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THE

PROVIDENTIAL MISSION

OF

LEO XIII.

A LECTURE BY

JOHN J. KEANE,

*Bishop of Richmond.*



BALTIMORE:

JOHN MURPHY & CO.

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THIS LECTURE,  
DELIVERED IN BALTIMORE, WASHINGTON,  
RICHMOND AND WHEELING,  
AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF MANY FRIENDS,  
IS LAID AS A TRIBUTE OF REVERENCE AND AFFECTION  
AT THE FEET OF  
LEO XIII.

THE PROVIDENTIAL MISSION  
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THE subject on which I am to address you this evening is suggested by the event which the whole world is now celebrating, the Golden Jubilee of our Holy Father, Leo XIII. And you will surely agree with me that no theme could be more worthy of our study than the character and career of that great and good Pontiff, who, holding the highest office that man can hold on earth, adorns it with qualities to which the entire world, without distinction of nation or class or creed, unites in paying the tribute of admiration and reverence, and who, being vested with his sublime responsibility in one of the most critical periods of the world's history, when every step is fraught with consequences of mighty moment, has discharged his great trust with a disinterestedness, a devotedness,

a lofty wisdom, and a practical prudence, that may well be considered more than human. It is in his relation to our epoch, with which the Providence of God has so inseparably associated him, that the character and work of Leo XIII. can best be understood. He will be forever one of the great landmarks of the nineteenth century, and it is in its light that we will now view him.

We are living in a great transition period of humanity. Everywhere around us the hand of God is working momentous changes and developments, which are to characterize a new era in the history of mankind. The convulsive throes of the birth of that new future began a hundred years ago, and their quivering is still felt throughout the human race. For fifty years and more men held their breath, not knowing what those agonies portended; they feared that anarchy was going to seize on Christendom and plunge it into chaos. But, to eyes that love the light, this latter half of our century is bright with the rainbow of hope, and the parting clouds show the God of Nations, the God of wisdom and of order, still sitting on His throne and guiding the march of time. 'Tis as with the face of nature around us. The beauty of her hills and dales is the work of heaving earthquakes and rushing torrents. At first, they seemed to promise only ruin and horror; but time rolled on, and nature

passed her soft strong hand gently but mightily over their awful work, and turned it into a new mirroring forth of the grandeur and the beauty of God. And so, over the rude wild work of human wills the loving almighty hand of God is passed, and grateful generations thank Him for the new beauties and the new blessings which spring up under His touch.

That we may understand the part which Leo XIII. was to take in the moulding of our era, we must glance back a moment to the epoch of his illustrious predecessor. When Pius IX. was called by Providence to the Chair of Peter, he heard the voice of his Divine Master breathing over the storm and the chaos the first sweet whisper of "Peace, be still!" With the faith of Peter, he was willing and eager to leap into the seething waves, to meet his loved Master and to stand with Him on the billows; and Europe and America rang with acclamations, as they saw the brave young Pope commit himself to the popular forces which were surging up tumultuously from the awakening energies of the yet untutored millions. But the billows were not ready for his heroic trust; only the Divine feet could as yet press them in safety. It was in Peter's bark, within the Church herself, that the providential work of Pius IX. was to be done, and the record of his wonderful pontificate shows how nobly he accomplished it.

The future was to bring with it two great dangers, and it was his work to raise up ramparts against them. These dangers were to spring from the very exuberance of the forces which the Providence of God was rousing and moving in human society, from the extremes to which even good and lawful tendencies are prone to go.

In the first place, our age was to be characterized by an astonishing development of human energy, by wonderful results of human activity and skill. Man was to almost annihilate the obstacles of time and space, to yoke to the chariot of his progress nearly every power of nature, to be, as he had never been before, monarch of the material universe. No wonder then that he should be tempted to take pride in his abilities, and to think human nature all-sufficient for human needs. No wonder that he should be tempted to ignore or to reject the salutary but humbling truths taught by Divine Revelation, the truths of man's fall, of nature's weakened powers, of humanity's need of a Redeemer. No wonder that he should be tempted to think the whole sphere of supernatural religion a dream, or should wish to drag it down to the level of mere nature. Against this evident danger Pius IX. was to provide a safeguard of Divine truth; and that safeguard, strange as it might at first sight seem to the world's proud



common sense, was the definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For the declaration of Mary's privileged exemption from original sin, was equivalently the declaration of the fallen condition of the human race, and of our need of Redemption; while the assertion of the privilege thus granted to her as the Mother of our Redeemer, is virtually the proclamation of His Divinity and of the supernatural Religion by Him established. The unthinking and the prejudiced cried out "superstition! Mariolatry!" But, to honest and reflective minds, the spotless hand of that Immaculate Mother, thus lifted up in the sight of all the world, holds aloft a beacon-light to warn and guide our age away from the shoals and rocks of naturalism, to keep it true to the great mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption, which are the very foundations of the Christian Religion.

