

thority of the Roman Pontiff was circumscribed by very narrow limits. Unless Protestants make good this assertion, no force of rhetoric can avail to establish their system.

Never mind, then, their voluminous rhetoric; shake this one column and their oratorical edifice will tumble upon their heads. When the Bishop of Rome first met the assembled Universal Church, was he considered a "Bishop like any other?" Was he a metropolitan "enjoined to take care of suburban churches?" or a patriarch with "proper limits assigned" him by an unsuspecting council? If I have been even moderately successful in my efforts, I have demonstrated that the Vicar of Christ at his first emerging from the gloomy atmosphere of the Catacombs into the free open sunlight, had already attained the full measure of his greatness.

THE LAWS OF THE CHURCH WITH REGARD TO SECRET SOCIETIES.

WHAT laws has the Church enacted against secret societies? Why does she inflict so severe penalties on their members? What societies incur her condemnation? These are the questions which it is proposed briefly to answer in this article, guided by the best authorities on the subject.

I.

First, then, *what laws has the Church enacted against secret societies?* As far back as 1738 Pope Clement XII. excommunicated the Freemasons: this excommunication was renewed in 1751 by Benedict XIV., in 1821 by Pius VII., and in 1826 by Leo XII. But the weightiest authority on the subject is the Papal Constitution "Apostolicæ Sedis," promulgated by His Holiness Pius IX. on October 12th, A.D. 1869. By this most important document the Supreme Pontiff, just when the Vatican Council began its labors, proclaimed to the Catholic world the censures, "*latæ sententiæ*," which were to remain in vigor, and the exact limits assigned to each, while he abolished by the same Constitution all former censures not therein renewed. Of the excommunications which are there stated as remaining in force, there are four classes. Of the first the absolution is in a *special manner* reserved to the Supreme Pontiff; of the second class, absolution is *usually* reserved to the same; of the third class, it is reserved to the bishops; and of the fourth, absolution is not reserved, but allowed to every ordinary

confessor. Now among those of the second class, *i. e.*, among those usually reserved to the Pope, and therefore considered very weighty, the fourth case regards the present subject. It states that all those are *ipso facto* excommunicated "who become members of the Masonic Lodges or of the Carbonari, or of other societies of the same kind, which openly or secretly plot against the Church or against legitimate powers; and likewise all who in any way show favor to such societies; and all those who do not denounce their secret chiefs or leaders until they shall have denounced them."

The evils, then, which the members of the condemned societies incur, as seen from this last document in particular, may be reduced to three heads.

1. *They render themselves guilty of a grievous mortal sin*, thereby forfeiting their right to heaven, as Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; and this although they should see no evil in said societies, provided they know the prohibition of the Church. For the sin is incurred by disobeying the laws of the Church in a grievous matter. It is the Pope's right and duty to feed the lambs and the sheep of Christ, to lead them into wholesome pastures, and to keep them away from poisonous fields. Whenever the Church through her Supreme Pastor threatens a grievous censure against those who pursue any certain course, she thereby most solemnly forbids that course: to disobey her is to disobey Christ, who has said to her: "He who hears you, hears Me; and he who despiseth you, despiseth Me." And this Pope Leo XII. declared when he said: "Be convinced that no one can be a member of those societies without making himself guilty of a most grievous crime." *Quin gravissimi flagitii reus sit.* When a power constituted by Almighty God decides a point it is not for inferiors to judge whether the decision be right or wrong. What is the use of having a teaching body on earth if every one is to be his own judge after all? This spirit of private judgment is the very principle of Protestantism.

2. *They incur excommunication, i. e.*, over and above the grievous sin of disobedience, the members of the condemned societies incur as a penalty the heaviest censure that the Church can inflict on any one by the power granted her by Christ: "What you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." She separates such rebellious children from her communion, and thereby from all participation in the spiritual blessings of which she is the dispenser through the sacred blood of Christ, and through his commission to his Church: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." "And behold, I am with you even to the consummation of the world." The excommunicated Catholic is entirely deprived of all the Sacraments as long as his excommunication lasts; he has no share whatever

in the public prayers and sacrifices which the Church in union with Christ is ever offering up for all her children; he is disowned by her and he is no longer her child; she has no blessings for him in life, and if he die in that state she has no Christian burial for him after death; she offers no prayers for the repose of his poor soul. He has knowingly and willingly separated himself from her communion, and he must bear the consequences. Should he have become a member without knowing these consequences, the only way he can avoid these great evils is to withdraw at once from the condemned societies as soon as he becomes aware of these penalties.

