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ROME THE CAPITAL OF
CHRISTENDOM.

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A SERMON

BY

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ROME

THE CAPITAL OF CHRISTENDOM.



Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, taking water washed his hands before the people, saying, 'I am innocent.'—S. MATTH. xxvii. 24.

I DO NOT INTEND to draw any historical parallels of persons, nor to affix any names; but to make a parallel of certain motives, and actions, with their inevitable results.

It is evident that Pilate was not willing to condemn our Divine Lord to death. Again and again he sought to let Him go. But the clamorous multitude would not. The more he sought to save Him, the more they clamoured. And when Pilate saw 'that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made,' to clear himself he took water and washed his hands before the people, and said, 'I am innocent.' But neither God nor man holds him guiltless.

The other day we read a letter of a Catholic King to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. It stated, not that he was impelled by duty or by justice, but that he was unable to resist the aspirations of the people; and that he had, therefore, no choice but to enter Rome, and to seize its sovereignty. 'The state of feeling,'

he says, 'among the populations governed by your Holiness,' constitutes 'evident dangers for all.'

I do not doubt that this King is a brave man in battle, generous to the poor, and that he has still the faith of his ancestors, whatsoever be his acts. But the multitude clamours, and their aspirations he cannot resist. How far his filial protestations will clear his innocence, is for the judgment of God.

Such were the motives; what were the acts? An army of sixty thousand men and a hundred and fifty guns encompassed the city of Rome.

On this the Sovereign Pontiff issued to the Commander of his small but heroic army a letter in these words:—

At this moment, when a great sacrilege and an injustice of the greatest enormity are about to be consummated, and the troops of a Catholic King, without provocation, nay, without so much as the least appearance of any motive, surround and besiege the capital of the Catholic world, I feel in the first place the necessity of thanking you and our entire army for your noble conduct up to the present time, for the affection which you have shown to the Holy See, and for your willingness to consecrate yourselves entirely to the defence of this metropolis. May these words be a solemn document, to certify to the discipline, the loyalty, and the valour of the army in the service of this Holy See.

As far as regards the duration of the defence, I feel it my duty to command that this shall only consist in such a protest as shall testify to the violence that is done to us, and nothing more: in other words, that negotiation for surrender shall be opened as soon as a breach shall have been made.

At a moment in which the whole of Europe is mourning over the numerous victims of the war now in progress between two great nations, never let it be said that the Vicar of Jesus Christ, however unjustly assailed, had to give his consent to a great shedding of blood. Our cause is the cause of God, and we put our whole defence into His hands. From my heart I bless you and your whole army.

POPE PIUS THE NINTH.

From the VATICAN: Sept. 19th.

The rest is soon told. On the twentieth of September the fire of five hours made a breach in the old crumbling walls. The Italian army entered in, followed by thousands of exiles and fugitives who, for offences of many kinds, had fled or been banished from Rome; with them troops of women. The legitimate Sovereign was deposed, and a provisional Government was then named by the invader. Such are the facts. Now for the fictions with which the unsuspecting English people are misled.

It has been sedulously propagated that the Sovereign Pontiff was not free; that he was under the dominion of a 'foreign soldiery,' 'ruthless hirelings,' 'mercenary cut-throats,' 'fanatics,' and 'legitimists.' So are described some of the noblest and purest blood of Europe — men who for the Vicar of Jesus Christ offered their wealth and their lives; and others who, if poor, and, therefore, like our brave British soldiers, receiving their food from the Sovereign whom they volunteered to serve, were not behind the nobles who led them, in chivalry and devotion. The letter I have read proves this base accusation to be a falsehood.

Again, it was said that the Roman people received the invaders as deliverers, and hailed their entrance with acclamations of joy. The rejoicing and applause entered ready-made through the breach with the invader, duly prepared beforehand.