The second great danger was to spring from that general assertion of popular and individual rights, which was to be a still more striking characteristic of our era. The close of the last century beheld myriads so intoxicated with the "rights of man" as to be oblivious of the rights of God. Our own century has seen in all nations large numbers so infatuated by that magic word *liberty* that they denounce all authority as tyranny and all law as oppression. And multi-

tudes of minds, although incapable of excesses so monstrous as these, are in danger of so exaggerating the principles of democracy as to acknowledge no authority, whether in civil or in religious matters, that does not emanate from the people and find its sanction in the people. Nay, some seem to admit no standard of law save the collective force of human votes, and no standard of truth save the collective force of human opinions. In a word, the democratic idea which the Providence of God has awaked in the mind of the world, runs risk of turning against God Himself by being pushed to the extremes of socialism, anarchism, and mere humanism in both Church and State, and of leaving mankind, as the Apostle expresses it, "without God in the world." The barrier which Divine Providence, through Pius IX., raised against that danger, was the definition of Papal Infallibility. This solemn promulgation to our age of a truth as old as Christianity, reminds the world that mankind is not left to the mercy of fluctuating human opinions, but is ever guided, although through a human agency, by Christ the Light of the World and by the spirit of truth; that, amid the thousand changing forms which human authority may assume, the organization and authority of the Kingdom of Christ on earth must remain till the end of time as firm and unchanging as Himself Who established it and

as the Rock of Peter on which He laid its foundations; that there is an authority, a power on earth, which man is incapable of either giving or modifying, and whose existence reminds the peoples of the world that, no matter how they may control the reins of civil power, no matter how they may entrust them to the hands of their chosen public servants, still the fountain of authority is not in man but in God, and that the measure and sanction of just laws is not in human wills or votes, not in police or armies, but in the truth and the justice of the Supreme Law-Giver and Judge.

To teach the world these two great lessons, to impress them indelibly on the mind of our age by the most solemn of all authoritative pronouncements, and to give mankind, in his own beautiful life, an exemplification of all he taught,—this was the work of Pius IX.; and, having accomplished it, he passed from this scene of storm and struggle to the ranks of his sainted predecessors in the realms of endless peace.

Before he died, the Church and the Papacy had begun to experience their share in the great transition which our era was to accomplish; for the Church too was to have her part in its changes and modifications. “But,” it will be objected, “can the Church change? Is not the Church ever the same?” The Church is indeed

ever the same, and yet she is ever changing too. Let a simple comparison explain this apparent paradox. A man's soul is always the same; from babyhood to manhood and on till death, it is ever the same identical spirit, with the same identical being and faculties; and yet it is equally true that, from babyhood till death, a man's soul is perpetually changing, adapting itself to the ceaseless modifications of the body in which it lives and of the environment by which it is surrounded. Now the Church is the spiritual element in human society, and may well be called the soul of mankind. She will remain till the end of time the same spirit that the Son of God has made her, identical in mind and will, in her inner life and in the purpose of all her exterior action. But the body which God has put her in to animate and guide, the great world-wide human body of which she is the spiritual principle, is undergoing and shall continue to undergo constant vicissitudes; and the Church has to feel them all, to be, in a certain sense, modified by them all. The Church is the same in the noon-day of the nineteenth century that she was when hidden in the catacombs in the second and third; she is identically the same amid the surroundings of European civilization that she is in the Indian missions of Paraguay or Alaska; and yet how different her life, her relationships, her

manner of action, under these different circumstances. The nations, and perhaps the whole human race, advance from childhood to manhood and to old age, just as individuals do. In the time of their growth, they pass through the writhings and tearings of many a growing pain; in the age of their manhood, they undergo many a vicissitude of fortune and of condition; in the period of their decline, they suffer many an ache and pang in stiffening limbs; and all these changes the spirit has to feel, and to make allowance for, and to adapt herself to, for she must make herself "all things to all men, in order to win all to Christ."

