

on the Christian Constitution of States, on Socialism, on the Labor Question, on the Duties of Christian Citizens, and on other kindred subjects. But the ardent desire of Our soul has not been merely to illuminate minds. We have wished also to influence and to purify hearts; for we directed all Our efforts to the revival of Christian virtues amidst the nations. Therefore, We continue to lavish encouragement and counsels with the view to raise souls towards the goods that do not perish, to enable them to subordinate the body to the soul, their earthly pilgrimage to the heavenly life, and man to God.

Through the Blessing of the Saviour,

Our word has contributed to strengthen the convictions of a large number of men, to enlighten them moreover in the midst of the difficulties of actual questions, to stimulate their zeal, and to promote good works of the most varied character. It is especially for the good of the poorer classes that these works have arisen, and continue to arise still in every country; because that Christian charity has been revived which has always found its favorite field of action in the midst of the people. If the harvest has not been more abundant, venerable brethren, let us adore God in the mysterious justice of His dispensations, and, at the same time, beseech Him to have pity on the blindness of so many souls, to whom, unhappily, the terrible words of the apostle may be applied: 'The God of this world hath blinded the minds of unbelievers, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ should not shine unto them' (II. Cor. iv. 4).

The more scope the Catholic Church gives to her zeal for the moral and material welfare of the people, the more do the children of darkness rise up in their hatred against her and employ every weapon to tarnish her divine beauty, and to paralyse the efforts she is making to revive and restore. What fallacies and calumnies do they not propagate! One of their most perfidious artifices lies in incessantly repeating to the ignorant masses, and to jealous governments, that the Church is opposed to the progress of science, that she is the enemy of liberty, that she is an usurper of the rights of the State, and that politics is a field that she encroaches upon for every purpose. Foolish accusations a thousand times repeated, that have been a thousand times refuted by sound reason, history, and by all whose minds are honest and friendly to truth!

Is the Church hostile to science and to education? Undoubtedly she is the vigilant guardian of revealed dogma; but it is this very vigilance that inclines her to protect science and to favor the healthy cultivation of the mind! Not in opening his intelligence to the revelations of the Word, the Supreme Truth from Whom all truths originally emanate, man will never, in any way, compromise his rational requirements. On the contrary, the lights which will come to it from the divine world, will always give more power and clearness to the human mind, because they will preserve it in the most important questions from agonising uncertainties and from a thousand errors. For the rest, nineteen centuries of glory achieved by Catholicism in all branches of knowledge amply suffice to refute this calumny. To the Catholic Church the credit must redound of having propagated and defended Christian knowledge, without which the world would still be lying in the night of pagan superstitions and in a wretched state of barbarism. To her belongs the credit of having preserved and transmitted to the generations the precious treasures of literature and of ancient learning: hers is the credit of having opened the first schools for the people, and of having created universities still existing, whose fame is perpetuated to our days. Hers, in fine, is the credit of having inspired the highest, purest, most glorious literature, at the same time that she fostered under her protecting wings artists of the most sublime genius.

The Church the enemy of liberty? Ah! what a travesty they make of the idea of liberty, that most precious gift of God, when they employ its name to justify abuse and excess!

What are We to Understand by Liberty?

Is it exemption from every law, freedom from all restraint, and as a consequence, the right to take whim and inclination as our guide in all our actions? This liberty the Church repudiates for a certainty, and all upright hearts repudiate it with her. But if by liberty is meant the rational faculty of doing good, freely and without restraint, in accordance with the rules laid down by eternal justice, then from no source does this, the only liberty worthy of man and of use to society, receive encouragement and protection more than from the Church. It is the Church, in truth, through her teaching and efficient action that has freed mankind from the yoke of slavery, in preaching through the world the great law of equality and human brotherhood.

In all the centuries she has assumed to herself the defence of the weak and oppressed against the insolent tyranny of the strong; she has vindicated the freedom of Christian conscience by the blood of her martyrs poured forth in streams; she has restored to infancy and womanhood the dignity and prerogatives of their noble nature, by making them in the name of right itself participators in respect and justice, and she has largely assisted in the introduction and maintenance of civil and political freedom in the heart of nations.

The Church an usurper of the rights of the State, an encroacher in the domain of politics? The Church well knows and teaches that her Divine Founder has commanded to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's, and that He has thus sanctioned as an immutable principle the perpetual distinction of the two powers, each supreme in its own sphere—a fruitful principle which has largely contributed to the development of Christian civilisation. A stranger, therefore, to all thought of envious hostility, the Church, in her spirit of charity, aims only at working in parallel lines with the public authority; acting undoubtedly on the same subject, man, and on the same society, but in the manner and according to the lofty design which her Divine mission points out to her. Would to God that her action was received without distrust and suspicion! for the count-

less benefits of which We have spoken already would then be multiplied. To accuse the Church of ambitious aims is merely to repeat a very old calumny; a calumny, too, which her powerful enemies have more than once employed to disguise their own tyranny. Far from being an oppressor, the Church, as history, when studied without prejudice, clearly teaches, has been on the contrary, like her Divine Founder, most often the victim of oppression and injustice. Her power resided not in the force of arms, but in the power of thought and of truth.