3. *This excommunication is usually reserved to the Supreme Pontiff, i. e.*, one who has incurred this excommunication, even when he repents, when he severs all connection with the condemned societies, and humbly applies for absolution, cannot be absolved by an ordinary confessor, but only by the Pope or by one who has been delegated by the Pope for that purpose. We must add, however, that in this missionary country our bishops and priests possess more powers in such matters than in Catholic lands; and that when a sinner is in danger of death any priest in any country can absolve him from all his sins, notwithstanding the excommunication. For the Church is a merciful mother, and does not wish any one to die without hope. Such absolution, however, "by any priest," supposes that no recourse can be had to the Pope or to one delegated by him in this matter; and that the excommunicated person, if he should recover, shall afterwards be duly absolved from his excommunication by one authorized to absolve him from it.

We feel convinced that on none of the points so far stated is there any difference of opinion among the teachers of the Church. A question was raised whether those could be absolved from sin who had become Freemasons, if they repented of having taken the forbidden oath, but still retained an outward semblance of membership. This question was set at rest by an answer from the Holy Office at Rome, which decided that such persons could not be absolved while maintaining this semblance of membership.

II.

We will next consider *the reasons why Holy Church pronounces so severe a sentence* against such societies. Many Catholics care not to ask this question. It is enough for them to learn that the Church has pronounced on any subject; they know that the reasons must be supremely good, since rulers humanly so prudent, and enlightened by a higher wisdom, have so determined. Still there are not wanting motives for examining this point, *v. g.*, that we may be

able to give a clear answer to outsiders, who may ask us why we cannot unite with them in societies which appear to them harmless enough. But there is one motive for examining this matter, to which we desire to call special attention. It is this: by understanding the various reasons why the Church prohibits certain societies, we shall be warned against the various dangers connected with them; and we shall understand that if there are some associations which are not directly condemned, these may, however, be full of dangers, as involving or leading to some of the evils which belong to the worst kinds of societies. In examining these reasons we must bear in mind that the Church, in matters of such importance, is guided by considerations of the general and highest good. Her first duty is to look to the good of souls, the next to the temporal peace and happiness of civil society at large. The question is not with her, whether in some places some individuals may make a few dollars by joining a certain society, or thereby leave a small fund for wife and children. Lower advantages must be sacrificed for higher, private for public good. How, then, can she tolerate for a moment societies which are ever trying to thwart her twofold mission of glory to God and peace to men, of the salvation of souls and the highest good of civil society? How can she tolerate those who strive to gain such control over her children as to alienate them from herself, and arm them against the mother that bore them? *Her first reason* then is, that she has learned for certain, by long and bitter experience, *the evil purposes of the societies* which she condemns. Many may be ignorant of these purposes, but she is not. She has carefully and thoroughly examined the matter; she has acted with that slowness for which Rome is proverbial. We of course believe her on her word, and besides the proofs of such wicked motives are conspicuous enough to any one that has studied the history of modern European revolutions, even if the Church had not so pronounced. Freemasonry is a powerful association, which boasts to be one and undivided. It is a tree whose branches extend into all Christian lands, and which combines everywhere all the powers that are arraigned against the Catholic Church. There was a time when its aims were more hidden, and there are lands now where all evil purposes are disavowed by most of its members, many of whom are no doubt upright men. But the Church well knows, and every careful reader of history readily sees, that the great war of opposition to Catholicity, and even to Christian civilization, which has been growing more and more fierce and general during the last generation, has constantly been promoted, if not originated, by the action of the Masonic lodges, the Carbonari, and other secret societies of like purposes and similar organization. Every one knows what the Carbonari and Freemasons have done

in Italy within our own lifetime. They have stripped the Holy Father of all his temporal dominions, they have imprisoned him in his palace, they have forced the clergy to enter the army, they have striven to make vocations to the priesthood impossible by preventing young men from entering the seminaries and as novitiates of religious bodies, they have closed many religious houses and expelled the inmates, they have desecrated churches and stolen the ecclesiastical revenues.

