

SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

man princes of the Church, from whom the pope is chosen, by the standard of pure Christian morality, it is clear that the great majority of them were pitiful impostors, many of them utterly worthless and vicious. These well-known historical facts, however, do not prevent millions of educated Catholics from admitting the infallibility which the pope has claimed for himself; they do not prevent Protestant princes from going to Rome, and doing reverence to the pontiff (their most dangerous enemy); they do not prevent the fate of the German people from being intrusted to-day to the hands of the servants and followers of this "pious impostor" in the Reichstag—thanks to the incredible political indolence and credulity of the nation.

The most interesting of the three great events by which the papacy has endeavored to maintain and strengthen its despotism in the nineteenth century is the publication of the encyclica and the syllabus in December, 1864. In these remarkable documents all independent action was forbidden to reason and science, and they were commanded to submit implicitly to faith—that is, to the decrees of the infallible pope. The great excitement which followed this sublime piece of effrontery in educated and independent circles was in proportion with the stupendous contents of the encyclica. Draper has given us an excellent discussion of its educational and political significance in his *History of the Conflict between Science and Religion*.

The dogma of the immaculate conception seems, perhaps, to be less audacious and significant than the encyclica and the dogma of the infallibility of the pope. Yet not only the Roman hierarchy, but even some of the orthodox Protestants (the Evangelical Alliance, for instance), attach great importance to this thesis.