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American Protestants Interpret

Vatican Council I

JAMES H. SMYLIE

Vatican Council II has stimulated reevaluation of Vatican Council I. This is true among American Catholic scholars interested in the contribution made by American participants. For example, John Tracy Ellis is responsible for an exploratory essay, "The Church Faces the Modern World: The Vatican Council, 1869-1870," and James Hennesey, Ellis' protégé, for the expanded study, *The First Council of the Vatican: The American Experience*, both published in 1963. These historians concentrate on the participation and place of the American hierarchy in council proceedings, and they replace the now inaccessible, short, and rather sterile account by Raymond J. Clancy, "American Prelates in the Vatican Council," published by the United States Catholic Historical Society in 1937.¹

Neither Ellis nor Hennesey deals with American Protestant reaction to the Vatican Council. In 1941, J. Ryan Beiser explored *The Vatican Council and the American Secular Newspaper, 1869-70*, in which he focused attention on Americans who helped to shape public opinion in the United States. He concluded that editors and reporters displayed a very narrow perspective and were generally "gullible and illogical" in expressing hostility toward the work of the council. Beiser found that democratic newspapers in areas of strong Roman Catholic population were more sympathetic, implying that logic and discernment followed subscription and precinct lists.² Although Beiser's study is thorough, he neglected, as do Ellis and Hennesey, treatment of the evaluation of the Vatican Council by Protestant intellectuals, made, for example, in the numerous Protestant quarterlies published during the period.³ Among these Protestants were some

1. John Tracy Ellis, "The Church Faces the Modern World: The Vatican Council (1869-1870)," in *Perspectives in American Catholicism* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1963), pp. 162-190; James Hennesey, *The First Council of the Vatican: The American Experience* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963); Raymond J. Clancy, *American Prelates in the Vatican Council* (New York: United States Catholic Historical Society, Historical Records and Studies, 1937), pp. 7-135.
2. J. Ryan Beiser, *The Vatican Council and The American Secular Newspaper, 1869-70* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1941), p. 19, pp. 298-299.
3. Among the periodicals consulted for this study were the following: *The American Quarterly Church Review and Ecclesiastical Register*, later *The American Quarterly Church Review . . .*; *The American Presbyterian Review*, *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton*

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notable clergymen, historians, theologians, and professors, including Leonard Woolsey Bacon, pastor of the influential First Congregational Church of New Haven, Herman Lincoln of Andover, George Park Fisher of Yale, Henry Boynton Smith of New York, Charles Hodge of Princeton, John W. Nevin of Mercersburg, Ezra Hall Gillett, professor at the University of the City of New York, and Burke Aaron Hinsdale, president of Hiram College.⁴ Philip Schaff, dean of America's church historians, was the most important and most knowledgeable.⁵

These men, among others, attempted to cover the council. They discussed the biblical and historical presuppositions and the ecclesiastical procedures employed in arriving at the dogmatic formulation of papal primacy and infallibility. They considered its political implications. They watched with concern as those who resisted the promulgation of the dogma accepted it, and they encouraged those who started the Old Catholic movement. It is clear that no study of American reaction to Vatican Council I will be complete without a thorough appraisal of the writings of this group of Protestants.

No Protestant insider, no Robert McAfee Brown, no Douglas Horton, no Albert Outler, at the council kept Americans informed of its activities and actions. Protestants either ignored or rejected the papal invitation to return to the Roman Catholic Church, as did, for example, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.⁶ This did not mean, however, that Protestants were either disinterested or ignorant of what was going on among "Papists"⁷ and during the pontificate of Pius IX. They recalled how encouraged they had been at the beginning of Pius' reign. He had started as a "Protestant Pope," according to an author in the Episcopal *American Church Review*, but the Jesuits had "transubstantiated" him.⁸ The promulgation of the Marian dogma of 1854 and

Review later *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review; The Baptist Quarterly; The Christian Quarterly; The Christian World*, organ of the American and Foreign Christian Union; *The Methodist Quarterly Review*, edited in New York; *The Mercersburg Review; The New Englander; The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; Lehre und Wehre; Der Lutheraner; The Southern Presbyterian Review; Harper's New Monthly Magazine; The Nation; The North American Review*.

4. These men represent a few of the more perceptive observers. It should be noted that Gillett, although a clergyman, was teaching political economy, ethics, and history at the University of New York.
5. For a longer treatment of Schaff's understanding of Protestant-Roman Catholic relations see my analysis: "Philip Schaff: Ecumenist," *Encounter*, 28 (Winter, 1967), 3-16.
6. Presbyterians declined the pope's invitation to return to the fold, having resolved that his claims were "inconsistent with a catholicity more catholic than Rome, the authority of infallible scripture, and the glorious supremacy of Jesus Christ." *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 18 (1869), 936-937. (Old School)
7. One writer saw no reason why this term should be any more derogatory than the labels congregationalist, episcopalian, presbyterian, since each were designations of ecclesiastical polity. See note, "Moral Results of the Romish System," *The New Englander*, 29 (January, 1870), 101.
8. "Catholicism and the Vatican," *The American Church Review*, 26 (April, 1874), 257. Also see, George Park Fisher, "The Temporal Kingdom of the Popes," first published

the issuance of the Syllabus of Errors in 1864 foreshadowed the principal work of the council.⁹ Protestants were not unprepared when it was summoned in the encyclical *Aeterni Patris Unigenitus Filius* in 1868.