In Germany the war has been bitter unto imprisonment and death in chains, but its worst feature has been the expulsion of religious teachers from the land, and the handing over of the children to irreligious and infidel educators. What had the poor Sisters of Charity done to deserve this treatment? Evidently the blow was not aimed at them, but at the Catholic Church, of which they embody the spirit. Even a law against religious as such would have been too unpopular with the masses, therefore the leaders of the secret plot called it a law against the Jesuits and kindred bodies, and as the Jesuits are the universal scapegoats the ruse was successful.

In France the war just now is as fierce as possible; all the evils that have been brought on Germany and Italy are there aimed at, and the Freemasons come boldly and openly to the front in the army of irreligion, hatred of the Church and of God. They have long acted more fearlessly in France than in other lands. During the terrible reign of the Commune in Paris the Freemasons as such openly planted their banners on the walls of Paris for the avowed protection, not of France against Prussia, but of Communism against the party of order. On May 2d, 1871, between three thousand and four thousand Freemasons met in the Place de la Concorde, and resolved that "the banners of the brotherhood should remain on the ramparts, and that the Masons should march with the National Guards to their respective quarters for the protection of the Commune." This was the work, it must be noticed, of the Central Lodge of France, not of some obscure branch of the Masonic body. On May 3d the dispatches announced from Dieppe: "The Freemasons here, in conjunction with those of Rouen, have voted their full adhesion to the address of the Central Lodge in Paris." The Freemasons are in power now; they have recalled the Communists from exile, those same men who had promoted the abominations of the Commune, the burning of Paris, and the shooting of its noble bishop, with those of his clergy, and irreproachable laymen, who had the happiness of sharing his martyrdom. And should the Church allow her children to fight under the standard of Freemasonry, and glory in the name, and wear the insignia of the troops marshalled in so many lands against her? And can she

stand by listlessly, when she hears the leaders of those sects lay down a new gospel for their followers in direct opposition to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Listen to some of its teachings: here is a resolution of the Masonic Council of Naples some ten years ago: "Considering that the idea of *God* is the source and support of all despotism and of all iniquity, the freethinkers of Paris pledge themselves to the prompt and radical abolition of Catholicity, and by every means to procure its utter destruction." The Freemasons of other lands were represented in that general council. F. Lafargue, at the Council of Liege, in Belgium, uttered this war-cry: "War against God, this is progress!" F. Jules Ferry, the present Minister of Public Instruction in France, describes Catholicity as "the grand army of human folly."

In England and the United States most Masons would of course disown such sentiments; we do not question their honesty, but the Church has seen enough of the fruits of Masonry to judge the whole tree and to guard her children against it. Placed here by her Divine Founder to direct the consciences of His followers, she points out the forbidden tree, and says, "On the day you will eat of it you shall die the death" of the soul, losing the life of grace. If the tree here had never borne evil fruit, the presumption would still be against it; for the very name and the identity of organization would suggest further identity. But have not the lodges here inserted in their reports the achievements of their brother Masons in other lands, even those of a very unchristian character, as triumphs of their sect? We know they have; and we could prove it, if it were at all seriously questioned, whether the Masonic lodges here, as a rule, sympathize with the Masonic lodges throughout the world, and even explicitly fraternize with them. Besides, must we believe them on their word when they speak of their harmless intentions? Are they not bound to secrecy? If they had evil intentions would they tell us of them? Still we will grant that there are among them here and in England men so honest that if they knew their own lodges aimed to destroy Christianity they would at once withdraw from them. Whether they would be so determined if only Catholicity were plotted against we do not know. But this is not the question. The lodges here are found in company with those who aim at great evil; they are like men caught in the company of conspirators; the presumption is unfavorable, and they must clear themselves. As long as they do not, they cannot claim that the Church should make an exception in their favor. But is not the spirit of Masonry one throughout the world? But a few weeks ago a prominent Mason and Orientalist wrote: "Western Masonry borrowed from the Arabic its spirit and form, changing only what was necessary to localize the