Now the nineteenth century is working momentous, and, for all we can see, permanent changes in the organization of human society, in the methods of human governments, in the relationships of human life. These changes may be summed up in one word: it is the era of democracy; it is the era of the power of the people, of the predominance of "the fourth estate" in the body politic, as it used to be called. It is not for us at present to examine the political philosophy of this development. It suffices us to state and to accept the unquestionable fact, and to express our firm conviction that it is not the work of chance, nor of the devil, but of the overruling Providence of God. Whoever opens his

eyes, and is willing to see what is, must recognize that the day of absolute rule and of so-called paternal governments is over; that if, in some parts of the civilized world, they still hold a struggling existence, their duration must be stormy and short; that the laws of the nations can never again be made by one man or by a few men, unless as the delegated and responsible agents of the people, for whose welfare alone laws ought to be made.

The consequence in regard to the relation of the Church with the world is obvious. As Cardinal Manning has recently so well expressed it: "Hitherto, the Church has had to deal with dynasties; henceforth, she has to deal with the people." "But," it may again be objected, "why need the Church have any dealings either with the power of dynasties or with the power of the people?" Simply because, in the nature of things, there must be harmonious relations between the body and the soul of humanity. As the Church has neither the right nor the wish to hinder or hamper the State in the State's rightful domain, so the State has no right, and ought to have no wish, to hinder or hamper the Church in her rightful province. But, unfortunately, the good will of governments is prone to fickleness, and cannot always be taken for granted or depended on. Hence it was found necessary to secure

religious freedom by *contracts* entered into with the governments. In former times, the stability of the government or dynasty was supposed to be a natural guarantee for the stability of the contract and of the religious freedom secured by it. But now, governments or administrations change with the changes of popular majorities. We may like this state of things, or we may dislike it; but we have to accept the fact and to recognize that, with some possible modifications, it bids fair to be the fundamental fact of all governments for the future. Hence the Church has to secure the rights and the freedom of religion, not by treating with changing administrations or governments, but by her hold on the convictions and affections of the people. It is so in our country, and it is fast becoming so in countries where Cæsarism has thus far maintained some hold. And I am frank to confess that, when I look back at history and see how Cæsar has almost habitually treated religion and the Church in the past, I heartily welcome the future, in which she shall no more have to deal with him, but with the people, who, in the main, and always when in their senses, know that she is their best friend and that her interests are their own.

It is easy for us Americans to feel this way; but it must, naturally speaking, have been hard

for Leo XIII. to enter into such new views. The notions of the old school are very much to the contrary of all this, and have usually a very tenacious hold on the minds and feelings of Europeans; and it was in that old school that he was nurtured and trained. But no school could hold or trammel a man like him. His great mind and his noble heart soar above all prejudices and attachments and habits of thought, to see facts as they come from the hand of God, and to accept their meaning and their moral.

To Leo XIII. God has assigned the task of at least inaugurating this adjustment of the Church to the new circumstances of the world, and Providence had admirably fitted him for so delicate and so important a mission. Naturally endowed with all the qualities of mind and heart which make up the great and good man, his life-experience had been such as to make him intimately acquainted with every detail of both Church and State, and with all the interlacings of their complex life. His ties of blood and his career as priest, as prelate, as papal nuncio, as cardinal, had brought him into familiar contact with the nobility, with the people, with the clergy and the hierarchy, with the diplomacy of courts and governments, with the supreme administration of the Church. With the clear and practised eye of a philosopher, a theologian, and a statesman,



he had scanned the life of the world, had noted the throbbings of its pulse, had watched the ways of Providence, and he knew that those ways, though often obscure to us, are always right. He saw changes going on, and changes ahead; but he knew he could look on them without fear. Temporary difficulties were indeed inevitable, for all great adjustments are difficult; but the wisdom and the benefit of the final results he was sure of beforehand.

