

And yet it is not astonishing that the best beloved children are struck at, since the Father himself, the Head of Catholicity, the Roman Pontiff is treated no better. The facts are well known. Deprived of temporal sovereignty, and deprived by that very fact of the independence that is necessary for him to accomplish his universal and divine mission, compelled in this city of Rome itself, which belongs to him, to shut himself up in his own dwelling, because a hostile power besets him there on all sides, he has been reduced, in spite of derisive assurances of respect and precarious promises of liberty, to a condition that is abnormal, unjust and unworthy of his high ministry. We ourselves know only too well the difficulties which they raise up for him each moment, while they misrepresent his intentions and outrage his dignity. This is the fact that experience makes day by day more evident—it is the spiritual power itself of the Head of the Church that they have attempted little by little to destroy when they have laid violent hands on the temporal power of the Papacy. Those who were the true authors of this robbery have, indeed, not hesitated to admit it.

To judge by its consequences this deed is not only impolitic, but a kind of anti-social outrage: for the blows inflicted on religion are so many blows struck at the very heart of society. Whilst making man a being destined to live with his fellow-men.

God, in His Providence has also Founded the Church, and, according to the expression of the Bible, has established it on the mountain of Zion in order that it might serve as a guiding light to humanity, and that its fertilising rays might bear with them the principle of life even into the dark places and recesses of society, making to germinate and flourish everywhere those seeds of heavenly wisdom from which order and happiness result. Therefore the more society cuts itself off from the Church, whence it derives so great a share of its strength, the more it decays or crumbles into ruin, since it separates what God wished to be united.

We ourselves have never wearied of inculcating these great truths whenever an opportunity has offered itself to us; and we desired to do it now once more on this extraordinary occasion. God grant that the faithful may be thereby encouraged and instructed to make their efforts converge more efficaciously towards the common good, and our adversaries be led to see what an injustice they commit in persecuting a mother so loving, the most faithful benefactress of humanity.

Nor should we wish that the thought of present afflictions should banish from the souls of the faithful the full and absolute confidence they ought to have in the divine assistance. God will bring about in His own time and by His mysterious ways the final triumph. As for us, no matter what sadness may fill our heart, we feel no misgivings about the immortal destinies of the Church. As we said at the beginning, persecution is her inheritance; for God purifies His children by subjecting them to trials and draws from their sufferings higher and more precious results. In delivering over His Church to vexations and struggles He more clearly manifests His Divine assistance, ever furnishing her with new and unforeseen proofs of His protection, which give a permanent guarantee that her work can be developed and maintained, and that the forces that conspire against her are powerless to accomplish her ruin. Nineteen centuries of life spent on the flow and ebb of human vicissitudes teach us that tempests come and go, but never reach the depths.

We can remain all the more unshaken in our confidence as the present time shows symptoms well calculated to calm our fears. The difficulties are extraordinary and formidable. It is true, but other facts which unfold themselves before our view testify notwithstanding that God fulfils His promises with admirable wisdom and goodness. For whilst so many powers contend against the Church and whilst she is deprived of every human support does she not continue to pursue her gigantic labors throughout the world, and does not her action extend to all the races of the globe and make itself felt under every climate? The ancient prince of this world, who has been driven off by Jesus Christ, can no longer exercise his domination, as in former days; and although the efforts of Satan may place dangers and perils in our path, they will not attain their object. Already

A Supernatural Peace,

due to the Holy Spirit, Who extends His wings over the Church and lives in her bosom, reigns not only in the souls of the faithful, but throughout the whole Catholic world—a peace which is fostered in all serenity by that union, which was never closer and more devoted, between the Episcopate and this Holy See, presenting such a wonderful contrast with the strife and dissensions and continual unrest of the sects that trouble the peace of society. Fruitful in innumerable works of zeal and of charity, the same beneficent harmony prevails between the clergy and the laity. Lay Catholics, more united and more free from human respect than ever, are more alive to the duty of defending the holy cause of religion, and are better organized for the purpose than in times past. Oh! that is the union we have recommended so often, and that we now recommend once more; and we bless it, so that it may develop more and more, and be able to oppose an impregnable wall to the furious violence of God's enemies.

There is nothing more natural than that, in such circumstances, we should see innumerable associations spring up and multiply and flourish in the heart of the Church like sprouts that take root at the foot of the tree. It may indeed be said that no form of Christian piety has been neglected, whether it relates to Jesus Christ Himself and His adorable mysteries, or to His divine mother, or to the saints whose virtues have shone most brilliantly. No detail of charity has been overlooked. On all sides there has been a rivalry in zeal to give Christian education to youth, to relieve the sick, to improve the morality of the people, and to assist the poor. With what rapidity would this movement not be extended, with

how much greater advantages would it not be followed if it did not come so often into collision with unjust and hostile laws that impede its liberty.

