

ARCHBISHOP OF BAHIA (BRAZIL) ON THE CHURCH AND THE MASONS.

THE Dublin 'Freeman's Journal' gives the following extract from a letter of Mgr. the venerable Archbishop of Bahia:—

"You know," says the Primate, "that the evil hour of triumph of darkness has come, wherein the spirit of error and of falsehood seeks to build up its throne on deplorable outrages to religion and to faith."

It is evident, according to the pretensions which are now set up, that in future it is to the craft, and not to the Holy Church, we are to look for the understanding of the Scriptures—for the maintenance of canon law—for the explanation of Papal bulls—for the interpretation of conciliar decrees—since in Brazil it is the authority of the Masonic Orientals, and not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that is to direct the Catholic Church. Religious anarchy, like a torrent let loose, is advancing to ruin and overthrow everything that meets it in its headlong course. Before long, we, bishops of Brazil, shall be getting advice and orders by which it will be intimated to us that the ritual, the Pontifical, all our liturgy, all the disciplinary enactments of the Council of Trent, are now a dead letter. Soon, if the Masons get their way, ecclesiastical sepulture cannot be denied to duellists, to suicides, to public and notorious heretics—because, forsooth, it is the pleasure of the lodges! Soon they will issue processes against confessors and parish priests who will not absolve the sick notoriously tainted with the corrupting poison of the sect, even when they refuse the necessary retraction—because the lodges so will it. Soon those priests who, having failed in their sacred duties have been punished *ex conscientia informata*, will deem themselves completely released from the obedience their owe their bishops—because, again, the lodges wish it. Soon, in fine, civil marriage, the separation between Church and State, will be laid as the corner-stone of that colossal and gorgeous edifice raised with square and compass—because so the lodges will have it, and wish to decree it. In such trying circumstances, what, brethren, is our imperative duty? To raise our voices boldly, in word and in writing, and to prepare ourselves for the passive resistance which the Gospel recommends to us. And, in truth, we must obey, firstly, God, then Cæsar—the lodges never. Let this be made manifest by letter, by pamphlet, by sermon, by imprisonment cheerfully endured. A compact phalanx, we shall not irritate the bad example of the ancient apostates, who, trembling before the threat of

punishment, abandoned their sees or betrayed to pagan tribunals the sacred deposit of the Holy Books. A bishop who does battle for the Cross and the Gospel is invulnerable. He is an immovable rock, against which the waves roll their might with ineffectual fury.

Courage, brethren, courage. The bishops armed with that cross which one day will be borne in triumph, as it was borne of old across the ruins of old pagan Rome, will never bend down before the superstitious triangle of the temple decorated with pillars of Zachein and Boaz. We have, brethren, on the summit of the Vatican our polar star, and guided by it, we shall follow on our way without faltering. The great and immortal Pius IX. is our pastor—the infallible teacher of the faith—our only sovereign in the spiritual order. Permit me, brethren, though the least amongst you, to exhort you to persevere in that ardent zeal for the sanctuary which you have ever so constantly shown. United in a community of sentiment, let us uphold as far as in us lies, and with that strength which can come to us from heaven alone, the cause for which we are struggling. The *non possumus* of faithful and courageous predecessors in presence of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem ought to be ever on our lips, and, as we are their successors by virtue of the dignity with which we are clothed, so we ought to be the imitators of their intrepidity and courage. We shall never yield, by a single iota, anything that touches on either doctrine or discipline; for the Church, the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ, does not walk in the tortuous paths of the dangerous novelties which the world calls 'progress.' It is our portion to maintain, in all their integrity, the definition of our holy Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, presided over, as it was, by the same spirit of wisdom and fortitude which formerly came into the *cenaculum*, and confirmed the Apostles of the newly planted faith. Let us be ready, if need be, to sacrifice ourselves, and to give up our lives, if necessary, since it is in our consciences rests the foundation of our glory, and we are bound to obey God rather than man. Let us pray with that ardent fervor which charity alone supplies, for the conversion of those bad children of the Church who will persist, with fatal tenacity, in remaining blind to the evil of their ways. Let us pardon our remorseless persecutors, and proclaim ourselves disciples of Him who, reviled and persecuted, from the height of His gibbet opened his parched lips and implored pardon for His murderers. Let us bear our wrongs with invincible patience and resignation, and like the Apostles, place our confidence in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of consolation.

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