

THE ENCYCLICAL--IMMORTALE DEI.

On the Christian Formation of States.
To Our Venerable Brethren, all the
We Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishop-
NORTHWEST, and Bishops of the
Catholic World.

LEO PP. XIII.

VENERABLE BRETHREN, HEALTH AND APOSTOL-
IC BENEEDICTION:

CONTINUED.

This society, though consisting of men like civil society, nevertheless on account of its aim, and the means which it uses for its purpose, is supernatural and spiritual; and therefore is different and distinct from civil society; and, what is of very great moment, is a perfect society in kind and in law, since it possesses of itself and in itself, by the will and benefit of its founder, all the aids necessary to its security and its action. Since the aim of the Church is by far the noblest, so its power is of all the highest, and can never be considered inferior to civil authority, or in any way subject to it. In truth Jesus Christ gave to His Apostles free mandate as to sacred things adding the power of making laws in the true sense of the word, and the consequent two fold power of judging and of punishing. "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth; going therefore teach all nations... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" (12). And elsewhere: "If he will not hear you tell the Church" (13). And again: "Having in readiness to revenge all disobedience" (14). Again: "I may deal more severely according to the power which the Lord hath given me unto edification and not to destruction" (15). The leader of men to heavenly things is not the State but the Church, and to her the charge has been assigned by God that she should look to and decree in those things that concern religion; that she should extend the bounds of Christianity as far as possible; in short, that she should administer all Christianity freely and readily, according to her own judgment. This authority, absolute in itself, and plainly independent, which has long been denied by the philosophy that flatters princes, the Church has never ceased to assert for herself and also publicly to exercise, first of all the Apostles themselves asserting it, who, when forbidden by the rulers of the synagogue to spread the Gospel, answered with constancy: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (16). The holy Fathers of the Church according to opportunity, labored to establish by arguments this same power; and the Roman Pontiffs, with unconquerable constancy, never failed to vindicate it for themselves against opponents. Still more, princes themselves and governors of States approved this power by word and by deeds, by compacts, by transactions of affairs, by sending and receiving ambassadors, and thus acting with the Church as with a Supreme lawful Power. Nor surely is it to be held that it was without a special providence of God that this same power was made secure by a civil principedom as the best assurance of its liberty.

Therefore God has divided the guidance of the human race between two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one looking to Divine the other to human affairs. Each is greatest of its kind; each has certain bounds determined by the nature and proximate cause of each; whence a circle as it were is drawn in which each may lawfully act. But since the power of both is over the same persons, and hence it may happen that one and the same thing may come, although in different ways, under the law and judgment of both;—God the Supreme Providence, who is the Author of both, must have accurately and harmoniously traced the course of each. "Those that be, are ordained of God" (17). Were it not so, cause of destructive contention and strife would often arise; and man would frequently have to stop in doubt and hesitancy like one with forked roads before him, anxious as to what he should do in the presence of two conflicting authorities, neither of which can be conscientiously rejected. Such a condition is in the highest degree repugnant to the wisdom and goodness of God Who, even in the physical world, though it is of far inferior rank, nevertheless has disposed and harmonized natural powers and causes that one is not an obstacle to another, and all fittingly and accurately combine to attain the purpose of the universe. There is need, therefore, of a kind of harmonious connection between the two powers; and it is not unduly compared to the union between the body and the soul in man. Its character and extent cannot be judged except by considering, as we have said, the nature of both, and taking into account the excellency and nobility of their purposes; one having as immediate and chief aim the benefit of mortal things, the other aiming to provide heavenly and eternal blessing. Whatever therefore in human affairs has a character in any way sacred, whatever pertains to the salvation of souls or the worship of God, whether such by nature or by the purpose to which it is directed, is under the power and judgment of the Church; on the other hand, whatever is of a civil or political character is rightfully subject to civil authority, since Jesus Christ commanded the things that are Caesar's to be rendered to Caesar and the things that are God's to God. There are times when another means of concord avail's to secure peace and liberty, namely, when any ruler and the Supreme Pontiff enter into an agreement on any particular matter. On such occasions the Church gives marked proof of maternal kindness, yielding and indulging as much as possible.

Such are the principal points in the Christian character of civil society, and characterization is not inconsiderate or the fanciful, but deduced from the highest and truest of principles, which are con-

firmed by natural reason itself.

Such a molding of the State presents nothing derogatory to the majesty or honor of princes, and, far from lessening the prerogatives of majesty, rather renders them stronger and more august. In fact, when more deeply considered, this formation of the State presents a certain great perfection that is lacking in other forms of State; and from it various and excellent fruits would follow, if each would retain its place and entirely fulfill its proper office and charge. In truth in such a form of the State as we have above described, the Divine and human elements are fittingly placed; the rights of the citizens are intact, and have the protection of divine, natural and human law; individual duties are wisely described and their fulfillment fittingly provided for. Every person in his uncertain and laborious course to an eternal home knows that he has trusty guides to lead him on his way and help him to reach its end; and likewise understands that there are other leaders given him to procure and preserve security, worldly means, and the other advantages of which our common life consists. Domestic society obtains due firmness from the sanctity of marriage one and undivided; the rights and duties of the married parties are ruled in justice and equity; the honor due to woman is maintained, the authority of the husband has as its model the authority of God; the power of the father is tempered fittingly by the dignity of the wife and children; the protection of the children, their comfort and their training, are well provided for. In political and civil lines the laws look to the common weal, and are regulated not by the whim and fallacious judgment of the multitude, but by truth and justice; the authority of rulers is endowed with a certain sanctity above all human veneration, and is restrained from injustice and from excess; submission honored and dignified because it is not slavery of man to man, but obedience to the will to God, exercising His rule through human agencies. Once that this is known and well accepted, it becomes a well understood matter of justice to hold respect for the power of rulers, to yield unvarying and faithful submission to public power, to do nothing of a seditious character, to observe sacredly the discipline of society. Likewise mutual charity, kindness and liberality are placed among duties; he who is at the same time a citizen and Christian is not troubled and distracted by conflicting commands; all those great benefits with which the Christian religion spontaneously fills mortal life as well, are secured to civil society; so that it becomes manifest that "the condition of the State depends upon the worship of God, and there is a manifold and close connection between the one and the other" (18).