The same Lord Who gives the Church its vitality in countries where it has been long established, is willing also to console us by other hopes. These hopes arise instinctively every time we dwell on the zeal of our missionaries. Never discouraged by the perils they have encountered, nor by the privations and sacrifices they have borne, they go on increasing in numbers, annexing new countries every day to the Gospel and to civilisation. Nothing can overcome their fidelity to the task they have undertaken, although, like their Divine Master, they are often repaid for their indefatigable labors by accusations and calumnies.

Afflictions are, therefore, Tempered by Consolations,

and amidst the struggles and difficulties we have to face, there are many things that refresh our soul and invite us to look to the future with confidence. This is a fact which ought to suggest useful and wise reflections to anyone who observes the world with intelligence and without allowing himself to be blinded by passion: for it proves that as God has not made man his own master in relation to the ultimate end of life; and as He spoke to him once, so He speaks to him again in His Church, visibly sustained by this divine assistance and clearly shows him the way to salvation and truth. This unfailing assistance will fill our hearts with an invincible hope; it will make clear to us that at the hour marked out by Providence, and at a time that cannot be far distant, truth, breaking through the clouds under which man's perverse ingenuity has endeavored to obscure it, will shine more brilliantly, and that the spirit of the Gospel will infuse new life into our corrupt society and its exhausted members.

For our part, venerable brethren, in order to hasten the advent of Divine mercy, we shall not fail in our duty to defend and propagate the kingdom of God on earth. As for you, your pastoral solicitude is too well known to us to need our exhortation. May the ardent flame that burns in your hearts be communicated to the hearts of all your priests. They are in immediate contact with the people. They know their aspirations, their needs, their sufferings, as well as the snares and the seductions by which they are beset. If, full of the spirit of Jesus Christ, and standing in an atmosphere that is not contaminated by political passions, they make their actions correspond to yours, they will succeed, under the blessing of God, in accomplishing wonders. By their words they will enlighten the people: by the suavity of their manners they will gain all hearts; and in aiding by their charity those who suffer they will help little by little to improve their condition.

The clergy will be firmly sustained by the active and intelligent co-operation of the faithful. Thus, the children who have shared in the maternal tenderness of the Church will know how to show their gratitude by coming to her assistance and defending her honor and her glory. All can contribute to this meritorious homage; men of letters and of learning by taking up her defence in books and in the daily Press, a department of which our adversaries make such an abuse; fathers of families and teachers of schools by giving a Christian education to children; magistrates and representatives of the people by the firmness of their principles and the integrity of their character, professing their faith openly and without human respect. Our time requires elevation of sentiment, generosity of purpose, and exact observance of discipline. It is above all by perfect and confident submission to the directions of the Holy See that this discipline will be affirmed. By such compliance it is alone possible to prevent or diminish the injury caused by division, and to make all efforts combine towards the higher end—viz.,

The Triumph of Jesus Christ in His Church.

Such is the duty of Catholics. Ultimate success depends entirely on Him Who watches with wisdom and love over His immaculate Spouse, and of whom it is written:—'*Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and the same forever.*'—(Heb. xiii. 8.)

It is, therefore, towards Him that we direct our humble and ardent prayer; towards Him Who, in His love for erring humanity, consented to become the expiatory victim for its crimes in the sublimity of martyrdom; towards Him Who, seated, although invisible, in the mystic barge of His Church, can alone calm the tempest and issue His commands to winds and waves.

Beyond all doubt, Venerable Brethren, you will pray to this divine Master with us that the evils which weigh down upon society may be lessened, that the splendor of heavenly light may shine on those who, perhaps more through ignorance than malice, hate and persecute the religion of Jesus Christ, and that all men of good will may be bound together in a close and holy union for common action. May the triumph of truth and justice be thus hastened in this world, and may the dawn of a better future, of days of tranquility and peace, soon shed its hopeful rays over the great human family.

Meanwhile, as a pledge of the most precious favors of heaven, we lovingly impart to you and to the faithful confided to your care our Apostolic Benediction.

Given at Rome, near St. Peter's, this 19th day of March in the year 1902, the 25th of Our Pontificate.

LEO, XIII. POPE.

Wanted Known.—That for acute Bronchitis or Pneumonia TUSSICURA is an immediate and permanent remedy.—“*.”

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