Because of the arrangements of the council it was extremely difficult for anybody to obtain clear and accurate information about its preparations, its procedures and its problems. Even American Catholics, according to Ellis, seemed to have been ill-informed.¹⁰ Leonard Bacon accused Roman Catholics of at first stimulating popular interest through a show of "parades, pantomimes, and pyrotechny" in the gathering of the hierarchy in Rome, and then of shutting off the public with locked doors and oaths of secrecy. It was "childish" to complain about the incorrectness of published accounts of the assembly. Catholics had no one but themselves to blame.¹¹ Of the Protestant periodicals examined, it seems only the *Methodist Quarterly Review* tried to carry continuous coverage of the council in a section on "Foreign Religious Intelligence." Lyman Abbott wrote about the council for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. No other "potentate," he commented about Pius IX, could have provided so "magnificent a reception" for churchmen from all over the world. The buzz of the different languages reminded "devout spectators" of the "feast of Pentecost; scoffers, of the Tower of Babel."¹² Generally Protestant discussions were based, first, on information gathered from the literary controversy which raged among Catholics themselves, and then upon Protestant understanding of the critical issues surrounding papal primacy and infallibility. Protestant comments took the form of book notices and extensive reviews and evaluations of this literature and these issues.

Discussants favored the materials emanating helpfully from liberal Catholic sources, such as Carl Joseph Hefele, much admired historian of the councils,¹³ Johannes Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger, identi-

in *The New Englander* (January, 1867), and then in *Discussions in History and Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880), pp. 87-88; and B. A. Hinsdale, "The Downfall of the Secular Papacy," *The Christian Quarterly*, 5 (January, 1873), 24. Hinsdale held that Pius had to avoid "the stationary danger" and "the revolutionary danger." Being of a gentle and benevolent disposition, he chose to "innovate slowly, and reform progressively."

9. See, as an example of this interpretation, Philip Schaff, *Bibliotheca Symbolica Ecclesiae Universalis, The Creeds of Christendom, with A History and Critical Notes* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877), I, 108-34. Hereafter referred to as *The Creeds of Christendom*.
10. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
11. Leonard Woolsey Bacon, *An Inside View of the Vatican Council, in the Speech of the Most Reverend Archbishop Kenrick* (New York: American Tract Society, [1872]), pp. 6-7.
12. See, the coverage beginning in *The Methodist Quarterly Review*, Fourth Series, 21 January, 1869), 122-125. D. D. Whedon was editor of the review but I have not been able to identify the correspondent. Lyman Abbott, "Pro Nono and his Councilors," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 42 (December, 1870), 16.
13. One book reviewer identified Hefele's bias in *A History of the Christian Councils*, but maintained that he left the "facts of the case to tell their own unvarnished tale to the reader, and to testify that the dogma of Romish and papal primacy was of

fied as "Janus" and the author of *The Pope and the Council*, Quirinus, author of *Romische Briefe vom Council*,¹⁴ popular Fathers Auguste Gratry and Hyacinthe Loyson,¹⁵ Bishop Joseph Georg Strossmayer, who refused to hold Protestants responsible for all nineteenth-century apostasy,¹⁶ and above all, Peter Richard Kenrick, Archbishop of St. Louis. This last preference was demonstrated in the volume by Bacon entitled intriguingly, *An Inside View of the Vatican Council, in the Speech of the Most Reverend Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis*, published in 1872. While the speech by the Missouri prelate was the feature of the book, Bacon printed other sources from the council minority along with the acts of the assembly. Kenrick's speech was doubly significant, however. The address had to be privately printed in Naples due to restrictions on publishing anti-infallibilist opinion in Rome. Moreover, Kenrick's arguments marked him as an advanced fallibilist who could not be put in the category of inopportunist.¹⁷ Bacon was encouraged with the perspective of his own collection with the appearance of the work of Munich's Professor Johann Friedrich, *Documenta ad Illustrandum Concilium*.¹⁸ Many of the periodicals printed the decrees of the council, sometimes in Latin with English translations.¹⁹

Protestants knew that Roman Catholicism was not monolithic, and that Gallicanists, Ultramontanists, and in Rome, Curialists, could be found amid the "Modern Variations of Romanism."²⁰ These factions were at "issue on fundamental points."²¹ *The Catholic World*

gradual and post-apostolic growth." *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, 43 (July, 1871), 463-464.

14. See *The Bibliotheca Sacra*, 27 (April, 1870), 394; Henry B. Smith, "'Roman Letters' on the Vatican Council," *The American Presbyterian Review*, New Series, 2 (October, 1870), 667-679. These volumes were reviewed and referred to often.
15. See Fisher, "The Council of Constance and the Council of the Vatican," *op. cit.*, p. 124; and "The Office of the Pope and How He is Chosen," *ibid.*, p. 161. Father A. Gratry was lecturer in theology and philosophy in the Sorbonne while Father Hyacinthe (Charles Jean Marie Augustin Hyacinthe Loyson) was a Carmelite priest and popular metropolitan preacher of Notre Dame de Paris before the council.
16. Joseph Georg Strossmayer was bishop of Bosnia and Sirmia. A portion of his speech delivered on March 22 was printed in Bacon, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-82; cf., also Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
17. Bacon, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-174. Schaff made this distinction clearly. "Besides the all-powerful aid of the Pope," he wrote, "whom no Bishop can disobey without fatal consequences, the infallibilists had the great advantage of perfect unity of sentiment and aim; while the anti-infallibilists were divided among themselves, many of them being simply inopportunist; they professing to agree with the majority in principle or practice, and to differ from them only on the subordinate question of definability and opportunity." "The Vatican Council," *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, New Series, 2 (October, 1873), 642.
18. This collection of documents (Johann Friedrich, *Documenta ad illustrandum Concilium Vaticanum*, [Nördlingen, 1870]), permitted Bacon to delete the scholarly apparatus of Kenrick's speech and confirmed with other documents many of his conclusions.
19. See, *The American Presbyterian Review*, New Series, 2 (October, 1870), 769f.; *The Christian World*, 21 (October, 1870), 308-314; *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, New Series, 1 (October, 1871), 587-605; *The Methodist Quarterly Review*, Fourth Series, 22 (October, 1870), 599-601; *The Mercersburg Review*, New Series, 7 (April, 1873), 191f.; *Lehre und Wehre*, 16 (July, 1870), 209-215.
20. C. A. Stork, review of *An Inside View of the Vatican Council*, in *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, New Series, 2 (April, 1872), 301.
21. "Papal Infallibility," *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, New