Augustine has portrayed the number of these benefits in his usual remarkable manner in many of his works, but especially where he addresses the Catholic Church in these words: "Thou trainest and teachest children in childlike manner, youth forcibly, old age calmly, looking not alone to corporal but to mental age also. Thou subjectest women to their husbands in chaste and faithful obedience, not for purposes of lust, but to increase the race and to further the work of the family. Thou placest husbands over their helpmates not to make a toy of the weaker sex, but to be guided by laws of sincere love. Thou subjectest children to parents in a certain unconstrained bondage, thou placest parents over children in a control accompanied by devotion. . . Thou unitest citizen to citizen, nations to nations, and all men in fact, by the memory of our first parents, not alone in social bonds, but even in brotherhood. Thou teachest rulers to look to the welfare of their subjects, and subjects to yield submission to their rulers. Thou teachest carefully to whom honor is due, to whom affection, to whom reverence, to whom fear, to whom consolation, to whom admonition, to whom exhortation, to whom discipline, to whom reproof, to whom punishment, that all things are not due to all, that charity is due to all and injury to none" (19). And the same writer, in another place, reprehending erring political philosophers, says: "Let those who declare the doctrine of Christ adverse to the commonwealth give us an army of soldiers such as the doctrine of Christ commands they should be, such governors of provinces, such husbands, such wives, such parents, such children, such masters, such servants, such rulers, such judges, finally, such tax-payers and tax-gatherers as the doctrine of Christ would have them, and then let them dare to declare that doctrine adverse to the State, or rather let them frankly acknowledge that in that doctrine, if followed, mainly lies the welfare of the State" (20).

There was a time when the philosophy of the Gospel ruled States; when its efficacy and divine virtue had penetrated the laws, the institutions, popular customs, all ranks and lines of the State; when the religion instituted by Jesus Christ was firmly placed in its due eminence, and flourished in the favor of the princes and the legitimate protection of the magistrates; when the priesthood and the civil power were auspiciously joined by concord and a friendly interchange of offices. The State thus constituted produced results beyond expectation, of which the memory remains and will ever remain in innumerable records of deeds that cannot be distorted or dimmed by any cunning of foes. That Christian Europe tamed barbarian races, and led them from fierceness to gentleness, from superstition to truth; that she victoriously repelled Mohammedan invasions; that she retained the primacy of civil cultivation and became the permanent leader and mistress of the rest of the world in the attainment of all that adorns humanity; that she bestowed on peoples genuine and manifold liberty; that she wisely established much for the alleviation of misfortunes, is beyond con-

trovery due in great part to religion which animated to so great undertakings, and aided in their accomplishment. The same blessings would surely have remained if the concord of both powers had remained; and greater things still might rightfully be expected if the authority, if the teaching power; if the counsels of the Church had been accorded a greater and more unvarying submission. For we must hold as a perpetual law what Yves of Chartres wrote to Pope Paschal II.: "When the civil power and the priesthood are in accord, the world is well ruled, the Church flourishes and bears fruit. When they are opposed one to another, not only little things fail to grow up, but even great things suffer a wretched decline." (21)

(1) Rom. xiii. 1. (2) Sap. vi. 7. (3) Rom. xii. 1. (4) Ibid v. 2. (5) Joan. xx. 21. (6) Matth. xviii. 20. (7) Joan. x. 10. (8) Marc. xv. 12. (9) Matth. xvi. 19. (10) Joan. xxi. 16. (11) Luc. xziii. 32. (12) Matth. xviii. 18-20. (13) Matth. xviii. 17. (14) 2 Cor. x. 6. (15) 2 Cor. xiii. 10. (16) Act. v. 29. (17) Rom. xiii. 1. (18) Scar. Imp. ad Cyrillum Alexand. et Episcopos metrop. Cir. Libanum Collect. Conc. T. III. (19) De moribus Eccl. cath. cap. xxx. n. 63. (20) Epist. cxxxviii. (al. 5) ad Marcellinum, cap. II. n. 15. (21) Ep. cxxxviii.

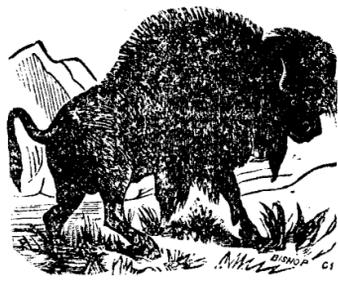
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