institution in Christian countries. Some parts of the system have been entirely Christianized, to the very great damage of Masonry. The two systems are not parallel nor harmonious. They rest on very different bases in the hearts and minds of men, and as the Christian system is introduced true Masonry is excluded. The Masonic institution is altogether different from that sacerdotal society of the Nile, whose supreme ideal was a theological God, in that the supreme ideal of Masonry is *humanity*."—*Brooklyn Cath. Rev.*, Feb. 7th, 1880.

The second reason why the Church condemns all such societies is in the *oath of secrecy* which their members swear. This oath may assume various forms, but it will generally be liable to one or all of the following objections: (*a.*) It is wrong to promise, whether under oath or not, to do things which are not yet known, as when one is made to swear that he will execute orders of which he does not yet know the nature; and it is of course worse still to promise it under oath. This requires no proof; and, therefore, though an important objection to the oaths of some secret societies, it will not be further developed by us. It is no answer to say that religious promise obedience, for they know the nature of what shall be required of them; whereas the secret societies professedly withhold their secrets till after the oath.

(*b.*) It is never allowed to promise entire secrecy, *i. e.*, to pledge oneself to keep anything secret from those who have authority to require the revelation. Now the oath of most secret societies binds the members to such absolute secrecy. Hence Lord Plunket says: "I consider an association bound by a secret oath to be extremely dangerous on the principles of common law; inasmuch as they subtract from the state, and interpose between him and his allegiance to the king." For *king* substitute *sovereign power*, and the same reason holds for all countries, be they republican or otherwise. The Catholic has besides conscientious obligations of subjection to his Church, whether in the confessional or before his priest or bishop; and he cannot promise to hide what it may become his duty to make known. The following is the oath of Masonry, as copied from the manual of the English lodges, and it is certainly liable to this objection and to several others. The candidate kneels, and placing his right hand on the Old Testament, and with his left supporting one point of the compasses to his naked breast, he says in presence of the Worshipful Master:

"I, N. or M., in the presence of the Great Architect of the Universe, . . . do hereby and hereon most solemnly and sincerely swear that I will always hale (sic), conceal, and never reveal any part or parts, point or points, of the secrets and mysteries of or belonging to Masons; what have been, shall now, or may here-

after be communicated to me, . . . on no less a penalty, on the violation of any of them, than to have my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the root. . . . So help me God!"

No man can take that oath without refusing the Church and the civil government what either may have a right to learn, *v. g.*, when he is summoned as a witness before a lawful tribunal, sacred or profane. Besides, pray, gentlemen of the fraternity, who is to cut the throat across? Where does reason or revelation teach that God will do it? Does not the appointing of a special penalty imply an intention to inflict it? There are many rumors afloat and some stubborn facts, *v. g.*, the murder of Mr. Morgan, in the State of New York, which assign terrible vindictiveness to the lodges against all violators of the terrible oath. The words quoted seem to bear such a meaning. If not, what *do* they mean? But of course you cannot tell us, it is part of the sworn secret, and you do not want to have your throats cut across. Perhaps you say the whole oath is a mockery. We have no doubt that with very many persons it is a mere mockery; but that too is wrong.

(*c.*) This is a *third objection* to such oaths: no one can lawfully take an oath in jest, nor for a trifle. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Is the dreadful oath we have just quoted but a mockery, a play? If it is, it looks like the play of a lower world. And is the Prince of Wales, *v. g.*, the future head of the English Church, the present Grand Master of the Masons in England, to lead in such sacrilegious profanation? It is often said, and it appears to us the most plausible explanation, that such men as the Prince of Wales are but figure-heads to give outward respectability to the "brotherhood," that they are not acquainted with any bad designs, but know of only philanthropy and display; that many other good men are received to get money and influence through them, while they see nothing in Masonry but self-interest or amusement, or even a sort of respectable worship.