Again, in order to fit him to be a safe guide into the future, Providence had firmly moulded and rooted him in all that was wise and good in the past. For progress is not a leap in a vacuum; it is an advance on a solid road. The growth of the future, if it is to stand firm, must be well rooted in the past. He who plans what is to be, without taking careful account of what has been and what is, is building houses on the sand or castles in the air, but not a lasting structure on solid foundations. Leo XIII. came to his work enriched with all the spiritual wisdom bequeathed by Pius IX., armed with every conviction and every principle whose assertion had immortalized the name of that glorious Pontiff. His whole life breathes forth the spirit of the two great definitions of faith, which are the chief glory of his sainted predecessor, and in formulating which he had himself had so important a

part. We know too with what marvellous assiduity he attends to every detail of the Church's inner life, to whatever becomes the holiness and beauty of the Bride of Christ. And because thus solicitous for the Church's inner life and spiritual beauty, he was all the better fitted to provide for her external action and her worldly relationships; because so fully possessed of all that had preceded him, he was the more competent to be a wise guide in the new ways on which the world and the Church were entering.

The difficulties of those new ways, the wrench and pain of the new adjustments, have been experienced to a special degree in France and Spain; and here, accordingly, the Holy Father's wisdom has had to be specially exercised. Very many of the good and honest people of those countries accept willingly the democratic future, and, while lamenting the errors and the violence which are apt to accompany great changes, yet fully trust that the final issue will be for the general good. Very many others, on the contrary, firmly wedded to old ideas, see nothing but unmixed evil in the new developments, and believe that the only hope of the future, and especially the only guarantee of the Church's welfare, is in the restoration of fallen dynasties. Such a conflict of views, urged on each side with all the earnestness of passionate conviction, made the situation of the Holy Father

a most difficult one. The vehemence and the importance of the controversy demanded that he should speak out; and yet what could he say without grievously wounding the most sensitive feelings on the one side or on the other? He spoke out, however, bravely and clearly; and his declaration was that the Church and her interests are not wedded to any dynasty or to any particular species of social organization, that she does not consider any form of government as necessarily hostile or injurious to her, that she has no fear of any result which the Providence of God and the due development of nations may bring forth. Out it rang, clear and loud amid the storm, and many a heart stood still in amazement at the sound. The irreconcilables of the old school wailed aloud at seeing their idols thus cast down, and cried that the sacred traditions of the past were being swept away. Cæsar too gnashed his teeth; for he was used to consider the Church as his dependant, and her interests as inseparably bound up with his own, and he winced under this proclamation of the Church's emancipation from his vassalage. But, all the same, the word rang out from the lips of Leo XIII., and it will stand forever as the Church's Declaration of Independence.

In Germany, Cæsar still holds sway. He is no longer, indeed, the absolute potentate of former

times; he knows well the power that resides in the masses whom he rules. Yet he plays the dictator occasionally; and it was as such that Leo XIII., when called to the Papal throne, found him confronting the Church. Cæsar demanded the Church's vassalage, and unsheathed the sword of persecution. But the demand and the threat were no new things to the Church of all the ages, and she knew how to meet them. Leo put his trust in the power of truth; he looked to God, and to the faithful millions of German Catholics, who understood the power which the advance of democracy had put in their hands and were determined to use it sturdily. We know how the despot did his worst, and how he failed, and how at last he had the good sense to surrender to the German Centre and to the millions whom they so worthily represented. And then the magnanimity of Leo XIII. manifested itself in another form. The victorious phalanx seemed to be pressing the vanquished Cæsar too sorely, demanding further concessions, which were indeed simple justice to the Church, but the immediate enforcement of which seemed more than the galled and beaten tyrant could endure. Then it was the voice of Leo XIII. that called halt to his eager columns and granted truce to his adversary. Many of his old soldiers growled and thought him in error; and it was

no small pain to the Holy Father to grieve his faithful veterans by restraining them. But his superior wisdom knows how to be patient and prudent in victory as well as unflinching in the hour of combat; and he is well assured that the full justice which he now restrains the Catholics of Germany from taking by storm they are certain to win by the steady advance of popular rights.