explained the necessity of promulgating "infallibility" since Catholics were "beginning to go astray after so-called *Catholic liberalism*, and a clique of secret traitors . . . plotting a revolt against the holy see." Bacon was amused. For several years, he recalled, *The Catholic World* had commended Catholics, highly respected by Protestants, as representing the literacy and liberality of the church in accord with free government and American sentiment.²² Philip Schaff showed the comprehensive grasp of these variations and of the literature in his *A History of the Vatican Council, Together with the Latin and English Text of the Papal Syllabus and the Vatican Decrees*. This thorough analysis based upon the sources was first copyrighted in 1874 and then was incorporated in the widely circulated *Bibliotheca Symbolica Ecclesiae Universalis, The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*.²³ The work gives an intimation of the seriousness with which some Protestants took the council and attempted to understand and interpret it.

The "First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ," not the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith," caught the attention of Protestants. The dogma of papal primacy and infallibility determined their evaluation of the council. It was the "capstone,"²⁴ a consistent development of Roman Christianity especially since the Council of Trent. Some Protestants hoped that the council would not define and declare the dogma, although such a course would then clarify the issues about authority among Christians. As lovers of the truth, a reviewer remarked in *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, "we would not see even Rome take one more false step, either to save or to complete her consistency, or for any other purpose whatsoever."²⁵ Historian George Park Fisher wrote in *The New Englander* that he preferred that the "doctrine should be neither practically nor theoretically received." "We may desire," he continued, "that evil may be manifested, but not that evil should be done, in order that good may come. And we have no hostility to the Roman Catholic Church except so far as we deem its doctrines erroneous."²⁶

When it became clear that the dogma was to be the chief business of the council, it was thoroughly discussed before and after the text became available. Protestants knew that papal primacy and infal-

Series, 1 (October, 1871), 586. This was an obvious point with many writers. See also, E. H. Gillett, "Papal Infallibility and the 19th Century," *The American Presbyterian Review*, New Series, 2 (October, 1870), 636.

22. Bacon, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

23. This history may be found in W. E. Gladstone and Philip Schaff, *The Vatican Decrees in Their Bearing on Civil Allegiance* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875), pp. 51-168, and also in *The Creeds of Christendom, op. cit.*, I, 134-188. Cf. bibliographies on pp. 53-54 and 134-135 respectively.

24. Gillett, *op. cit.*, 642.

25. *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, 42 (January, 1870), 181-183.

26. See Fisher, "The Council of Constance and the Council of the Vatican," *op. cit.*, pp. 128-130.

libility were based upon a Roman Catholic interpretation of Christ's words to Peter, and the attempt to determine where the ultimate authority in the church resided—in the church, in the council, or in the pope. They reasoned that the decree involved development from a time in which the Roman bishop was only *primus inter pares* to the time when he claimed a supremacy. J. Colver Wightman saw a growth of pretension before the end of the twelfth century when popes began to refer to themselves as vicars of Christ rather than simply the vicars of Peter.²⁷ Another author in tracing the influence of the political imperialism of the Roman Empire on the "ecclesiastical imperialism" of the hierarchy of Peter, maintained that just as the Pontifex Maximus of imperial Rome was deified so the pope had become "logically and practically God." Although most authors did not raise the question in this way they did trace the escalated development of this dogma through the history of the church.²⁸ In dealing with the dogma itself some authors considered that it only pretended to make a distinction between a personal and an official authority. E. H. Gillett, writing in *The American Presbyterian Review*, summarized a general understanding of the problem of authority:

The Pope is considered as sustaining two characters, that of universal teacher, and that which belongs to him as an individual. As a man he may err, but as a Pope he cannot err. In his private opinions, so far from being infallible, he may fall into grave error, he may give gross error. But let him speak *ex cathedra*, and thenceforth every word is the truth, and nothing but the truth, and from his decision there is no appeal.²⁹

This applied to both "faith and morals." C. Z. Weiser, reflecting on the wider problem of authority in Protestantism, wrote for *The Mercersburg Review* that the infallibility of the pope was the ultimate logic of the Roman Catholic interpretation of the church. The "Truth once revealed" in a book could not be secured by means of a book, but had to be interpreted "solely through the instrumentality of a living Institution—through a church endowed with the prerogative of Infallibility,"³⁰ and since 1870 the instrumentality of the pontifical office. Some Protestants realized the most important words in the decree were that definitions of the pope needed no confirmation from the church or an ecumenical council, but were of themselves, *ex sese*, irreformable.³¹

27. B. A. Hinsdale, "The Rise and Establishment of the Papacy," *The Christian Quarterly*, 2 (April, 1870), 240; J. Colver Wightman, "Papal Infallibility," *The Baptist Quarterly*, 8 (January, 1874), 43.

28. "Rome and Her Council," *The American Quarterly Church Review* . . . , 22 (April, 1870), 106-107, 124. C. Z. Weiser insisted that the decree had not "Deified" the pope in any sense. "The Dogma of Infallibility," *The Mercersburg Review*, New Series, 21 (April, 1874), 186-187. Besides Schaff's survey, see Hinsdale, "The Rise and Establishment of the Papacy," *op. cit.*, 240-243, and Wightman, "Papal Infallibility" *op. cit.*, 42-43. "Catholicism and the Vatican," *op. cit.*, 252.