Lastly, it was said that the Pope was compelled to call for the protection of the Italian army against his own subjects: That is to say, an invading host had overthrown all order; a mob gathered from all parts had burst into Rome, and crowded the Piazza

of S. Peter's under the eyes of the Holy Father. Every form of tumult followed, and insult with violence. Murder was committed in open day. The invaders had driven all police away, and had taken captive the army of the Sovereign Pontiff. They had brought a flood of turbulence into Rome, and they alone had power to control it.*

Such are the lies with which the public mind of England has been poisoned. And such are the facts which refute them, known to me not only through public but private channels. I am glad also to know that it was by no English hand that these things were written: but I am ashamed to know that Englishmen lend themselves to spread them where-soever the English tongue is read.†

* A hostile hand proves this:

'The Pope appears disposed to wait and see how this programme will be carried out. General de Courten having informed him that his disarmed soldiers solicited his benediction before leaving Rome, the Holy Father looked out on the assembled corps from a window, exclaiming, 'You are going, my children, and may God bless you! I remain. I shall see what they will make of me.' Soon afterwards a mob of Roman roughs swarmed into the Piazza of S. Peter's, and made a rush at the entrance to the Vatican, shouting, "Death to Antonelli! Death to the Pope!" Fortunately the Holy Father retained a guard of about thirty gendarmes, who, firing from the passage, kept the ruffians at bay till the bersaglieri came up at the charge. The mob was then driven out of the piazza, but not till the bersaglieri fired a volley, which killed and wounded about a dozen of their number. Since this affair the Holy Father has spoken quite affectionately of the bersaglieri. By the capitulation he is empowered to retain the Noble Guard, Swiss and Palatine, and 150 gendarmes.'—*Pall Mall Gazette*, Oct. 3, 1870. The 'roughs' were in Rome; but not of Rome alone, but of all Italy.

† I add the following as specimens. I need not remind the reader of the 'charred bones' which were found in the dungeons of the Inquisition in 1848; nor need I say that every statement here bears falsehood on its face. I had hoped that Miss Ratcliffe's novels,

Rome, then, has been seized by violence; and the Head of Christendom, and Christendom itself, has been robbed. The capital of the Christian world is

and Maria Monk, had exhausted this kind of calumnious nonsense:—
 ‘There are, however, some tribunals which are now, and will probably for ever henceforth remain, closed. First among these is the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition, directed by the Dominicans. These worthy disciples of Guzman have not yet made their appearance in the streets of the city; for, like the Jesuits, they are anything but popular in Rome. People still remember here that hundreds of poor wretches were shut up in the prison of the Holy Inquisition for the great crime of eating a sausage on a Friday, or because they had forgotten to kneel down when the miraculous “Bambino” of “Ara Cœli” made his appearance in the streets. At the Café de Rome a man was shown to me this morning who was kept in a dark prison of the Holy Office for three months because he had ventured to state publicly that the “Misérables” of Victor Hugo was the best of books. A poor woman reduced to poverty stopped a cardinal at the promenade, asking him to give her some money. His Eminence having refused, in her indignation she said that Princes of the Church had no heart, and were hypocrites. The poor woman was sent to the Holy Office, and was condemned to a month’s imprisonment. I could quote a hundred facts of the same kind, but the two above mentioned are enough to explain how it is that the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition is not popular in Rome.’—
Daily Telegraph, Oct. 4, 1870.

I cannot refrain from adding another sample of the absurdities cooked for English credulity, with which the keen Italian intellect amuses itself at our expense. I need hardly say that ‘the little window of St. Peter’s in the Vatican’ physically cannot exist, and that ‘in the Vatican’ the interior of St. Peter’s can only be seen by clairvoyance, nor that the Pope’s ‘head at the crack of the door’ is fabulous and foolish. Any one who knows the locality will know that such a tale must be a fabrication. But the aim of it is as evident as its malice. The whole is intended to make mischief between the Holy Father and the noble men who the other day exposed their lives in his defence. But neither will this succeed—they know him and he knows them too well:—‘The Pope in the meantime amuses himself by watching, himself unseen, through a little window of S. Peter’s in the Vatican, the Italian soldiers, who visit the Great Temple with much devotion, and, passing before the statue of St. Peter, bow and kiss its toe and make the sign of the cross. On the

