

It is since these doctrines have been broached, that our country, formerly so peaceable and so happy, has become the theatre of deplorable scenes of violence, of disorder and of all sorts of scandals during the elections. Men, who find their interest in misleading the people, have exalted beyond all bounds their liberty and independance, in order to succeed better in making use of them as blind instruments for their own ambition.

They first laid down this false principle against which we have already protested, that religion has nothing to do with politics; then they insisted that in the selection of a candidate, you had only to follow your own pleasure, and the caprice of your will: and finally, laying aside all truth and justice, they have gone so far as to allow every thing to be said or done that might be thought useful in securing the triumph of the candidate of your choice.

These are monstrous errors, Dearly Beloved Brethren, and, wo to the country where they should take root! wo to the government which thinks of ruling without God! wo to the people which, in the exercise of its political rights, ignores the eternal laws of sound reason and justice!

Far from us the thought of denying you this true liberty and independence which the constitution of our country guarantees to you; what we deplore, what we condemn, is the abuse that is made of it; it is the lamentable excesses into which so many fall, as if this liberty and this independence authorized you to trample under foot all divine and human laws.

Remember that, one day, God will judge your elections; he will ask an account of your intentions, of your choice, of your vote, of your words and of your acts, in the exercise of this important right. At the same time that the constitution gives you the right of selecting your representatives, God imposes on you the obligation of using this liberty only for the public good, and of giving your votes only to men capable of procuring it, and sincerely disposed to do so. Hence arises another obligation for you: that of studying well those who solicit your votes. You would certainly be guilty of very great imprudence before God and men, if you gave your suffrage for the first comer who presents himself with fair words, without examining his capacity, or his principles. To defend your civil and religious rights, you cannot depend upon a man who is not religious, and of proved honor and integrity. What confidence could you have in an unbeliever who laughs at conscience, at religion and at God himself? in a man who only goes to church at election time? who boasts of carrying the election by fraud, by violence, by calumny, by perjury? who wishes to buy your votes with money? Should you not dread that after having bought you, he will sell