29. Gillett, "Papal Infallibility and the 19th Century," *op. cit.*, 638-639.

30. C. Z. Weiser, *op. cit.*, 190.

31. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, I, 166. See also, "Catholicism and the Vatican," *op. cit.*, 249; B. A. Hinsdale, "The Vatican Council and the Old Catholics," *The*

One incident during the year 1870 underscored a problem concerning the uncertainty of the term *ex cathedra*. James Kent Stone, Episcopal clergyman and former president of Kenyon and Hobart Colleges, heard the papal invitation to come home to Rome, accepted it, and then justified his decision in a long apologetic, *The Invitation Heeded: Reasons for a Return to Catholic Unity*, written in 1870. Stone reviewed the historical aspects which made this return necessary, particularly the failure of Protestantism. He considered the church as a "Divine Creation," and discussed the logic of primacy and infallibility which gave the assurance of salvation.³² In comments about the book, Bacon weighed "How the Rev. Dr. Stone Bettered His Situation." He concluded that Stone had not improved it. There was still a lack of clarity as to what was a definition, *ex cathedra* or an infallible statement concerning faith and morals.³³ There was actually a vagueness here and should the Roman Catholic accept the dogma he could never "catch" the pope's infallibility unless "it was his choice, or his contrivance" to have the believer do so.³⁴

For centuries, according to Gillett, it had been an "open question" as to where infallibility resided, or what was to be accounted the court of final appeal.³⁵ It had been a question clearly controverted in the church because the tradition of papal primacy and infallibility itself were based upon fraudulent and faulty premises regarding the interpretation of tradition and scripture. Protestants had their own reasons for reading tradition and scripture as being against the dogma; they were delighted with the help they received from the Roman Catholic opponents of papal infallibility, who assisted them particularly with the proper interpretation of the development of tradition.

The facts of the history of the church denied the truth of the Roman contention that papal primacy, or supremacy, and infallibility were true, either in terms of the orthodoxy of popes themselves or the claims of ecclesiastical councils. In many of their essays, Protestants traced the history of the idea of the dogma drawing upon Bishop Hefele and Father Gratry. Two particular cases stand out clearly in the argumentation. In the first instance, Protestants examined the heresy of Pope Honorius in detail, with the intention of proving that if fallibility were true in the case of only one pope, it would upset

Christian Quarterly, 4 (October, 1872), 499; Henry B. Smith, "Bishop C. J. Hefele on the case of Pope Honorius," *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, New Series, 1 (April, 1872), 274; John L. Girardeau, "The Ultimate Source, Rule and Judge of Theology," in *Discussions of Theological Questions* (Richmond, 1905), pp. 210-211; and Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York, 1872), I, 130, 150.

32. James Kent Stone, *The Invitation Heeded: Reasons for a Return to Catholic Unity*, 11th ed. (New York, 1870).

33. Leonard W. Bacon, "How the Rev. Dr. Stone Bettered His Situation," *The New Englander*, 29 (July, 1870), 471-495; also see review in *The Biblical Repository and Princeton Review*, 42 (October, 1870), 640-649.

34. "Catholicism and the Vatican," *op. cit.*, p. 253.

35. E. H. Gillett, "Papal Infallibility and the 19th Century," *op. cit.*, 640.

the dogma altogether: *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*.³⁶ They accepted the fact that Honorius was anathematized as a monothelite by the Sixth General Council of Constantinople, 680-681. This condemnation was reiterated in the Roman Breviary until the sixteenth century when it was quietly dropped. And Honorius continued to be condemned by council and popes as late as the seventeenth century.³⁷ Protestants did not accept the argument that Honorius spoke only as a *doctor privatus*. This argument demonstrated to them how uncertain the dogma of infallibility could be since this latter day opinion only raised questions about the consistency of Honorius' successors.³⁸ In the second instance, Protestants maintained that the Council of Constance of 1414, "a complete triumph of the Episcopal system," had obviously asserted its supremacy over the papacy in the deposing of John XXIII and in its declaration that the Christian, including the pope, was subject to the council in matters of faith.³⁹ They were aware of the struggle in the development of Latin Christianity between the authority of the councils and the pope, including the influence of the spurious documents, for example, the false decretals attributed to Isidore of Seville, which encouraged papal aggrandizement. Aggressiveness did not abate when they were proven forgeries.⁴⁰ Tradition indicated to the Protestants that the Roman pontiff had no just claim to a preeminence of power or jurisdiction, much less to infallibility. Rome "manufactures history," complained Hinsdale,⁴¹ in order to support its claim.

What Protestants objected to most, however, was the faulty biblical base on which the papal claims were made. They pushed the argument back through tradition to an analysis of the claims Rome made about Peter. George W. Samson, writing in *The Baptist Quarterly* about "The Apostle Peter and his Relation to the Church of Rome," argued that Protestants quarrelling with Rome over the decision of the council could disprove the conclusion by denying the facts.⁴² Quite clearly Protestants preferred to think, given the various

36. Henry B. Smith, "Bishop C. J. von Hefele on the Case of Pope Honorius," *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, New Series, 1 (April, 1872), 274; also "Ueber die Infallibilität des Papstes," *Lehre und Wehre*, 15 (August, 1869), 236-238.

37. Smith, *op. cit.*, 276. Also Fisher, "The Council of Constance and the Council of the Vatican," *op. cit.*, p. 124.

38. "Catholicism and the Vatican," *op. cit.*, p. 252. Also Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

39. Gladstone and Schaff, *The Vatican Decrees*, *op. cit.*, p. 101. Fisher's article, *supra*, is the most thorough treatment of Constance. Also see Hinsdale, "The Infallibility Dogma," *The Christian Quarterly*, 2 (July, 1870), 412; "Critical Notices," *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, 23 (January, 1872), 148.

40. See the work of Henry C. Lea, *Studies in Church History* (Philadelphia, 1869). In reviewing "Janus" Lea wrote that the author showed the church's power to have been "founded on forgery and consolidated by fraud." *The North American Review*, 110 (April, 1870), 438.