While the Holy Father was thus busy foiling the fierce assault of mail-clad Germany, he had to withstand another attack of Cæsarism from another quarter. This time, however, it came in a very different guise. It was not Cæsar trying to coerce the Church or to crush her; it was Cæsar cunningly seeking to cajole the Church and to use her as a cat's-paw for his own selfish ends. This tells plainly enough whence the attempt emanated. With stealthy overtures of friendliness on the one hand, and insinuated threats of hostility upon the other, England sought to win the Pope to the unworthy task of restraining poor Ireland's aspirations after just government and rightful freedom, of holding her submissive in the chains of centuries, from which the spirit of our era is delivering her. But here too Leo XIII. was found impregnable. Calmly but firmly, heeding neither promises nor threats, he threw his sympathy and

his influence on the side of justice and humanity. Poor, down-trodden, long-suffering Ireland felt that she had indeed in him a Father and a friend, when, in spite of the bitterest opposition and the most wily influences, he appointed to the See of Dublin the patriot priest who was the choice of the Irish hierarchy and the darling of the Irish people. Few men have a more difficult position than that held by Archbishop Walsh. Compelled by his providential situation to be not only the spiritual guide but also the temporal adviser of a down-trodden, generous-hearted, and impulsive people, who, asking only the barest justice, are exasperated by taunts and goaded by coercion; forced, on the one hand, to assert his people's rights, and, on the other, to restrain their honest indignation and hold them in the wise and safe paths of peace; constantly maligned by his country's enemies, and often misunderstood and misrepresented by those who ought to be her friends; he must indeed have many a sad and weary hour. But his chief comfort, next to his trust in the God of truth and justice, is the loving sympathy of Leo XIII.

Still another solicitude has all along weighed heavily on the heart of the great Pontiff, owing to a danger which lies at the very foundations of human society. He knows well, from his careful observation of European events in the present

century, that the greatest danger attending the development of democratic institutions, has sprung from the discontent of the laboring and poorer classes. These ought to be the bone and sinew of a nation; but if their affections are alienated from their country by real or supposed injustice, they easily become its peril and its bane. Demagogues are always ready to exaggerate their wrongs, to preach to them the gospel of hate, and to hurl them against all authority, both civil and religious. The comfort and content of the lower classes is the surest guarantee of the peace and prosperity of nations. Hence, as the best friend of human society, as the enlightened advocate of European civilization, as the devoted Shepherd entrusted with the care of all the sheep and all the lambs of the fold of Christ, Leo XIII. has always manifested the most paternal solicitude for the welfare of the laboring classes. His voice has constantly been heard in gentle pleadings and loving warnings against the influence of those hot-headed or unprincipled agitators, who, under the guise of friendship, strive to mislead them into the ruinous abysses of socialism, anarchism, and violence. But it has also been heard with equal clearness pleading the poor man's cause and asking respect for the poor man's rights.

Quite recently, when welcoming with special

affection the great pilgrimages which represented the thousands of the workingmen of France, he poured forth the convictions of his heart in language that shows equally the Father and the statesman, and which ought to be well pondered not only by the toiling millions of the world, but also by their employers and their rulers. He laid down the broad and all-important principle that the workingman has a *strict right* to such a return for due and honest labor as will supply the ordinary human needs of himself and his dependent family; that it is not mere benevolence or charity which must impel the employer to give this much, but strict justice which commands him to do so. He recognized that the working classes might very properly take all lawful means for securing their just rights, but impressed upon them the obligation of keeping their efforts within the limits of public peace and of respect for the rights of others; and he asserted that it was the duty of governments, when necessary, to protect the working people with the strong arm of the law against injustice and oppression. These again were, to very many ears, strange and startling sentiments—to those who have been used to regard the workingman as an object of charity rather than of strict justice, and who have been accustomed to consider wages as depending for their amount on the good-will of the employer,



or on the bargain he can make with labor, rather than on the inalienable human rights of the employed. But Leo XIII. spoke it out, calmly, gently, fearlessly, and his principles may well be considered the standard of all wise and just action in the great labor questions which are now agitating the world.

In the light of these principles, it is easy to comprehend the position of the Holy See in the recent controversy concerning the Knights of Labor. Rome drew a clear distinction between the principles involved in that question, and the particular methods or form of organization by which it was sought to enforce them. Upon the principles avowed, the Holy See could but look with sympathy and kindness; for they asserted unquestionable rights, and appealed only to legitimate means for their vindication. But to the organization in all its practical details the Holy See could not commit itself, and never gave any approval; for the fact could not be ignored that when large masses of men are seeking to vindicate their rights against real or supposed wrongs, they are in imminent danger of falling into errors and of being led perhaps into violence and injustice. But Rome could not, on that account, be induced to put the organization under the ban of ecclesiastical censure. The Church wisely preferred to leave it to experience to eliminate

the elements that might be mistaken or dangerous, feeling sure that practical good sense and justice would prevail at last, and trusting confidently that the conservative wisdom of our country's institutions, and the strong right arm of her legal authority, were fully competent to keep the action of this and all similar organizations within the limits of law and order.

