

ing the children of the Church, and its subordinate rulers in whatever clime, in whatever nation, under whatever form of government they may live. It implies, also, on the part of the bishops of the Church, the paramount duty of being in strict communion with the See of Peter. The intercommunion of the Apostolic See and of all the bishops of the Church, should be uninterrupted and untrammelled, like the flowing and ebbing of the tide. Who does not see, therefore, that the doctrine of the primacy involves as a corollary the divine right of freedom of communication between the Head of the Church and its members, the right of the supreme Pontiff of being free and independent of any human power in the discharge of the sublime duties of his office. Such a freedom is an essential element of Church government and discipline, and the Church is in its normal state only when it enjoys it.

Now, as a security and guarantee of this freedom of action on the part of the Sovereign Pontiff, He who established the primacy so disposed of events as to prepare the way for the temporal power of the Popes. He who reads history aright, must see the finger of God in the gradual establishment and consolidation of the temporal power, as the condition of the freedom and independence of the Head of the Church in the discharge of his sacred duties. Daniel saw in his vision of the night the whole divine plan, according to which empire was to give the way to empire, and kingdom was to succeed kingdom, until the whole world should be gathered into the Roman empire: "When in the days of those kingdoms, the God of heaven would raise up another kingdom which should never be destroyed, but which should stand for ever." (Dan. ii. 44.) Even so, the Christian student of history may see how the Almighty Disposer of events, who upholds all things by the word of His power, so disposed of events and controlled the destinies of nations as to prepare the way for the establishment of a principality which was to secure the free, unfettered exercise of that primacy which the Incarnate God had established in His Church, as the centre and principle of unity of faith and the fountain of jurisdiction. During three hundred years, the Church was subjected to a most sanguinary persecution; her faithful children were slain by hundreds, and the soil of Rome was soddened with martyrs' blood. During that dark period, the Church, it is true, acquired property, but not, of course, a civil principality; and hence, the only way in which the Supreme Pontiffs could vindicate their liberty and independence was to retire to the gloom of the catacombs, or to shed their blood on the red scaffold of martyrdom. But that was not the normal state of the Christian Church. Persecution had done its worst against it and utterly failed in its object. Human passions broke in angry waves against the rock of ages, but in vain. The Church was built upon a rock, and though the rain fell, and the floods came, and the tempests raged, it fell not. The victory of Constantine gave freedom to our holy religion, called her forth from her hiding places, and enthroned her in glorious basilicas and majestic temples. Then began to manifest itself the action of Divine Providence in