

It was important to check the progress of this dangerous error, and this the bishops intended to do, by their solemn declaration, in conformity with the constitutions of the Sovereign Pontiff and the decisions of councils, that Church-property, being of the order of things consecrated to the worship of God, belongs to God, and is thereby under the power and jurisdiction of the Church. Hence it follows that the administrators of Church-property are merely the stewards of the Church, that it is from her they hold their right of administration, and that they are therefore bound to administer her property in accordance with the regulations and intentions of the Church. Nor can they ever divert them to any other object, without the permission of the Bishop, who represents her in his Diocese.

Such are the momentous decisions, issued forth by the decree relating to ecclesiastical property; these decisions should serve you for a rule and a law, to direct you in regard to the administration and destination of Church-property, from which you cannot deviate under pain of disobedience to the Church.

"The name of God is holy and terrible;"¹ it should never be pronounced ^{1) Pa. 110} without the highest reverence: to take it in vain is a crime, and woe to the man who profanes it. Nevertheless, unworthy Christians are daily to be met with, who unmindful of the fear of God, for the sake of a vile interest, dare to profane his adorable name by rash, unjust, or false oaths; even lately, some incited by their pride and ambition, amidst the fury of the elections, have given vent to their impiety in the following words of blasphemy: "Fear not to resort to falsehood and perjury; mind not the priests who forbid you: God does not see you, nor does he hear you; during election-time you are free and independent of all control on the part of God or men; you may do what you please, God will not call you to account, nor will he punish you!" Finally, during these days of rioting and excess, many have been seen, who, being seduced by such infernal advice or blinded by their passions, formed for themselves a false conscience, and belicing their convictions, persuaded themselves that they could swear against truth, to assert their right to vote; and those men were not afraid to make use of the adorable name of God, to confirm a falsehood, and have committed this horrible crime without remorse.

While the echoes of these blasphemies and perjuries were still resounding