

brought about. The worst effect of this error was that Rome laid the foundation of her triumphs and her grandeur on a huge system of slavery. Man, the creature of a God the Romans knew not, had no rights that they did not give him; he was a part of the one great compound while useful to that body; he was worthy of notice while able to serve, but afterwards fit only to die; the individual was the tool of the State, whose interests he was born to serve, and when that service was no longer possible the State was grateful enough to kill him. The Emperor ordered and the servant obeyed; possessions, comforts, life, death, everything truly belonging to the individual was not his, it was wrenched from him by the State, and this was recognized as the highest right. What a work for the Church! Truly a power not divinely ordained would have shrunk from the task of reforming Pagan Rome. But men had been things long enough. The time came when the world was to know that the highest of God's earthly creatures is a man and not merely a unit. Representatives of a new creed appeared, and, though they seemed little prepared for the consequences, they dared to deny the superiority of might. They came with a doctrine for men and its first tenet was that there existed a living, seeing rewarding and punishing God—the first principle of all things. The second and a corollary of the first, was that man, the creature of that God, was endowed from his birth with inalienable rights and that all human institutions were nothing, if they were not the instruments whereby these rights were freely exercised. The new doctrine proclaimed that man was free. It said to the sovereign:—These are not thy slaves, they are thy subjects; thou art a king, but thou art a man, and a man who, like them, will appear one day before the Supreme Judge; thou hast the power of making laws, but merely for their interests; the power thou hast received is not for thy comfort or pleasure, nor for the gratification of thy passions, but solely for their happiness; thou art a person exclusively devoted to the public weal; if thou forgettest this, thou art a tyrant.

In a word, Catholicity—for such is the new creed—contradicted pagan philosophy in its fundamental principles. No longer was it to be believed that man ex-

isted for the State, but rather that the State existed for man, for his use and for his advantage. It was a terrible shock to pagan belief, but the Church bled for the faith that was in her, and she offered the lives of thousands of her children, to prove the truth of her teaching. There is no need to say on which side victory has rested, *veritas praevalabit*; but, keeping the object of this work in view, it is perhaps well to record this the first official act of the Catholic Church on behalf of suffering humanity.

Rome was always triumphant against her external foes, but when she turned her arms against the enemy she had nurtured within her gates, the fight was a doubtful one. So true is this, that the more protracted was the struggle, the less able was she for the issue. Vice had taken a firm grasp upon Rome, and her bravest soldiers could not recapture her strongholds—and what was Rome's fate was also the fate of Southern Europe. In this way was the coming of the barbarians prepared for them, those savage tribes that came down in terror from the North and carried everything before them. Rome fell an easy victim to the invaders, and to the doctrine that man exists for the state, succeeded an equally false one: man exists for himself. The satisfaction of his own wants and the gratification of his passions formed the *summum bonum* of the northern savage. Pagan Rome made man the slave of the state; the barbarians made him the slave of his own passions. Objective law they knew not, for with them every man was a sufficient law unto himself. But it is well to remember that a conquered nation is not dead, and although Southern Europe was trodden down by hordes of restless wanderers, there yet remained amidst the ruins a wonderful power, and it was not long before the savages were transformed under the powerful influence of Catholicity, and this not in Southern Europe alone, but in the West and in the North. The Catholic Church has the faculty of assimilating by a gentle persuasion all that it cannot reject, and of rejecting by force all that it cannot assimilate. The savages of the North threatened to stop the progress of civilization in a whole continent, but the Church took them into her fold and they became dutiful children. The Arabs overran Spain, but they carried with them their stubborn-