41. Hinsdale, "Infallibility Dogma," *op. cit.*, 409.

42. George W. Samson, "The Apostle Peter and His Relation to the Church of Rome," *The Baptist Quarterly*, 7 (1873), 323. Schaff analyzed five approaches to this question in Gladstone and Schaff, *The Vatican Decrees*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106. Also see long article "Apostolical Succession," *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, 23 (July, 1872), 353-399.

interpretations of this passage even in the early church, that the rock on which the church was founded was not Peter personally. As Fisher explained, it was founded on "Peter, as confessing to Christ, or the confession made by the fervent Apostle."⁴³ This point was not the sole basis of the Protestant case. In addition to this, they argued that the claims that (1) Peter governed the church, or (2) that Peter exercised any more actual authority than any other apostle, or (3) that Peter was bishop of Rome, or (4) that prerogatives conferred upon him were transferable, or in fact were transferred to successors in Rome, could not be historically substantiated.⁴⁴ Philip Schaff put the matter in this way. The truth which undergirded papal claims was a primacy assigned to Peter among the apostles. The error of the papacy was that it perverted a "primacy of honor into a supremacy of jurisdiction," a "personal privilege into an official prerogative," and a "priority of time into a permanent superiority of rank." To make New Testament references to Peter the basis of Vatican claims, Rome had to take for granted as intervening links of the argument that which could not be proven from the New Testament nor from history—"that Peter was Bishop of Rome; that he was there as Paul's superior; that he appointed a successor, and transferred to him his prerogatives."⁴⁵ Weiser maintained in *The Mercersburg Review* that what Christ guaranteed to his church was actually an "indestructibility," an assurance which "could not be limited to a particular locality and definite line of Bishops."⁴⁶

Readers of *The Christian World* had concerns confirmed when a translation of a portion of Bishop Strossmayer's speech was made available to them. "History is neither Catholic nor Anglican, nor Calvinist, nor Lutheran, nor Armenian, nor Schismatic-Greek, nor Ultramontane," the Bosnian had contended in eloquent Latin. Rather "it is what it is; that is, it is something mightier than all the decrees of ecumenical councils."⁴⁷ Roman conviction rested upon an *a priori* construing of tradition⁴⁸ and scripture. The case could not stand under Protestant cross-examination nor, and this was extremely important for the Protestants, under the criticism of the best in Roman Catholic scholarship. It was not a surprise to Protestants that the pope should be reported to have said, "I am tradition." Some felt that he could also hold, "I am the Church," just as Louis XIV had said "I am the State."⁴⁹

43. Fisher, "The Office of the Pope and How He is Chosen," *op. cit.*, p. 146.

44. For a very clear statement on this point see Weiser, *op. cit.*, 194.

45. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, I, 185-186. The editors of *Der Lutheraner* ran Luther's sermon on Matthew 16:13-20: "You Are Peter, and on this rock will I build my Church." See *Der Lutheraner*, 26 (July 1, 1870), 161 f.

46. Weiser, *op. cit.*, 195-196, 210-211.

47. Cited in *The Christian World*, 22 (September, 1871), 289.

48. Weiser, *op. cit.*, 191.

49. Gladstone and Schaff, *The Vatican Decrees*, *op. cit.*, p. 65. Schaff wrote elsewhere that if the pope is infallible then "Church history must be rewritten in the interest

As the Protestants insisted that papal primacy and infallibility were the "capstone" of the Roman system, so they purported to show that the Vatican Council was only a "pseudo-Council," to use Janus' term, or, in other words, a Roman Synod.⁵⁰ Observations of the procedures of the assembly involved Protestants in a discussion of the nature of conciliarism. Opposition focused on three basic problems, each supported by Catholic opponents to the Vatican decrees.

For Greeks and Protestants, Philip Schaff observed, the Vatican assembly was no more ecumenical than that of Trent.⁵¹ For Roman Catholics themselves it was a "packed convention for a special purpose."⁵² As Protestants checked the figures of persons in attendance they did not fail to comment upon the number of Italians from the papal states whose presence outweighed that of any other national group. Indeed, the virtual "Italian monopoly of the Popedom," made it inevitable that Vatican doctrines should be imposed "upon the Church by Italians and for Italians."⁵³ This imbalance was all the more damaging to the council because it placed in the minority the most responsible scholars of the whole church, namely those from the trans-Alpine and trans-Atlantic sectors of the body.⁵⁴ According to the Protestants, supported in their contention by the experiences of the anti-infallibilists, the council lacked the two fundamental conditions of liberty of discussion and moral unanimity of suffrage. The first contention was sustained by Protestants in pointing to the oaths of secrecy imposed upon participants in the council, the restrictions on publications *contra* infallibility, although not on opinions *pro* infallibility in the Vatican and Rome, and the contemptuous manner in which infallibilists treated the anti-infallibilists in the debate, according to reports of the proceedings. Reporting on the reaction to the speech of Strossmayer, Quirinus quoted an American bishop. He maintained, "not without a sense of patriotic pride," that there was one assembly still rougher than the Congress of his own country. Schaff recalled similar scenes of violent outbursts in the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, but commented that "Christian civilization ought to have made some progress since the fifth century"⁵⁵

of this dogma." *The Christian World*, 21 (November, 1870), 337. John W. Nevin wrote: "And as Louis XIV dared to say of France, *I am the State*, so Pious IX then may say also, *I am the Church*; as he has in fact already allowed himself to say in a truly naive way, *I am the Church Tradition!*" "The Old Catholic Movement," *The Mercersburg Review*, New Series, 7 (April, 1873), 275.

