

will allow, in order the more effectually to cement together, and unite all classes of citizens in mutual affection. Yet we cannot dissemble that faith and morals are exposed and endangered by objectionable associations. All societies are to be shunned by whosoever name they may be called, the objects whereof are not distinctly declared, and wherein the solemnity of an oath, or any corresponding engagement, is employed to veil the ends of the association, or its proceedings, from the public eye. It is plainly a rash use of the name of God, where the object for which it is employed is not distinctly understood; and since all just objects may be openly avowed and pursued, the mantle of secrecy is needlessly thrown around them. We would not judge unkindly of any body or men, or of any individuals, professing to have in view objects of philanthropy and mutual aid: but we cannot conceal our apprehensions that by assuming mere natural principles as their guide they insensibly prepare themselves for discarding revealed religion, so that some find themselves divested of faith, before they were conscious of the tendency and influence the society with which they connected themselves. We, therefore, feel ourselves bound to renew thus solemnly our admonitions to all who claim to be members of the Church, and to remind them of the several decrees of the sovereign pontiffs in regard to secret societies, and to declare anew that sacramental absolution cannot be lawfully or validly imparted to persons continuing to profess themselves members of such societies. We conjure all our children in Christ by his tender mercies, to shun all such associations, and through no consideration of interest or fear, to continue in a connection so opposed to the positive laws of the Church, and so dangerous to the integrity of faith. The privileges of membership in the great society of the faithful are granted on condition of obedience to the laws of the Church; and are forfeited when acts are done to which the penalty of privation is attached.

In calling on you, brethren, to avoid those dangerous associations, we mean not to weaken, but to strengthen, your social relations to your fellow citizens generally. No difference of religious sentiment varies the eternal rules of justice; no errors, or even crimes, deprive any one of his claims on your charity, in virtue of the law of him who said, "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: bless them that curse you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." "If it be possible," says the apostle, "as much as in you lies, have peace with all men." "Do good to all men," and if especially to those who are of the household of the faith, yet to others likewise, with sincere, effectual beneficence. To you we trust for the practical refutation of all those atrocious calumnies which deluded men, severally or in odious combinations, constantly circulate by every possible means against our

holy religion. Your strict integrity in the daily concerns of life, your fidelity in the fulfilment of all engagements, your peaceful demeanour, your obedience to the laws, your respect for the public functionaries, your unaffected exercise of charity in the many occasions which the miseries and sufferings of our fellow-men present; in fine, your sincere virtue will confound those vain men whose ingenuity and industry are exerted to cast suspicion on our principles, and evoke against us all the worst passions of human nature. Let, then, your entire deportment be good, "that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, considering you by your good works, they may glorify God in the day of visitation. For so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Whilst you justly prize the civil rights which you enjoy in common with your fellow-citizens, be mindful of the allegiance which you owe to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Give to God what belongs to God, the homage of enlightened faith, and the cheerful obedience of your wills. "As free, and not as making liberty a cloak of malice, but as the servants of God. (1 Peter ii. 16.)

The enormous evils of intemperance, which no tongue can portray, have given occasion to the adoption of a remedy apparently extreme. Millions in Ireland, and many thousands in this country, have publicly pledged themselves to abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors. We cannot but approve the determination taken by such as have had the misfortune to contract this dreadful vice: for we have rarely seen the drunkard reclaimed, except by the total abandonment of the occasion of his sin; we also highly applaud the generous charity and zeal of such as through compassion for the unfortunate, have stepped forward to share with them the privation, but we deem it right to guard against the possible abuse of so excellent an institution. It must be distinctly understood and avowed, that the moderate use of wine or of any other liquor is of itself perfectly lawful, since "every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected which is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. iv. 4. It would not be advisable to impose or to assume generally the obligation of total abstinence, since, considering human frailty, it might become a snare of souls, and change a lawful act into sin, and add to the sting of conscience the terror of despair. We will, therefore, that the pledge usually made be regarded as a resolution, which whilst it affords to those who take it the advantages of mutual examples and prayers, imposes no new moral obligation, so that the person who should fail in its observance, sins only by excess, or by exposing himself to danger in consequence of his peculiar frailty. Let each one at the same time remember that it is only through the grace of Jesus Christ that we can effectually overcome temptation and