresistible movement of secularizing democracy and Catholicism, by its chief in Rome as well as by its clergy at home, had brought the French people face to face with the separation of Church and State, an event which was the culmination of a long history.

The issue between the two sides has never been religion itself but a question of political justice. It is not fair for a man to be compelled to support a religion in which he does not believe. Furthermore, there was a feeling that the Church should cease to be a state within the State paid by the State. While anti-Clericals are suspicious of her motives and questions the nature of much of her influence they, as a whole, desire that the Church may continue to enjoy the essential liberties of religious bodies, liberty to assemble, liberty to pray, liberty to teach religion, and liberty to perform the necessary rites of Church life. Even with the most rigid enforcement of recent legislation, the Church may still have her primary schools, her secondary schools, her institutions of higher learning, as the *Institut Catholique* of Paris, and similar establishments in Lyons, Lille and other centers, only members of the Orders may not teach in those institutions. The Bill of Separation, as we shall see, does not indicate even an intolerant spirit. M. Combes has never been the persecutor represented by his opponents. At times he may have applied the law with needless severity but last year the writer still saw nuns as nurses in the *lycées*, a madonna over the door of a police station, and crucifixes in every room of the school-houses which he visited, these are certainly signs of great toleration. The acts of unpardonable brutality which took place in enforcing the Law of Association must be credited to the defenders of the Orders. The

repulsive treatment of public officials in Brittany was revolting. Compared with the course pursued by the Catholics under Napoleon III., or under President McMahon, that of M. Combes was liberal and considerate. He did not stay in power long enough to carry out his plans of separation, but M. Rouvier has realized them.

The presentation of the Separation Bill took place in the early part of the year. The Clericals resorted to peculiar manœuvres to secure the postponement of the question, but in vain. The time had come to face the real issue, the abrogation of the Concordat, one of the most crying anachronisms of our own time. The debates reached a rare elevation. No parliament has ever had a question of this kind discussed more brilliantly and more eloquently. The fifty sessions devoted to this Bill will remain the most memorable of the French Parliament. Philosophy, science, theology, history, sociology, statistics, wit, humor and no little sarcasm were used unsparingly by both sides, though all the time the discussions remained within the domain of parliamentary courtesy. The best elements of the Opposition showed the deficiencies of the Bill, deficiencies which the Republicans recognized and made up. On July 4th the Bill was passed by 341 votes against 233. To become law it needs only the approval of the Senate which will most certainly be given. It now remains to examine the terms of the Bill in its present form—a Bill of which the French people already speak as a law.

The first article marks a new era in the history of religious freedom. When under the presidency of McMahon, Dr. de Pressensé proposed a law sanctioning freedom of conscience the Bill was treated almost contemptuously. The clergy were indignant at the daring of the Protestant senator. The present Bill begins with the following words: "The Republic guarantees freedom of conscience." Then it asserts that the French government neither knows, salaries, nor subventions any religious body, exception being made in the case of chap-

lains in the colleges, hospitals, asylums and prisons. The moveable and immoveable property of the State Churches shall be transferred to the religious associations who have the care of the Churches after the Separation. Reasonable provisions are made for the present debts of some of the Churches. All endowments for general charities will go to the regular State charity organizations. In cases in which there are no religious associations the property will be devoted to the charities of the district. In all the transfers of property the State will not levy the usual tax. Clergymen over sixty years of age, and with over thirty years of ministry, will receive three-quarters of their salary; those forty-five years old, with twenty years of service, will be entitled to one-half. The clergymen in office not belonging to either of the preceding classes will receive full salary the first year, two-thirds of it during the second, one-half for the third, and one-third for the fourth year. In villages of less than 1,000 inhabitants all these periods will be doubled. Professors in the Protestant schools of theology will have considerate treatment. The cathedrals, churches, chapels, Protestant houses of worship and synagogues remain the property of the State, but they continue to be used without compensation by the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish associations. The archbishops and bishops may continue to use the State palaces for two years. The clergy may use their manses, the theological seminaries and the Protestant faculties of theology may remain in their present buildings for five years. Provisions have been made for the preservation of objects and buildings which present a peculiar historical or artistic interest. The archives and libraries, having documents and charts belonging to the State, will surrender them to the institutions to which they should properly belong. In the case of the sale of any object connected with religious buildings the churches will have a right to pre-emption. The religious associations must manage their affairs in a business-like way. They must publish annual financial

reports. The local religious associations may group themselves into unions. The church buildings remaining State property are free from taxes, the others are subject to common law. Any church of any religious body may be opened by a simple declaration to the authorities.