50. "Janus," [J.J.I. von Döllinger] *The Pope and the Council* (Boston, 1870), p. 346. For an illuminating discussion of what a Protestant thought a council should be according to tradition see B. A. Hinsdale, "Ecumenical Councils," *The Christian Quarterly*, 1 (October, 1869), 491-507.
51. Schaff, "The Vatican Council," *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, New Series, 2 (October, 1873), 637. E. L. Faucher, "The Bible Better than the Oecumenical Council," *Methodist Quarterly Review*, Fourth Series, 22 (January, 1870), 96.
52. "Papal Infallibility," *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, New Series, 1 (October, 1871), 586.
53. "Catholicism and the Vatican," *op. cit.*, 264.
54. Schaff, "The Vatican Council," *op. cit.*, 637.
55. Gladstone and Schaff, *The Vatican Decrees*, p. 64. Also see "Zur Geschichte des vati-

Of even greater significance to the Protestants were the final votes on the decree, "The Constitution of the Church." To be sure, on the eighteenth of July when the final vote was taken there were only two nays against five hundred thirty-five yeas to the decree, with Bishop Edward Fitzgerald of Little Rock voting in the negative. "Only two nays, therefore almost total unanimity," explained the *Civiltà cattolica*; and yet "two nays, therefore full liberty of the Council. How vain are all attacks against the ecumenical character of this most beautiful of all Councils." But Protestant writers recalled that in the vote on the thirteenth of July on the same Constitution eighty-eight members present voted *non placet*, sixty-two voted *placet juxta modum*. Of greatest importance was the fact that most of the opposition to infallibility withdrew from Rome before the eighteenth, in part, because many of them did not wish to vote *non placet* openly in the face of Pius.⁵⁶ Obviously, the rule requiring moral unanimity in definitions of faith according to the canon, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est*, was not sustained either by the support of all Roman Catholics or the Orthodox and Protestants.⁵⁷

What would be the civil effect of the decree on papal primacy and infallibility? Protestants could not avoid the discussion of this question as Americans, or as they watched political developments engulfing the papacy on the continent. They produced numerous articles analyzing the significance of the Vatican Council and the state, the Vatican Council and the civil obedience, the Vatican Council and the law of nations, and the downfall of the temporal papacy. They showed some interest in the developing struggles within Germany under Bismarck, but they were most troubled, according to the references, in their discussion of the writing of the Right Honorable William E. Gladstone, "The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance" which seems to have been widely circulated in the United States.⁵⁸

By nature of the definition, Protestants knew that infallibility might extend retroactively to include matters of a political nature. Although they admitted that it was difficult to settle just what papal utterances came under provisions of the decree, they could not avoid asking the question nor making tentative answers. Henry C. Lea had just reviewed "The Rise of the Temporal Power," and the develop-

canischen Concils," *Lehre und Wehre*, 16 (July, 1870), 215-216. Eugene Lawrence had this to say after a review of all ecclesiastical councils: "We have thus imperfectly reviewed the story of the various councils. We might scarcely admit, with the saintly Gregory Nazianzen, that no good result can ever flow from an assembly of bishops." "Oecumenical Councils," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 40 (December, 1869), 118.

56. Gladstone and Schaff, *The Vatican Decrees*, p. 77.

57. John W. Nevin, "The Old Catholic Movement," *op. cit.*, 243-244. Also see Schaff, "The Vatican Council," *op. cit.*, 635.

58. Gladstone and Schaff, *The Vatican Decrees*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-50. See Fisher, "Mr. Gladstone's Discussion on the Vatican Decrees," *op. cit.*, pp. 132 ff.

ment of "Benefit of Clergy" and "Excommunication" in 1869 in publishing his *Studies in Church History*.⁵⁹ Leaning on this study, and upon Roman Catholic assistance from Quirinus, Janus, and, Kenrick, Protestants reviewed the possibilities in their articles. A writer in *The American Church Review* enumerated the bulls *Unam Sanctum* of Boniface VIII, dealing with the pope's supremacy in temporal as well as in spiritual matters; *Cum ex Apostolatus Officio* of Pius IV, dealing with the deposition of rulers; *In Coena Domini* of Pius V and Urban VIII, dealing with papal prerogatives; and finally, the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* with the Syllabus annexed, of Pius IX. The latter usurped, according to the writer, the rights of rulers, in a range of negation which covered the entire ground of the affirmations condemned.⁶⁰ In another survey by Henry Boynton Smith of New York's Union Theological Seminary, the range of possibilities was extended in a much broader manner.⁶¹ The Vatican definition not only gave the pope a power of jurisdiction over the matters of faith and morals, but extended this influence in a more particular manner to those things which appertained to the discipline and government of the church throughout the world. This vast prerogative made the pontiff an absolute monarch. Gladstone's writings reminded the American observers that in the struggle for Roman Catholic emancipation in Great Britain, representatives of the church did not hold the pope to be infallible. They admitted no right on his part to interfere directly or indirectly with the independence, sovereignty, or government of the Kingdom. Fisher of Yale, in a lengthy review of Gladstone's arguments, agreed with the Englishmen that the distinction between direct and indirect power was unimportant, and only indicated how "flexible, evasive, slippery" the system could be.⁶² The Vatican Council had erected a formidable *imperium in imperio*, the extent of which no Protestant could be certain.⁶³

At the same time Protestants were expressing this anxiety over retroactive infallibility, they also showed an interest in the "downfall" of the "secular" or "temporal" papacy, as Italians fought for national unification and as the French withdrew defence of the Vatican because of the Franco-Prussian war. They were not surprised at this, nor were they deeply distressed. They believed that papal states had not been ruled effectively anyway, and that the Roman Church en-

59. Lea, *Studies in Church History*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-521.

60. "The Council and the State," *The American Church Review* 24 (April, 1872), 180. See also Hinsdale, "The Downfall of the Secular Papacy," *op. cit.*, 39-41.

61. Smith, "'Roman Letters' on the Vatican Council," *op. cit.*, 667-679. This article included long quotations from letter fifty-six in Quirinus, *Romische Briefe vom Concil.* See also "Ueber die Infallibilitat des Papstes," *op. cit.*, 232-233.