reduced to the capital of a nation; and to-day, the Festival of the Holy Rosary is fixed for the Plebiscite. This day, hitherto sacred in memory of the deliverance of Christendom in the battle of Lepanto, by the Christian powers animated and sustained by the spirit and energy of a Pontiff, will hereafter be memorable for the mockery of a Plebiscite, taken with all the freedom of a siege, and helped by the presence of an invading army. Such are the events. Now for the results; of which some are immediate, some future, but all inevitable.

Let us estimate the moral character of the deed which has been done:—

1. First, it is a sin. In an old book there still is

evening of the 26th he said to Cardinal Patrizi, "Does your Eminence know that these Italian soldiers seem much better Christians than those who were in my service a week ago? Good fellows! Good fellows!" A few days since two Italian officers of artillery entered the Vatican to visit the museum, and on entering ascended by mistake the grand staircase to the right instead of the one in front. The gendarmes and halberdiers made way for them with every sign of respect. In the same respectful manner they were saluted by Prelates and Abbés. Passing from hall to hall, they arrived at a spot where were dignitaries of the highest rank, Cardinals, Bishops, &c., in great numbers, one of whom asked what they desired. "To visit the museum," answered the officers. "You have mistaken your way," said Cardinal Pacca; "these are the apartments of His Holiness, and this is his ante-chamber." Pius IX., at the unexpected clank of sabres, putting his head at the crack of the door, saw the officers bowing themselves out backwards with all manner of reverences before the clerical dignitaries. Upon being told the cause of their appearance, he exclaimed, opening the door, "Fine fellows! brave youths!" Pius IX., who was himself an officer of hussars in his youth, is decidedly pleased by the Italian soldiers. These are trifles which I tell you, but they may have more influence than any one imagines upon the *modus vivendi*.—*Pall Mall*, Oct. 3, 1870.

read a law, now obsolete, which runs, 'Thou shalt not steal;' and, in the same statute, another forgotten precept may be read: 'Thou shalt not covet.' Now, he that 'aspires by force' after his neighbour's house, or his neighbour's goods, both covets and steals. Again, in the same book is recorded the sin and the judgment of one who 'shed the blood of war in peace.'* This deed, then, has these three stains upon it.

2. Further, this deed is a manifold injustice, even against the laws of nature. It is a war of offence: and all offensive wars are murders. It is also contrary to the laws of warfare, for it was perpetrated, as the doer professed, by a 'Son' against a 'Father,' in time of peace, and without even a declaration of war. As such, it was also contrary to the laws of natural justice which bind nations together. Moreover, it was a violation of sovereign rights, the oldest and most sacred in the world. For more than a thousand years, the Vicars of Jesus Christ have reigned as sovereigns over Rome. They are the most ancient of Christian kings. Compared with them, all European sovereignties are but of yesterday. The crown rights of all existing dynasties are less sacred by antiquity, prescription, and possession than the rights of Pius the Ninth.

3. And this sin, which would be injustice against any sovereign, is also sacrilege against the Vicar of Jesus Christ. It is a violence against a person who is sacred, and a violation of sacred things. The sovereignty of Rome is a sacred trust in behalf of

* III. Kings ii. 5.

the whole Christian world. The freedom of the Church and the liberty of the truth are contained in it. Pius the Ninth received it from his predecessors as a trust, and is bound before God to hand it on intact to those who shall come after. His throne is not that of earthly right alone, but of the Vicar of Christ; a power not won by conquest, nor sought by ambition, nor bought by gold, nor filched by intrigue, but forced upon the Pontiffs by a moral and political necessity. When the people of Rome and of Italy had no other protectors, they made the Pontiff to be their King. Christian Rome became afterwards the germ of Christian civilisation and of the political order of the Christian world. But the Christian order of the world is a creature of Divine Providence, and has a sacred character, of which the Sovereign Pontiff is the Centre and Head. The attempt to depose him is therefore a sacrilege against the Christian order of the whole world. Such, then, is the moral character of the deed that has been accomplished.