It was to be expected that there would be provisions made against possible abuses on the part of the Church. Political meetings in the churches are forbidden. Public processions and the ringing of the bells are left to the mayors. Religious emblems are not allowed upon public monuments, or public squares, but may be placed upon religious buildings, in cemeteries, in museums and expositions. Religious instruction cannot be given to children of the common schools during school hours. Threats to cause one to be discharged or any other threat on account of religion will be severely punished. A heavy penalty will be inflicted upon those who may disturb or interrupt any religious service. Outrage or diffamation of a public official from the pulpit will be severely repressed. Encouragement to resist the law of the country or to excite citizens against each other followed by effects make a preacher liable to two years imprisonment. Theological students are required to do only one year of military service instead of two like other citizens, and in case of war are to serve in the infirmary corps. During the eight years which will follow the enforcement of this law the ministers of religion cannot be members of municipal councils. The Concordat is abrogated. One sees from this synopsis that if the law lacks a certain continuity it does not lack liberalism. M. Briand, the defender of the Bill, calls it rightly "a liberal law." As a matter of fact it still recognizes privileges to the churches, but the objectionable features of State-churchism have been removed. It delivers France from the impossible Concordat, frees her from the obligation to sustain religious bodies, and from a politico-religious administration which generates constant friction and disturbing parliamentary interpellations. Absolute separa-

tion of Church and State exists only in few countries. Even the United States has kept something of the old régime. Why should property devoted to religious use be freed from taxes? Is not this a favor of the State toward church members which the non-religious do not enjoy? Is it not a breach of national equality?

The Separation will greatly affect the Clerical sociological body but that in a gradual way. The representatives of militant Catholicism will continue their abuses against a law which is obnoxious to them. These men will be re-elected by ignorant voters, but the more intelligent Catholics will more and more recognize the untenableness of the situation and the equity of the law. A new element has entered into the life of the country during the last third of a century, namely, popular education. During the last days of the Second Empire there were among the conscripts 30 per cent, who were illiterate, but now those who cannot write are only 4 per cent, and those unable to read are less than 1½ per cent. Illiteracy has ceased to be an ally of Clericalism. As to the Church, she will be freed from many evils inherent in her false position. Where the Separation merely to put an end to the indescribable intrigues which took place with the government for the nomination of bishops, that alone would prove a great gain. She will be released from innumerable accessaries which in the past have hindered her spiritual work. She will concentrate her energies upon the religious teaching of the young in the Church. She will do more to secure the co-operation of laymen in that work. Her active members brought together in common efforts will react in a healthy way upon the clergy. More will be done to bring back the churchless, the creedless and the Christless. It is not likely that the separation will materially affect their foreign missions. The mental activities of the clergy, which have been greatly accelerated during the last third of a century, will probably continue to be stimulated. Catholic theology will come closer to modern thought be-

cause it comes closer to modern life. It is quite probable that the two tendencies, the medieval and the modern, which are visible among her thinkers will be more pronounced, and that Catholic heresies will be more frequent. The bishops will still display their authority, but not sustained by the arm of the law. They themselves will be enfranchised from the service of two masters, the Minister of Worship and the Pope. The French embassy at the Vatican will probably remain closed, but, owing to the stupendous interests at stake, the French government will have to be, at least, as deferential to the Roman Pontiff as Kaiser Wilhelm, King Edward and President Roosevelt have been. The Pope will doubtless be grieved to lose his peculiar hold upon France which he was accustomed to call the eldest daughter of the Church, but the former political relations will be compensated by spiritual gains. His religious instructions will no longer have to be transmitted through political channels. His relations with the churches will be more direct and his touch with them closer.

Protestantism will be seriously disturbed by the Separation, though as a whole, Protestants do not fear it. The State-Church relations was not a matter of their choice. It was forced upon them by Napoleon I. After centuries of unparalleled persecutions, they were glad to have a recognized legal existence. A century of life in such relations has developed conditions which the Catholic Church would have prevented, but which among Protestants are the result of freedom of thought. The Protestants though one in name are seriously hampered by theological divisions. This led the Evangelicals to organize themselves, within the State-Church, so as to carry on their extensive works of all kinds. Their organization, with a fairly long experience, is adequate to meet the demands of the new situation. The Liberals, though less well organized, can face also the new issues. It is probable that later on there will be a union of all the forces of Protestantism for the defense of its general

interests. While the ecclesiastical autonomy will present many unexpected difficulties, it is not likely to interfere with their many educational interests, their philanthropic works, nor with their home and foreign missions. It is probable that the Evangelicals will support the faculty of theology of Montauban and the Liberals will stand by that of Paris. Theological students will not suffer for the lack of such institutions. One great gain will be that many skeptical pastors, no longer paid by the State, will cease to preach. Worship will be less formal, less artificial, more attractive. The churches will do more to hold their worshipers, not to speak of drawing new ones. The pastors will continue to give a large place to culture, but with a more direct view to spiritual utility. They will come closer to their parishioners upon whom they will depend. A more genuine and intense religious life will be generated.

The Separation which will be beneficent even for those who opposed it will not satisfy extreme men. Some Radicals there are who would have made the law a virtual expulsion of the clergy from its churches and institutions—would have surrounded them with such restrictions as to render their ministry impossible—would have goaded them to revolt or exalted them as martyrs. The extremes of Clericalism would not be satisfied short of national domination. There is fortunately in France a large part of the population gifted with much common sense and easily amenable to justice and equity. It is to this part of the population that the members of parliament will appeal to judge and sustain their work. There can be no doubt that the present law is a loyal attempt of the Republic to solve justly one of the most difficult problems of modern times—a problem, the legacy of centuries, which has frightened generations of loyal patriots. The solution is not ideal except in the sense that it is the only one possible in times of stress and storm. It was made in the spirit of concession on both sides, a spirit which has untied many gordian knots.