(*d.*) There is a strong presumption that a secret oath will hide some mischief or other. Truth and honesty love the light; falsehood and crime seek darkness. If all the aims and all the means are noble and pure, especially in a free country as ours is, what need is there of secrecy? Is it to create a monopoly, and to give occupation only to members of cliques and parties? If so, these societies are the bane of free and fair competition, and the sworn enemies of the man who depends on his honest labor. Is a man in a free country to be excluded from a position because his conscience does not allow him to join certain associations?

The third reason, which makes the Catholic Church condemn all such societies, is one which applies in a special manner to these

United States, though it extends through the world, as it is the *life and soul* of Masonry in particular. It is namely, the spirit of *indifferentism*, and as such *opposition to all dogmatic Christianity*. Humanitarianism is extolled, and any definite religious teaching is thrust into the background. Christ has said: "Go and baptize all nations, *teaching them* to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who believeth not shall be condemned." And St. Paul said: "If an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, let him be anathema." Masonry not only labors persistently here as elsewhere to pull down all difference of belief among Christian sects; but it puts Mohammedanism and Buddhism and all *isms* exactly on the same level with Christianity. It extols humanitarianism, for it must hold up some *idol*, but it does not rest the love of man on the love of God; the earthly good of man is the *summum bonum*, and regard for God is a means to that end, where it is respected at all. Thus the "Official Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of Missouri, for 1877," says, on p. 89, that Masonry requires belief in God "and it does so on the ground that to one who has no belief in God conscience is an idle term, having no fixed standard, and no boundary but such as the individual himself may fix." This is *the* reason why it favors belief in God, at least in the United States, and condemns the action of the Masonic body in France, which wishes to strike out belief in God from its Constitution. But besides this belief in God and consequently in the immortality of the soul, as means to obtain the *summum bonum*, the exaltation of human nature here below, Freemasonry favors and inculcates the broadest indifferentism. There are various ways of inculcating indifferentism. The Missouri report, lately referred to, quotes, on page 88, the following words of the first English Masonic constitution, which words, it says, are still regarded as the first principles of the craft.

"Though in ancient times Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, *whatever it was*, yet it is now thought more expedient only to obtain that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves."

This is the indifferentism which is the *first principle of the craft*, and which the Church must condemn, and every one that believes in dogmatic Christianity must do the same. This principle the Masons carry into universal practice. Hence they everywhere favor, and in many lands have evidently brought about, the total severance of religion and education, in Italy, Germany, Belgium, etc., and now they are trying to do the same in France, not accidentally, but in virtue of their spirit, which everywhere is in direct

antagonism to the Catholic Church. Therefore the Church considers them as working essentially, by their very nature, against herself, and wherever the state has sided with the Church, against the state. Hence the late contests in Italy, etc., so professedly Masonic.

It will be noticed that we have applied most of our objections to the Freemasons, as being outwardly the most respectable and the most widely spread, and as being the first who provoked the condemnation of the Church; but the evils complained of exist in most other secret societies in a large measure, in particular this worship of humanity, this latent pantheism, which makes earthly happiness the *summum bonum*, and humanity its God. Of course the Church loves mankind, and labors for its true happiness, viz., eternal union with Christ, who died for man; but indifferentism or humanitarianism severs man from Christ and from all supernatural aspirations. The Church and indifferentism are the two armies of Christ and Antichrist. The Protestant sects are but pasteboard ramparts scattered here and there along the battlefield. Masonry laughs at them, it never fights against them. But the Vatican is the stronghold it unceasingly attacks, as the great opponent of indifferentism, the only citadel of dogmatic Christianity. Indifferentism calls itself modern progress, and its enemy Jesuitism, clericalism, ultramontanism, all synonyms with true Christianity. Many *civil* reasons might be mentioned why secret societies should be discountenanced, as productive of great temporal evils. Those who wish to study this view of the subject more fully will do well to read *Adams's Letters on Masonry*. But there are two points to which we wish to call attention on this occasion. First. In the United States we have had enough of secret *rings*; we want no more of them; we see already clearly enough that such associations can do much for evil when it becomes their interest to do it. What produced the gigantic fraud of the Credit Mobilier but a secret ring or society?—call it what you will. What was the Whiskey Ring but a secret society on a small scale? Secondly. Have not secret societies often much to do with screening the guilty from justice, and thus multiplying crime at a most fearful rate? Some Freemasons say: We first try a brother in our lodge, and if we find him guilty we abandon him to his fate; if innocent, we shield him. But who has constituted them the judges of the land? This *imperium in imperio* is radically wrong, and directly against the idea of government.