And now, to show what are its results, I would ask two questions—

First, what will be the consequence of this act upon the Church?

S. Hilary says that the wounds of the Passion pierced the Manhood of Jesus, but the Godhead they could not reach. Like as the keenest weapon cutting a flame of fire passes harmless, and the flame is impassible, so with the Church; this outrage and sacrilege cannot reach the life and powers of the Church. It remains intact and inviolable: its faith,

its divine authority, its indefectible life, its indissoluble unity, its infallible Head and Voice, all alike undiminished in purity, energy, and freedom. It was not temporal power that sustained the Œcumenical Council the other day, when all the influences and menaces of the world were concentrated against it. It was by the supernatural power of its own Divine authority that it held on in its majestic course, without swerving a hair's-breadth from its duty. Temporal power is of use to the Church only for the peaceful exercise of its prerogatives. Its spiritual power can not be wrested from it, nor suspended, by any hand below God.

If the Church be spoiled, even the spoiling will in one way work for good. When the world persecutes, persecution purifies. While the Church is in peace, morbid humours gather. One thing is certain, we shall have among us fewer bad Catholics, worldly Catholics, lax Catholics, and liberal Catholics. When the world turns upon the Church such men are either reclaimed or fall off. When trial comes, it does not pay to be a Catholic; to be firm costs something. Only those who hold faith dearer than life stand the test. We are not afraid of this sitting. Nominal Catholics are our weakness and vexation, our scandal and our shame: sometimes they are our greatest danger. When there is nothing left for the ambitious, or the covetous, the Church will have more health and peace: and so long as this usurpation lasts, it will have at least this wholesome effect. For 300 years, not only without temporal power, or the friendship of the world, but even in persecution and

perpetual conflict, the Church rooted itself, and rose and ripened to its perfection. We have no fears then for the Church, if its destiny be to return into its first state of isolation. We have seen it already in Ireland, not only separate from the world but in endless war with it. The Church in Ireland has subsisted as by miracle, not only without temporal power but against all temporal power, in the face of it and in spite of it. The faith of pastors and people has been and is inexhaustible, the alms of the faithful inexhaustible. No Royal Supremacy could ever establish itself over the faith of Ireland. And what is true of Ireland is true of America. In the freest people under the sun the Church wields its authority, and spreads daily. So, come what may, the Catholic and Roman Church will thrive of its own intrinsic life and vigour. And if its future relations be not with dynasties, which seem to be passing away, they will be with the peoples, who cannot pass away. The constitution of the Church is indeed immutable, because it is ordained of God. The constitution of political societies may be changed, because God has not ordained any particular form of civil power. In the principles and order of the Church we can yield neither jot nor tittle, and the world therefore counts us fanatical and obstinate: but in the political order we are bound to no theories of government, no special kind of constitution. What is it, then, to the Church, if dynasties commit suicide? It can renew its relations with every form of civil order. And it would seem to be in the future that the government of the world will descend into the hands of the people; and with the people the Church

is always at home. The people hear it gladly, as they heard its Divine Master. Let no man then deceive himself, by thinking that the Pontiffs need Emperors or Kings. They are never stronger than when they are the guides of the people, walking to and fro in the midst of them. Let no one imagine that the temporal power is over, because a King has invaded Rome and spoiled the Pontiff of his rights. There is a future also for Italy; and the people of Italy have few dynastic reminiscences, but the memory of their Catholic freedom, and of their Pontiffs, is vivid and fresh. Rome will see many changes yet; but there is one thing which will never change: the See of Peter and the voice of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

