

of His truths, has inherited the same lot. The world is always consistent in its way. Near the sons of God are constantly present the satellites of that great adversary of the human race, who, a rebel from the beginning against the Most High, is named in the Gospel the prince of this world. It is on this account that the spirit of the world, in the presence of the law and of him who announces it in the name of God, swells with the measureless pride of an independence that ill befits it. Alas, how often, in more stormy epochs, with unheard-of cruelty and shameless injustice, and to the evident undoing of the whole social body, have the adversaries banded themselves together for the foolhardy enterprise of dissolving the work of God! And not succeeding with one manner of persecution, they adopted others. For three long centuries, the Roman Empire, abusing its brute force, scattered the bodies of martyrs through all the provinces and bathed with their blood every foot of ground in this sacred city of Rome; while heresy, acting in concert, whether hidden beneath a mask or with open effrontery, with sophistry and snare, endeavored to destroy at least the harmony and unity of faith. Then were set loose, like a devastating tempest, the hordes of barbarians from the north, and the moslems from the south, leaving in their wake only ruins in a desert. So has been transmitted from age to age the melancholy heritage of hatred by which the Spouse of Christ has been overwhelmed. There followed a Caesarism as suspicious as powerful, jealous of all other power, no matter what development it might itself have thence acquired, which incessantly attacked the Church, to usurp her rights and tread her liberties under foot. The heart bleeds to see this mother so often oppressed with anguish and woes unutterable. However, triumphing over every obstacle, over all violence, and all tyrannies, she pitched her peaceful tents more and more widely; she saved from disaster the glorious patrimony of arts, history, science and letters; and imbuing deeply the whole body of society with the spirit of the Gospel, she created Christian civilization—that civilization to which the nations, subjected to its beneficent influence, owe the

equity of their laws, the mildness of their manners, the protection of the weak, pity for the afflicted and the poor, respect for the rights and dignity of all men, and thereby as far as it is possible amidst the fluctuations of human affairs, that calm of social life which springs from the just and prudent alliance between justice and liberty.

Those proofs of the intrinsic excellence of the Church are as striking and sublime as they have been enduring. Nevertheless, as in the Middle Ages and during the first centuries, so in those nearer our own, we see the Church assailed more harshly, in a certain sense at least, and more distressingly than ever. Through a series of well known historical causes, the pretended Reformation of the sixteenth century raised the standard of revolt; and determining to strike straight into the heart of the Church, audaciously attacked the Papacy. It broke the precious link of ancient unity of faith and authority, which, multiplying a hundred-fold, power, prestige and glory, thanks to the harmonious pursuit of the same objects, united all nations under one staff and one shepherd. This unity being broken, a pernicious principle of disintegration was introduced among all ranks of Christians.

We do not indeed, hereby pretend to affirm that from the beginning there was a set purpose of destroying the principle of Christianity in the heart of society; but by refusing on the one hand, to acknowledge the supremacy of the Holy See the effective cause and bond of unity, and by proclaiming, on the other, the principle of private judgment, the divine structure of faith was shaken to its deepest foundations and the way was opened to infinite variations, to doubts and denials of the most important things, to an extent which the innovators themselves had not foreseen. The way was opened. Then came the contemptuous and mocking philosophism of the eighteenth century, which advanced farther. It turned to ridicule the sacred canon of the Scriptures and rejected the entire system of revealed truths, with the purpose of being able ultimately to root out from the conscience of the people all religious belief and stifling within it the last breath of the spirit of Christianity. It is from