Assuredly, then, it is with perverse intentions that such accusations are hurled against the Church. In furtherance of these pernicious and dishonest efforts, there is more prominent than all others one secret sect which society has borne in its womb for many years, and which, like a fatal germ, poisons its well-being, its fertility, and its life. The abiding personification of revolution, this sect constitutes a kind of reactionary society, whose object is to exercise an occult suzerainty over external society; the sole purpose of its existence is

To Wage War Against God and His Church.

There is no need to name it, for in these lines everybody recognises Freemasonry. In Our Encyclical 'Humanum Genus' of the 20th April, 1884, we have already spoken of this sect. We there denounce its pernicious tendencies, its erroneous teachings, and its nefarious work. Enveloping in its immense net almost all nations, binding itself to other sects, which it moves as puppets by its hidden springs of action, drawing its members to it at first and then retaining them by the allurements of the advantages which it procures for them, making governments pliable to its designs, sometimes by its promises, sometimes by its threats, this sect has begun to infiltrate all classes of society. It forms, as it were, an invisible and irresponsible state in the State proper. Full of the spirit of Satan, who, according to the Apostle, knows how to transform himself at need into an angel of light (II. Cor. xi. 14), it puts in the foreground a humanitarian project; but it sacrifices everything to its sectarian purposes; it protests that it has no political aims, but it exercises in reality the most profound influence on the legislative and administrative life of states; and whilst it professes in words respect for authority and even for religion, its supreme aim and object (as its own statutes testify) is the extermination of sovereignty and of the priesthood, in which it sees the enemies of liberty.

Now, it is becoming daily more manifest that it is to the inspiration and to the artifices of this sect that the continual annoyances by which the Church is harassed, as well as the recent renewal of attacks upon her, must, in great part, be attributed; for the simultaneousness of the assaults in the persecution which has suddenly come upon her in these latter times, like a tempest in a clear sky—that is to say, without cause proportioned to the effect—the uniformity of the means employed to bring about this persecution, the campaign in the Press, public meetings, theatrical productions, the employment in every country of the same weapons, calumnies, and popular passions—all these clearly indicate the identity of design and the word of order issued from one and the same centre of direction. Yet it is but a single episode in the plan determined on beforehand, which is brought into play in a theatre that grows wider and wider in order to multiply the ruins that we have before enumerated. Thus it is its special desire first to restrict, then to completely exclude, religious instruction, and thus to make the generations unbelievers or indifferent; to combat through the daily Press the moral teaching of the Church; in fine to ridicule its practices and to profane its sacred festivals.

Hence there is nothing more natural than that

The Catholic Priesthood,

whose mission precisely it is to preach religion and to administer its Sacraments, should be attacked with particular fury. By making it the object of attack the sect wishes to lessen its influential character and its authority in the eyes of the people. Already, with hourly-increasing boldness, with audacity proportioned to its assured impunity, this sect malignantly interprets all the actions of the clergy, urges the people to suspect them on the slightest pretence, and overwhelms them with the vilest accusations. Thus new injuries are added to those from which the clergy suffer already. They are harassed now by the tribute they must pay through military service—that great impediment to the training for the priesthood—and again by the confiscation of the ecclesiastical patrimony which the faithful, in their pious generosity, had freely established.

The religious Orders and religious Congregations, whom the practice of the evangelical counsels had made the glory of society as well as of religion, have, thereby only earned for themselves more blame from the enemies of the Church, who have denounced them with implacable hostility, and invoked upon them the contempt and hatred of the world. It is for us a grievous sorrow to be obliged to recall the odious (and undeserved) measures, loudly condemned as they are by all upright hearts, of which, quite recently, religious have again been the victims. Nothing could save them, neither the integrity of their lives, in which even their enemies could find no grounds for attack, nor the natural right which authorises association entered into for an upright end, nor the constitutional right which loudly proclaims their liberty, nor the favor of the people, who are filled with gratitude for the precious services rendered by them to the arts, to the sciences and to agriculture, and for their charity which overflowed upon the most populous and the poorest classes of society. And it is thus that men and women, the offspring of the people, who had, of their own accord, renounced the joys of family life to consecrate in peaceful associations their youth, their talents, their powers, their life itself to the good of all, have been treated as evildoers, as if they had formed criminal combinations, and have been shut out from common justice and proscribed—at a time too when liberty is the watchword in the mouth of everybody!