

It is rather late in the centuries to assert that the doctrines that Christ left to His Church contain principles subversive of progress. If true progress, — or Civilization, to call progress by the name its highest development demands — has for its object the perfecting and well-being of man in actual life, we may rest assured that the Church will not put any obstacles in its way. Man, as a private individual, may exact from civilization the satisfaction of the legitimate exigencies of his soul and body; as a citizen, he may exact the maintenance of order and peace, and whatever else can tone down the rigors of life. There is nothing in the Gospel of Christ, nor in the teachings of His Church, to disappoint those lawful expectations of man here below.

His final end, however, is the attainment of eternal happiness. Every phase of progress, in whatever sphere, should be for him a means of salvation. How, then, can the Church antagonize any such means, seeing that she herself has the same end in view, and employs, besides, supernatural means to attain it?

The proper and direct mission of the Church is to preserve the deposit of revelation that she received from her Founder, and to make men reach heaven. This is the only end the Church has in view, an end which she pursues vigorously, yet, sweetly; all other ends are secondary. If she does not see fit to mix herself up with, or patronize, the various phases of progress that are continually presenting themselves, the only reproach — unfair though it is — that can be made against her is that she is indifferent to them; no one can logically conclude that she is opposed to them.

The Church has her own sphere of action; her programme is one of her Founder's making and is well defined; and she parts company with blatant apologists of progress the moment they cease to listen to her, or attach to their hobbies an importance these do not deserve. Just, a word to illustrate what the Church's attitude is towards the various phases of progress.