And this brings us to the Holy Father's feelings towards our own beloved America. But here it would be hard to tell the bare truth without seeming to be over-boastful, so very remarkable are the esteem and affection which Leo XIII. manifests for America and Americans. He recognizes in our country the furthest advance yet attained by the true spirit of our era; the most symmetrical and orderly development of democracy which the world has yet beheld; a republic which is a rebuke and a lesson equally to the absolutism of the past, and to the red-revolutionism which misrepresents democracy and imperils its future in Europe. Here he sees Church and State moving on side by side peacefully, not indeed as closely and harmoniously related in their action as the body and the soul of human society ought, in the nature of things, to be; but yet in mutual respect and forbearance, in the best manner which, considering the existing state of things, could reasonably be expected. He

appreciates the contrast here presented to the condition of insult and violence which the Church has to endure from Cæsarism or from red-revolutionism elsewhere, and he loves and honors our country and her straightforward, broad-hearted people. In acts which speak louder than words, he has shown that he has no fear of such democracy and such freedom as ours, and that he would rejoice to see it giving the tone to the future of the world.

Now from all this some may be tempted to conclude that Leo XIII. accepts and endorses that "spirit of the age" which Pius IX. so emphatically condemned. But this would be a great mistake. Pius IX. condemned that self-styled, self-constituted, false "spirit of the age," which asserts man's self-sufficiency, rejects Divine Revelation, scoffs at the supernatural order, glories in materialism, and denounces religion and the Church as the enemies of human nature and human freedom. And to such a "spirit of the age" Leo XIII. is as firmly opposed as Pius IX. ever was. But he knows full well that this is not the real spirit of the age, but its perversion and its caricature. Our age is the the age of freedom, the age of the assertion of man's inalienable rights, of rights which are inalienable because they have not been conferred by man and therefore cannot be taken away by man, but have been, as our Declaration of Independence proclaims, bestowed on man by his Creator, rights

therefore which have their basis in man's relationship with God. But now these infidels come and cast doubt on the existence of God, or deny it outright. Then, they conclude, rights are not God-given but man-given; they are given by the laws, by human society, by the State. And thus is laid the foundation of a *stateolatry*, which makes of the State a Moloch before whom individual rights and individual freedom must fall prostrate, and in whose name, even under the pretence of liberty, can be perpetrated such horrors of tyranny as the world still shudders at in the French Revolution. The agnosticism, the atheism, the materialism of our day, would logically lead back to the absolutism which prevailed everywhere under heathenism and which Christianity dethroned. And the Vicar of Christ, by protesting so vehemently against those errors, and by asserting so strenuously the great truths of reason and revelation which are the real and the only basis of human dignity and human rights, is laying the only foundation on which our era can stand securely, the only logical foundation for an epoch of popular rights and true freedom. Outside of that, there remain but the two extremes of grinding absolutism or of desperate anarchism, under neither of which can human society live. Reflective minds everywhere are beginning to appreciate this, are looking to religion for the security of society in the

future, are coming to understand the important relationship which exists between human welfare and the office of the Chief Pastor of the Universal Church. This explains the wonderful spectacle which we now behold,—the heads of so many of the nations imitating the example of Germany's Iron Chancellor and reaching out for the hand of Leo XIII., or chafing uneasily in the consciousness that, whether they like it or not, they must come to that, as the best security of peace and order.

From all this we easily understand why Leo XIII. has so assiduously inculcated in his famous Encyclical Letters that the only guarantee for the prosperity of commonwealths is their being organized on a Christian basis. This too is why he constantly insists that the masses of the people, since they are to be the great reservoir of power, should be imbued from their earliest years with true ideas, with moral and religious principles, in good Christian schools. This is why, above all, he so earnestly desires that they who are to be, by their talents and position, the leaders of the people and the moulders of public thought, should be prepared to exercise on their generation a salutary and not a destructive influence, by being solidly grounded in sound philosophy, and fully and nobly developed by a thoroughly Christian higher education.