The other question I have to ask is this; What will be the consequence of this act upon the world? In a word, it will reduce it to the order of nature from which it was elevated by Christianity. The Church has a twofold mission: the one, to convert individuals one by one to faith, and to bind them into a spiritual society; the other, to civilise and to elevate the political order of mankind. It was this latter office of the Church which, when nations were converted to the faith, united them under public Christian laws, and bound them together by international compacts under one supreme judge of all. Of the former part of its mission, nothing under God can deprive the Church. Of the second it may easily be discharged. If the political order of the world separates itself from the unity of faith and from the authority of the Church, then the Church can no longer fulfil its

mission as the guide of the civil society of men. For three hundred years, the separation has been accomplishing itself. In every country of Europe the Church and the civil powers have ceased to act in unison, or to be united by common laws. In Rome alone, the civil order remained Christian. And this deed has dissolved this last union of public law and Christianity. The King who did it may not have intended it. But the Revolution did; and he has done its work.

The effect of this is inevitable. Throughout the whole of Europe, the political order is now parted from the authority of Christ. Christian faith and Christian law are left to individuals, one by one. States and nations are Christian no longer, when their public life and law and conduct are withdrawn from Christianity. If they legislate in conformity with Christianity, it is not because they recognise Christianity as a rule, but because the popular will may happen to fall in with it. If it happen to fall out with Christianity, they will legislate against it.

Christendom, then—that is, the family of Christian peoples united in one body, one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, under one common law, and one common Father, is dissolved. This deed has dethroned the representative of Jesus Christ among men, and the nations of the world look on without moving a finger to restore him to his right. The international law of justice and mutual respect is gone. Diplomacy is a name without authority; talk, without force to do: and, by this act of disintegration, Christendom returns into the order of natural mo-

rality and natural sanctions. What it retains of Christianity it retains, not as such, but as expedient, or politic, or of mere custom. In its public order it has no worship, and is therefore without God in the world. In its morality, it has no higher sanction than the awards of penal retribution; in its education, nothing higher than the service of this world. Therefore this disintegration reproduces itself in every civil State throughout the world. One by one, they are dissolving by the same law and force which has dissolved the unity of Christendom at large. Wheresoever the plague of revolution enters, its effects are anti-christian and anti-social. Two things surely follow in its train: the dissolution of Christian marriage by divorce, and the abolition of Christian education. Where these things are, society is smitten at its root, and the offspring of society grow up without faith, and therefore without God. Woe to the people among whom the young are rising to manhood without Christianity! And how shall they be Christian, if Christianity be expelled from education? And what dissolves States, dissolves also homes, and in the end the canker eats into men and their very nature. The intellect developed without faith, is the prey of all error and perversion. The will grown strong without Christian law, is the source of all rebellion. And to such a state of nature the public apostacy of nations from Christianity is reconducting society, homes, and man. All this may seem far-fetched. But so is the early calculation by which the shoals and reefs and sands are foreknown and avoided.

You may ask, what has all this to do with the temporal power of the Pope?

The temporal power of the Pope is the providential guardian of the public order of Christian law in Europe, from which our ripe Christian civilisation sprang; and the dissolution of that temporal power leads straightway to the dissolution of that public, domestic, and personal commonwealth.

Men will not believe that under temporal forms and accidents lie concealed and guarded the highest moral laws. They denounce S. Thomas of Canterbury because he resisted King Henry the Second in matters of Church lands and manors, and tribunals, and appeals. They accuse him of pride, worldliness, and avarice. But S. Thomas saw by an intuition that under these things lay faith, morals, and the divine authority of the Church: and that in these all was at stake. He won his contest by the shedding of his blood, and he saved these things to the English people for more than three hundred years. The usurpations of Henry II. triumphed in Henry VIII., whom Thomas Cranmer served and flattered when he ought to have withstood. The instincts of S. Thomas are proved to be unerring by the spiritual and moral state of England now. The poor have been disinherited of their spiritual patrimony; and the civil power, with its laws, has departed century by century further from the unity of the Christian Church and faith. But these things men will not hear from our lips. They have been spoken lately by one from whom I am sorry to be widely parted, but for whose fearless zeal I have a true respect. He has

described the state of London as he sees it, and as we know it to be.* And London of to-day is the legitimate fruit of civilisation without Christianity. This is the work of the same anti-social, anti-Christian spirit, which is now exulting over what it believes to be the downfall of the temporal power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