III.

We must lastly consider what societies are condemned by the Church. And here we must distinguish those which are condemned so as to

incur all the penalties spoken of in our first part, and those which do not exactly come under the ban, but still are reprobated by her as evil or dangerous and to be avoided. The *first class* can best be made known by examining the very words of the bull "Apostolicæ Sedis," which we quoted above. Those are therein excommunicated "*who become members of the Masonic lodges (Sectæ Masonicæ), or of the Carbonari, or of other societies of the same kind, which openly or secretly plot against the Church or against legitimate powers; likewise all who in any way show favor to those same societies (favorem qualemcumque præstantes), and all those who do not denounce their secret chiefs or leaders, till they have denounced them.*"

Therefore, 1st. *All Freemasons* are excommunicated, no matter in what land they live, or to what lodge they belong; even though they may not be aware of any evil in the body which they have joined. The standard of Masonry is planted over the camp of opposition to the Church. No man can fight under two opposing standards, as "no man can serve two masters," God and Belial. It is supposed, however, that the members know the law of the Church, and the penalty or censure attached to its violation.

2d. The *Carbonari* are also explicitly condemned; they are but a particular form of Masonry.

3d. *All members of other societies of the same kind (ejusdem generis)*. The Church does not give us their names explicitly, but they are to be known by their being of the same kind as the societies named. Now societies are specified by their object, *i. e.*, by the work they are instituted to perform. Thus, a society is a religious, a benevolent, a temperance society, as its object or work is to practice religion, benevolence, temperance. And what *kind* is to be so understood in this case the bull clearly enough indicates by the words following: "*Which openly or secretly plots against the Church or against legitimate powers.*" In fact, this plotting constitutes the *essence* of the societies excommunicated in this definitive sentence. The oath of secrecy is not essential; *openly or secretly*, says the document. This reasoning of ours is put beyond all question by an order issued by Pius IX., in 1865, to the Cardinal prefect of the Propaganda, instructing him to call the attention of some of the bishops in the United States to a decree of the Roman tribunal of the Inquisition, issued in 1846, which says: "*The secret societies, of which there is question in the Pontifical Constitutions, are understood to be all those which aim at anything against the Church, or against the government, whether they require from their members an oath to keep a secret or not.*"

But it is not necessary that the societies openly acknowledge their illicit aim; it is enough that the aim exists to incur the excommunication, even though the members protest that such aim

is quite foreign to their intention. Thus, the Acts of the last Plenary Council of Baltimore, held in 1866, contain this statement, viz., that when, in 1850, the Archbishop of Philadelphia, Most Rev. F. P. Kenrick, consulted the Holy See about Odd Fellows, Sons of Temperance, and other societies of the kind, proposing the doubt in these words: "Whether those societies are to be held as forbidden which profess that they do not plot against religion or the civil state, though they enter into a secret league confirmed by oath, or otherwise bind themselves to secrecy?" The Sacred Congregation answered that "*these were comprehended under the Pontifical bull.*"—Conc. Plen., Balt., Acta et Dec., p. 261