62. See Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 138, 135-137.

63. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 139. Cf. Heman Lincoln, "The Vatican Council and Civil Allegiance," *The Baptist Quarterly*, 9 (April, 1875), 200-215; "The Papal Temporal Power," *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, 43 (January, 1871), 127-143; E. H. Gillett, "The Papacy and the Law of Nations," *The American Presbyterian Review*, New Series, 3 (April, 1871), 251-261; J. F. Rowe, "The Papacy and Civil Government," *The Christian Quarterly*, 2 (January, 1870), 76-95.

croached upon the area which should have been left to the civil magistrate.⁶⁴ Frederic H. Hedge interpreted the promulgation of the dogma as a compensation for the loss of temporal or secular power.⁶⁵ B. A. Hinsdale, sensitive to the fact that nothing was more "difficult of practical solution" than the proper independence of the church and state in their own spheres,⁶⁶ looked at the situation more positively. He predicted that the downfall of the papal states would give rise to a "truer and purer religion."⁶⁷

Protestants thought that they observed the emergence of a new reformation among those who resisted submission of the Vatican decrees. As has been indicated, some had hoped that the dogma would not be promulgated. After it was decreed, a writer in *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* held that that which had been done could not be undone. "The decree of Infallibility cannot be reconsidered or set aside," he maintained. "The dogma has gone forth and cannot be recalled."⁶⁸ Protestants watched in distress as the Roman Catholics whom they admired yielded to the decision: for example, Hefele, who had "forgotten more about the history of Councils than the infallible Pope ever knew," according to Schaff; Gratry, who had declared that the question of Honorius was "totally gangrened by fraud"; Strossmayer, who lost his courage and kept his peace; even Kenrick, who, however, did not refute his *Concio* so widely appreciated by Protestants.⁶⁹ The pope, remarked Heman Lincoln in *The Baptist Quarterly*; could only comfort: "our dogmas . . . are light."⁷⁰ John W. Nevin in *The Mercersburg Review* lamented this "ecclesiastical hari-kari." All the world knew that this submission imparted to the decree an *ex post facto* ecumenicity it never had in fact.⁷¹

Observers turned sympathetic attention to those who could not, for conscience sake, accept the decree,⁷² particularly those in the Old Catholic movement, such as, Father Hyacinthe, who gave it leadership, and Döllinger, who gave it inspiration but never joined.⁷³ They

64. "The Fall of the Temporal Papacy," *The American Quarterly Church Review* . . . , 22 (January, 1871), 492-508; Hinsdale, "The Downfall of the Secular Papacy," *op. cit.*, 23-51; "The End of the Temporal Power," *The Christian World*, 22 (May, 1871), 159-162. An interesting exchange took place between Protestants and Roman Catholics during the months of the council. Its direction may be sensed in two articles: "Moral Results of Romanism," *The New Englander*, 27 (July, 1869), 561-574, and "Moral Results of the Romish System," *The New Englander*, 29 (January, 1870), 101-124. This discussion smacks greatly of "nativism" although the apparent misrule and immorality of papal states and Roman Catholic countries bothered Protestants and was thought by them a legitimate issue for discussion.

65. F. H. Hedge, "Papal Infallibility," *The Religious Magazine and Monthly Review*, 44 (October, 1870), 294.

66. Hinsdale, "The Downfall of the Secular Papacy," *op. cit.*, 43.

67. *Ibid.*, 51.

68. "Papal Infallibility," *op. cit.*, 620.

69. Gladstone and Schaff, *The Vatican Decrees*, p. 80.

70. Lincoln, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

71. Nevin, *op. cit.*, 243.

72. Bacon, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-250.

73. See "Dr. Döllinger's Reply to the Archbishop of Munich," *The Mercersburg Review*,

knew the revolt was not in some of the premises. They saw the logical weakness of those who participated since, according to the Protestants, the Old Catholics accepted infallibility of the church, but rejected the conclusion that such infallibility was finally lodged in the papacy. That recanting anti-infallibilists were better logicians than the unrecanting, some were willing to admit.⁷⁴ Moreover, the Old Catholics would have difficulties because of a want of leadership and because it was a time, according to Hinsdale, when Roman Catholics were not generally ready for great religious reform. *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review* reported to its readers that Döllinger was painfully surprised to receive "no encouragement"⁷⁵ from Catholic countrymen in the "Transatlantic Republic." Nevertheless, Protestants believed Old Catholics represented an "indignant protest, in the name of learning, reason, and conscience, against the Vatican decrees of papal absolutism and papal infallibility."⁷⁶ At the Evangelical Alliance Conference in New York City in 1873 some time was devoted to the Vatican Council. The Alliance extended the "helping arm of prayer and active sympathy" by inviting Old Catholics to the New York Assembly without committing them to the Alliance's Protestantism nor the Protestants to their Old Catholicism. The Alliance received a cordial communication from the Congress of the Old Catholics of Germany which met in 1873.⁷⁷ This development within the Christian world was one dimension of the "piercing cry of the soul," according to Nevin, for the reintegration of Christian faith and life.⁷⁸

In looking back over some of the literature, it is, of course, not surprising to find Protestants writing as Protestants, and concluding what the Vatican Council decreed was blasphemous.⁷⁹ Given the nativist reputation of these years, what is surprising is that they were as well informed as they were, and that at the level of their scholarly quarterlies, at least, they took the matter with great seriousness. "We mean no polemical rhetoric or rant in what we say," Nevin wrote, "and God forbid that we should trifle with the subject irreverently in any way; for it is altogether too solemn for that."⁸⁰ While it may be too much to say that all Protestant writers were as sober in their treat-

New Series, 7 (April, 1873), 184-191; "Father Hyacinthe," *The New Englander*, 29 (January, 1870), 37-72; Hinsdale, "The Vatican Council and the Old Catholics," *op. cit.*, 498-526; "Catholicism and the Vatican," *op. cit.*, pp. 247-267.