But, to be brief, I will put in a proof above suspicion. A book has lately appeared which tells the truth, but yet not a thousandth part of the truth. It bears for its title, *The Seven Curses of London*. If men will not hear our testimony, let them at least listen to their own.

And now I have but two other words to add.

The one is this: that the Roman question, which men say is now ended, is only now beginning. Do not think me fanatical, or blind, or senseless, if I affirm that the temporal power is not ended yet: and that the Roman question is only now once more

* Lord Shaftesbury, speaking at Ryde on Friday on behalf of the London City Mission, said that 'he believed that the next census would show a population in London of nearly 4,000,000, a serious proportion of whom were in a state of moral and social degradation so great that, in his opinion, unless something were done to improve them, the British Constitution would not be worth a quarter of a century's purchase. His lordship thought that most of the evil was attributable to the fact that all who could afford it lived out of town, away from their poorer neighbours. The ignorance and poverty of the large masses of the people of the metropolis exceeded anything that could be described. When times of trouble came—and they would come—the lawless classes would emerge from their doors by thousands, and they might depend upon it that unless the mass of people were brought under the influence of the Gospel, the great City of London would some day present a spectacle of conflagration, plunder, and bloodshed that would astonish the civilised world.'—*Pall Mall Gazette*, Aug. 29, 1870.

begun. We have had to repeat, even to weariness, that some five-and-forty Popes before now have either never set foot in Rome, or have been driven out of it. Nine times they have been driven out by Roman factions ; times without number, by invaders. Why not, then, a forty-sixth time ? Pius VI., Pius VII., were prisoners ; why not Pius IX. ? Pius IX. has been already once in exile ; why not a second time ? Nine times the city of Rome has been held by usurpers ; why not a tenth ? Seven times Rome has been besieged ; why not an eighth ? Twice it has been nearly destroyed : and once so utterly desolate that for forty days, we are told, nothing human breathed in it, and no cry was heard but of the foxes on the Aventine. Warfare, suffering, wandering, weakness, with imperishable vitality and invincible power, is the lot and the history of the Pontiffs ; and Rome shares their destiny. There has nothing happened now that has not happened, and that often, before : the end that has often been predicted has not come ; why should it now ? Men are always saying ‘ Now at last is the end.’ But the end is not yet.

I say that the Roman question is only beginning, because the statesmen, and the diplomatists, and the Princes of Europe have undertaken to solve a question which has only one solution, and that solution they have rejected. For more than a thousand years the Providence of God has clothed the head of the Christian Church with a temporal sovereignty, in order that he may exercise his supreme spiritual power in peace. His supreme spiritual power is not of man, or by man, but from God alone. He has exercised it

in persecution and in peace. In the one state or the other, exercise it he will, until the end. In pagan days he exercised it in persecution: in Christian times in peace. Therefore it is not for its exercise, but for its peaceful exercise among Christian men, that the temporal power is needed. Between persecution and peace there is no third state. When the world became Christian, its instincts proclaimed that the Vicar of Jesus Christ could be the subject of no mortal sovereignty: therefore he became Sovereign. Between subject and sovereign there is no middle state. Men saw that the Head of the Religion of all nations could not be national, that is, the subject of any nation; lest national jealousies in politics and religion should set the world on fire at all its corners. But if not national or the subject of any nation, then he must be extra-national or independent of all nations; and then he must be sovereign: for between independence and sovereignty there may be a difference of sound, there can be no difference in reality. Such is the solution of Divine Providence. Therefore the Vicar of Christ and Head of the Universal Church has reigned independent as sovereign for more than a thousand years. But now, men will not accept this solution of the Providence of God. They must find another. They must revise His solution and find a better. But they will find neither a better nor another: and while they are seeking to solve this riddle, time will run, and the Roman question will not be ended. It will entangle itself more and more, and be further from its end the longer it is unsolved. Nay, I will be bold to say they will end it in one of