Here is the secret of the very remarkable interest which Leo XIII. has shown in the Catholic

University of America, which the hierarchy of the United States are now establishing in the Capital City of our country. He sees in it a realization of his desire that the highest and truest education should everywhere be the safeguard of the purest and noblest civilization. He sees in it a fountain of sound philosophy opened up to the people of America, another link to bind our country in faithful allegiance to Christ the Prince of Peace, the Author of all true social welfare and national greatness, as well as of individual virtue and salvation. He considers it morally certain that men educated in such an institution as we propose to establish, must go forth prepared to be a blessing to their country and to help her to be a blessing to mankind. The University is to commence, indeed, with the Faculty of Divinity, because the Religion of Christ our Lord must be the animating spirit, the enlightening central sun, the great moving principle of the whole organization, just as Christ Himself is the Light of the World. Still it is the wish of the Holy Father, as well as our own, that Faculties for the highest education of the laity should be added on as rapidly as means can be procured, in order that not only the Church but the State also may enjoy the blessings which the University is meant, under Providence, to impart, and that all parents who appreciate the inestimable advantages of the purest and safest and highest

and most useful intellectual culture, may have the facility offered them of bestowing so priceless a boon upon their sons. Therefore it is that he appeals to both clergy and laity to push on the work, and to let no difficulty discourage or deter them, till this noble undertaking be realized and its blessings be shared in by all.

A Father whose family is the whole world, and such a world as we know it to be, must always have a heart full of solicitude, and his life must be marked with many an hour of sadness. But I think one runs no risk of mistake in affirming that the greatest sadness in the heart of Leo XIII. is the alienation existing between him and his own loved Italy. The world is now ringing with the acclamations of his Golden Jubilee; but amid all its rejoicings he must feel as our Divine Lord did when, in the midst of His triumph, He looked down upon Jerusalem and wept over it. He knows indeed full well that there too the Providence of God is sure to work out a solution of the problem which will be for the greater good both of Italy and of the Church. But meanwhile, all the difficulties of the complication weigh on him, and circumstances seem to conspire to render the situation painful beyond endurance. On the one hand, the government of Italy is at present dominated by a faction of infidels, who certainly do not represent the Italian people, any more than the faction of

infidels who do the loudest talking and the most aggressive working in French politics represent the French people, which they assuredly do not. And these degenerate sons of the noblest races of the past fully verify the old Latin saying "*corruptio optimi pessima*—the very best, when corrupted, becomes the very worst." For truly one would suppose from their dealings with religion and with the Vicar of Christ, that they were lineal descendants of the ruffian Roman soldiers who smote our Divine Lord with their fists and spat in His sacred face. At Christmas time of 1886 I heard him pour out his heart on this subject in an eloquent allocution whose burning sentences stirred all Europe. He showed how the party now misgoverning Italy took every opportunity to outrage religion and to insult the Head of the Church; how they systematically banished Christianity and God from education and insisted on training up a generation of scoffing unbelievers; how with heartless tyranny they trampled on the most sacred rights of religious men and women, refused to let them serve God according to their conscientious convictions, and expelled them from the sanctuaries in which they had consecrated their lives to their Creator and to the good of their needy fellow-creatures. "And," he concluded, "as long as they persist in this policy of irreligion and injustice, what can I do but maintain my attitude



of protest?" Assuredly, with such a policy, and with the ideas and the spirit which prompt it, neither Leo XIII. nor any other Vicar of Christ can ever be reconciled.

On the other hand, the question of the Temporal Power presents a puzzle of the acutest difficulty. For more than a thousand years, the Temporal Power of the Popes had stood, the most venerable institution of modern times, preserved by a manifest Providence for the purpose of securing the independence of the Pope's sublime spiritual office and the freedom of his worldwide jurisdiction. In a day, the mailed hand of violence seizes it, wipes out its sacred and historic character, incorporates it with the dominions of the spoiler, turns the Capital of Christendom into the capital of one of the last and least of the European Powers, and turns the Central See of the Christian Religion into the receptacle and hot-bed of the worst blasphemers against Christianity. They expect the Pope to say *amen* to all this; and they do really seem to have made it impossible that such a city and such a country could ever again be governed by the Successor of St. Peter. But how can he say *amen* to such astounding spoliation, to such a wiping out of the tradition of all the ages of Christian history, to such a profanation of the treasures of Christian antiquity, to such a degradation of the Capi-

tal of the Christian world? And even if he were inclined to submit to all this, on the plea of accepting the inevitable, how can he enter into such a bargain with a government which, according to the signs of the times, may any day be overthrown by the volcanic red-revolutionism which honey-combs the whole country, or be swallowed up in the tremendous European outburst which the world is momentarily expecting? Such is the painful embarrassment in the mind of Leo XIII., who hears all around him the cry for *conciliation*, who longs for it himself more than any one else possibly can, but who says, "How can I accept conciliation on such terms?"