74. Henry Lea pointed this out in his review of "Janus." He admired this book for its scholarship and for the courage of its author, but not for logical consistency. Review of *The Pope and the Council*, *op. cit.*, p. 441. Also see Hinsdale, "The Vatican Council and the Old Catholics," *op. cit.*, 522-526.

75. *Ibid.*, 524-526. "Dr. Döllinger on the Catholics in the United States," *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, New Series, 1 (April, 1872), 379-380.

76. From Schaff's introduction to "Letter from the Old Catholic Congress," in Schaff and S. Irenaeus Prime, eds., *Evangelical Alliance Conference, 1873* (New York, 1874), p. 486.

77. *Ibid.*, pp. 487-489.

78. Nevin, *op. cit.*, 285-288.

79. Hinsdale, *op. cit.*, 499.

80. Nevin, *op. cit.*, 274.

ment as Nevin, these words, nonetheless, were characteristic of many of them. Several shrewd observations were made about what would happen to the decree about primacy and infallibility. Hinsdale predicted that the battle within the Roman Catholic Church would be renewed on the subordinate question as to when the pope acts as the infallible teacher of all Christians. The dogma would be redefined in a new kind of argument to make it mean something other than it certainly meant in 1870.⁸¹

There are two aspects of the discussion about Vatican Council I which should be mentioned in conclusion. Protestants had, in the first place, their not-so-hidden agenda. This included the primacy and the infallibility of the book rather than the primacy and infallibility of the church, or the council or the pope. They asked: "An Infallible Church, or an Infallible Book—Which?" and they answered, "The Bible Better than the Ecumenical Council,"⁸² speaking of Vatican Council I. In their writings on the council Protestants gave little indication of their own authority crisis. It is interesting in the case of the Vatican dogma that Protestants should be so very aware of the problem of historical development, and yet, in the case of the Bible, be apparently so untroubled about historical criticism. "No wisdom of man was ever able to invent this book," E. L. Faucher wrote for subscribers of *The Methodist Quarterly Review*, reasserting the Bible's divine origin and therefore, its primacy and infallibility. "The Bible is before all Churches," wrote William Thomas Moore in *The Christian Quarterly*, "The Bible was first, then the Church followed. Without the former the latter would have no existence."⁸³ In another debate one Lutheran suggested that the conservatives, under the leadership of Charles Portfield Krauth, while denying papal infallibility, were substituting the primacy and the infallibility of the Augsburg Confession even for the authority of the scriptures.⁸⁴ These authors exposed problems with which Protestants soon would be wrestling in dealing with the relation between scripture and the church, inspiration and interpretation.

In the second place, Protestants themselves did not consider carefully enough the political turmoil of Europe and the development of authoritarianism. John W. Nevin of Mercersburg had the prophetic insight to deal with the problem of infallibility in terms of political freedom and authority. He condemned the "popular idols" of private judgment and private will, and insisted on the "divine right of objective government and law, against the different radical and revolu-

81. Hinsdale, "The Infallibility Dogma," *op. cit.*, 419.

82. W. T. Moore, "An Infallible Church, or an Infallible Book—Which?" *The Christian Quarterly*, 1 (January, 1869), 38-53; Faucher, *op. cit.*, 85.

83. Faucher, *op. cit.*, 88; Moore, *op. cit.*, 50.

84. "Protestant Infallibility," *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, New Series, 2 (April, 1872), 161-179. "Our progress," the author wrote, "must not be backwards towards Rome, but forward in the line of true, apostolic Christianity." p. 161.

tionary tendencies of the age." On the other hand, he asked whether or not the emphasis on papal primacy and infallibility might have the effect in the political sphere of encouraging substitution of the "licentiousness of power" for the "licentiousness of freedom." The authority which bound might change the law of liberty into a "tremendous law of servility, a sirocco blast from the desert, before which the fairest fruits of humanity are struck with the blight of universal desolation."⁸⁵ George Park Fisher raised the question with the opinion that generally speaking the Church of Rome with the "natural ally and supporter of arbitrary principles of government."⁸⁶ Neither Roman Catholics nor Protestants put to themselves strongly enough the question: what is the political significance of ecclesiastical claims and structures?

There were dire predictions among some Protestant writers about the future of Roman Catholicism. Others, however, were not so sure. Weiser, Nevin and Schaff, who shared with one another an idea of historical development, maintained that while the Vatican Council had made things more difficult, God was still at work. Out of the antithesis of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism God would bring a "subsequent, and eventually, a final economy" for the church of Christ.⁸⁷ Some paid their respects to the amazing resiliency of Roman Catholicism, as did Roswell D. Hitchcock at the New York Conference of the Evangelical Alliance. He pointed out that the council had lifted the massive block of papal primacy and infallibility and crowned the edifice of Roman Catholicism. "Will it be crushed as well?" he asked. "Let us not feel too sure of that. Shorn of its temporal power, the papacy may at once put on new spiritual power." Speaking as a Christian of Protestant persuasion, he cried: "'How long, O Lord, how long?' The Church of Rome has denied her Lord, not so much for want of courage as for want of wisdom. By-and-by she will repent, and her last days will be her best days."⁸⁸

85. Nevin, *op. cit.*, 267-270, 273-275.

86. Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168. For a contemporary treatment of this problem by a Roman Catholic layman see E. A. Goerner, "The Relationship of Ecclesiastical and Political Structures," in his *Peter and Caesar* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), pp. 230-258. This political scientist at the University of Notre Dame tends to agree with Nevin and Fisher.

87. Weiser, *op. cit.*, 210-211.

88. Schaff and Prime, *op. cit.*, pp. 436-437.