two ways. They will either find, after all, that Providence is wiser than they, and they will put back the Head of Christendom in the throne and possession of his rights : or they will keep him out of them, and the whole of Christian Europe will be torn by political and religious conflicts. The Roman question will then last longer, and will cost all nations something more stern and solid, than the illuminations and *vivas* of the Italian Monarchy.

The other word I have to say is this. The principles of the Roman question are applicable to all kingdoms in the world.

The Jews had a proverb that 'tithes are the fence of property.' God's freehold is the defence of man's freehold. The respect paid to sacred property is the guardian of all human rights. If so, the violation of Divine rights is the violation of all.

Now, what is the first principle of this Italian deed? The deposition of kings ; and that by invasion ; without declaration of war ; and without cause. 'A monarchy of more than eleven hundred years,' we read the other day, has fallen. I say, No : it has not fallen ; it has been violently broken down. What crowns are safe when this is possible? Let no man say, Crowns are safe when people are contented. People are not contented when systematic intrigue and bribery buy them for seditious uses. There are in every country, even in the best governed, masses whom good government does not reach. They are the ready material for sedition and conspiracy. Englishmen believe England to be well governed ; let them look to the classes below those who have any-

thing to lose. For twenty years a Revolution, the most systematic and the most stealthy, has surrounded and pervaded Rome. If countries not far from us were treated in like manner, if Belgium had been so treated by France, how long would contentment last? In all this long conspiracy there has never been a charge of cruelty, of injustice, or of oppression, which would bear the touch of examination. The Government of the Holy Father has been a government of clemency and of forbearance, even to excess. No secular Government in the world would have spared the lives of criminals whom Pius IX. has spared to lead the outrage and sacrilege of the twentieth of September.

What then is the cause of discontent? 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' '*Nolumus hunc regnare.*' No crime of violated rights or of unendurable oppression can be proved. These things might lend a colour to a popular judicial process on a hard or unjust ruler. Nothing of this kind is so much as alleged by the hundred tongues and pens always going against the Holy Father. It is '*Nolumus,*' 'we will not.' His only crime is one which cannot be purged. The Government of the Vicar of Christ is the Government of a Priest.

And this the world hates, and the Revolution hates. It has an instinctive hatred against a Priest at the altar; what then against a Priest upon the throne? But there is a Priest upon a throne Who in this enmity against His Vicar reads the true motive, which is enmity against Himself. I know that I shall be thought a babbler, to utter these things in the

nineteenth century and in England. But they are truths which are not affected by time or nation, and will outlast both.

Another principle, then, of the Roman question is the deposition of a king without cause or crime, because the people will not that he should reign.

Again, possession of immemorial rights, which among men and nations has until now consecrated the just title of the holder—this has been violated with such signal audacity and such ostentatious contempt that no right, no prescription, no possession can give title against those who can back their aspirations by sufficient violence.

Lastly, a principle of profound deception has been sanctioned in a Plebiscite freely exercised, forsooth, in the midst of an invading army. This is pregnant with a future. The principle that a discontented minority, encouraged by sedition acting secretly from without, and supported by a foreign invasion, may renounce its allegiance and depose its legitimate sovereign, has been installed among the axioms of political justice and of public morality. I will not pursue this subject. On the head of the public writers who, day by day, have glorified these principles because they were of use to pull down the Pope, shall rest the undivided responsibility of this Gospel of Rebellion. They have preached it loudly, confidently, and scornfully; and wherever the English tongue is known these words have gone out to the uttermost ends of the earth. But there are ears listening, and eyes reading, not far off, to whom this Gospel is glad tidings indeed. They are learning it well; and the teachers of these

things must answer, and, I fear, pay for it. Had I spoken a tithe of what they have written, I should be accused of sowing sedition with both hands.