But of this we may rest assured, that as, in his recent negotiations with Germany, he has shown the Church's readiness to accept modifications in external circumstances, when such acceptance is demanded by the interests of religion and involves no sacrifice of principle or of spiritual duty, so will he be found ready to solve the problem of the Temporal Power by the same lofty principles, and to treat with Italy and Rome on the same noble terms, if he ever conscientiously sees that the circumstances of the times make it possible and advisable. Meanwhile, we leave the issue with him and with Providence, earnestly praying that the final solution may redound to the dignity of the Holy See, to the

advantage of religion, and to the welfare of Italy and of Christendom.

We have been studying Leo XIII. in his public and official capacity; and surely it is no exaggeration to say that, in the grandeur of his character as well as in the sublimity of his office, he stands to-day without a rival in all this wide world. But if now we could pass through the majestic portals of that grand outer life of his, into the sanctuary of his inner character and life, how charming an object of contemplation, how admirable a theme for study, would we there discover! Few great men can stand the test of that inner scrutiny. Many a life has electrified the world by its outer show, which was inwardly contemptible. Not such the life of Leo XIII. After the somewhat exceptional opportunities that I have had to gaze into the inner sanctuary of his heart and soul, I do not hesitate to affirm that it is the sweetest and loveliest that I have ever seen or that I ever expect to see here below. Probe his heart to the bottom, and you will not find in it one mean or selfish fibre. Search his character through and through, and you will not discover there one trait of insincerity or guile, one inclination that is not in accord with purity and truth and justice and honor.

We all recognize in him the strength that is able

to contend with every power of evil in the world ; but with it there is united the gentleness and tenderness of a father's, yea of a mother's heart. We see in him the majesty before which the greatest ones of earth may well bow in reverence ; but with it is blended a winning sweetness, such as must have drawn the little children to love Our Lord and cling to Him. You look upon his face in its repose, and you feel that you are gazing into a mind whose realms of thought reach to the ends of the earth and to the heights of heaven ; you speak to him, and at once the smiling attention, the eager interest, the sympathetic response, put you quite at your ease, and would make you suppose that he has only your business to concern him. You see that life crowded with cares, assuredly the busiest life on earth ; but behind it there is always the recollection in God, the spirit of prayer, which makes the saint. Occasionally a corner of the curtain will be drawn, and one can peep into that inmost holy of holies of his soul. Such a peep I had for the first time on the Monday of last Holy Week, and I shall thank God for it as long as I live. He had sent for me to assist him at the altar that morning, and never shall I forget that celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. Long he was wrapt in silent prayer before he ascended the altar. Then, clad in the sacred vestments, and reading the words of prayer and of prophecy which, in the

Ordinary of the Mass of that day, usher us into the sorrowful week of Our Saviour's Passion, he was no longer himself, he was as if transformed into Him whose Vicar he is on earth, and whose words of plaintive pleading with his obdurate people and with the sinful world he was reading there at the altar. I felt awe-struck and touched to the heart as I gazed on that transfigured personality and assisted him all through the sublime mystery of Calvary. And when his identification with our suffering Lord was perfected by the Holy Communion, and when, after the Sacrifice, he spent a whole half-hour on his aged knees, plunged and absorbed in communing with his God, then I understood whence came his wondrous wisdom and fortitude, and why it was that, all day long, his life was so much more than human.

Well may the world be glad that, for fifty years, such a priest has been daily offering up the Sacrifice of the Immaculate Lamb, invoking benedictions on the living and the dead. Well may the universal Church thank the Divine Good Shepherd that such a Supreme Pastor holds the place of Peter, caring for the sheep and the lambs of the whole flock. Well may our age rejoice that, amid its perils and its difficulties and its mighty issues, so wise and so holy a pilot is at the helm. For many a day may God yet spare him to us, to be an honor to humanity, a glory to the Church, and a blessing to the world.