Here, then, ends one period of the Roman question. But a far wider, darker, and more lasting period is, I fear, before us. The year 1796 raised a question which was not solved till Europe had suffered for twenty years. The future of the world is dark indeed. The blood already shed between two great nations may be little, compared with the stream which will flow, if these principles gain a head. No washing of hands before the people will cleanse any man, be he preacher or demagogue, prince or statesman, who shall teach men this Gospel of Anarchy.

S. Paul has foretold the coming of one whom he calls *the lawless*. No word more truly describes the state of the modern world. All ages have, indeed, been lawless, in the sense of violence which breaks the law. But the modern world is lawless, in that it rejects the *idea* of law, and destroys the *basis* of law, by resolving all authority into the will of numbers. The idea of right as limiting popular aspirations is extinct. Facts are taken to be just, because accomplished; as if robbery could become lawful by completion. The logic of facts is the series of wrongs which, once begun, necessitate each other. And the logic of facts is now one of the supreme reasons of state. The popular will may aspire after its neighbour's house and goods, all right and justice notwithstanding; for the popular will is a law to itself, and makes law by its aspirations. What it desires it wills, and what it wills is right. What is this but the reign of

licence, the corruption of liberty, the extinction of morality, the negation of justice, which is the negation of God? And yet such is the substitute in the modern world for the even law of nations and of God which, at least by public recognition, ruled and sustained Christendom.

And with this lawlessness comes the supremacy of might. Once, right and might met together ; sanctioning and confirming each other's acts. Now, might without right tramples down right without might. The weaker perish, and the stronger reign, till by mutual destruction men and nations execute on each other the just judgment of God. That this is in store for Europe if these principles prevail, who can doubt ? That this will be the solution of the Roman question, if this sacrilege be not repaired, is sure as to-morrow's sun.

The future of the Church may now be cloudy, but 'in the time of the evening there shall be light.'* The Church may have to suffer, and in all probability it will; but all the more surely it will do its work. There is to-day a kindling of indignation throughout the Catholic world wheresoever the tidings of this great wrong have spread ; and where the indignation is, reaction will follow, and the nations of the Christian world will pronounce whether they consent to the spoliation of Christendom to gratify the aspirations of a Revolution. If there be yet life in the Christian world, the temporal power of its Head is not dissolved. If it be dissolved, then it will be known that there is no public religious life left in nations and states which

* Zacharias xiv. 7.

once were Christian. But the undying Church will still remain—the living among the dead. Be then of good courage! To-day in ten thousand homes, and in ten thousand sanctuaries, millions of hearts are lifted up in prayer through the intercession of the Mother of God to her Divine Son. You will to-day adore His Divine Presence in the most Holy Sacrament, and pray to Him that He may put forth His power upon earth, and still reign. Keep yourselves innocent of this great offence. Protest, not only before Him but before men, that you abhor this sin and sacrilege. Do not share, even by silence, with those who consent in this deed. Speak out boldly and plainly, that all men may know your fidelity: and fear not. No man has laid hand upon the Vicar of Christ and prospered. For a time they may seem to be in great power, and to be lifted up as the cedar in Libanus; but in a little they will be gone, and their place shall know them no more.

So it has been from the beginning. The Emperors of heathen Rome laid hands upon the Pontiffs and perished. The Greeks of Constantinople, Barbarian hordes, Lombards of the north of Italy, Normans of the south, Counts of the Marches, nobles of Rome, Emperors of Germany, Emperors of France—the First Napoleon, I mean; for of the third, in profound compassion, I say nothing; all these strove with the Pontiffs and have passed away. Now, last of all, Italy lays its hand upon the Vicar of Jesus Christ: and they who wish well to Italy are full of fear in its behalf: for he whom it has dethroned is the Vicar of One who shall judge the world.