To apply these laws of the Church to individual societies would be as long a task as it would be thankless, nor is it our business. We have simply endeavored to lay down connectedly the laws enacted upon the subject by those to whom the government of the Church has been intrusted by Christ our Lord. In fact, this matter is so delicate that Rome has reserved the decision of doubtful cases to itself, for it has decreed that if any case of considerable doubt should arise, *that case should be referred to the Roman tribunals*, as is done in all matters of very great importance. In compliance with this the case of the Fenians was, in 1870, referred to the supreme tribunal of Rome, which, after very careful examination of the whole subject, definitely pronounced that the society of the Fenians came under the excommunication of the Church. (Ballerini, v. ii., p. 998, in nota.) Of course we would all like to see dear old Catholic Ireland get her full rights of civil and religious freedom, and all the blessings which her devoted sons so richly deserve, but "*we must do no evil that good may come of it;*" the end, with Catholics, does not justify the means, whatever Protestants may think of Catholic laxity of doctrine. The crown of Ireland is bright with the jewels of martyrdom; with Christ, she is like the lamb before its shearer; with him, thorns and stripes are her portion on earth; but with him, too, she will be glorified in heaven; even on earth a glorious resurrection may be destined for her; but impatience and imprudence will not hasten its dawn, nor blunt one thorn of her bloody crown, as experience has shown.

4th. *All such are excommunicated as favor in any way the excommunicated societies.*

5th. *All those who do not denounce their secret chiefs or leaders till they have denounced them.* Only secret leaders are spoken of, and none need denounce when it would probably be of no use, do no good at all, as theologians teach.

Lastly, it remains for us to speak of those societies which are evil or dangerous, and of course condemned by the Church, though not threatened with the same penalties. These may, in general,

be known by the fact that they contain one or more of the evils or dangers stated in our second part as reasons why the Church condemned the worst kind of societies. For these reasons are not of our own invention. Almost all, if not all, are laid down in the Apostolic Constitution of Benedict XIV., "*Providas*." The most evident evil is the fostering of indifference, and the most ordinary sign of evil is the obligation to secrecy, especially when confirmed by an oath. But on this delicate subject we prefer to say little ourselves, and to let our bishops speak, who share, with the Supreme Pontiff, the government of the Church by Divine commission. After saying that certain societies do not fall under the prohibition of the Church, our bishops of the United States, assembled at Baltimore, in 1866, add this caution: "Care should be taken lest under this pretext (they speak of mutual protection of workingmen) anything be allowed which favors the condemned societies; and lest the laboring men who join such societies be induced by the wiles of evil and deceitful men unjustly to withhold the labor which is due, or in any other way to violate the rights of those who are over them. Still we do not wish all this to be so understood as if those societies should be considered as tolerated in which, no matter what be their nature, the members on first entering them bind themselves by oath to obey commands which may happen to be issued by the chiefs of the association, or enter into a bond of secrecy which they cannot safely violate, even when interrogated by lawful authority. Those associations are likewise altogether unlawful whose members are so closely united for mutual defence that danger may thence arise of mobs or bloodshed."

We add this serious warning of Most Reverend Archbishop Hughes, of New York, who so fully knew his people, and was so deeply loved and venerated by them, and even by those not of the Church. In a pastoral address to his diocese, issued in 1842, he writes thus: "Now we warn and admonish all the faithful committed to our charge, if any are involved in such associations, to withdraw from them with as little delay as possible; and also, as a rule of safety and precaution, we entreat all others not to yoke themselves in the membership of such associations, *without having first asked leave of their respective pastors or clergymen* whether they can do so without cutting themselves off from the communion of the Church."

We conclude with these earnest words from the same pastoral letter: "If they (Catholics) wish to perform charities, the rules of religion direct the manner, and their fellow-members and neighbors furnish perpetual occasion for its exercise. But wherever some partial good is set forth as the end and aim of any separate society, unless all its duties be public and left free, the faithful

ought to be on their guard, lest there be connected with it something which is not made public, but by virtue of which they who enter become implicated in snares that may prove fatal to their salvation."

AMERICAN RATIONALISM.

The Holy Ghost, Lord and Giver of Life. A Sermon. By O. B. Frothingham. Published by D. G. Francis, New York.

Proceedings at a Reception in Honor of the Rev. O. B. Frothingham, given by the Independent Liberal Church in New York. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 182 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Farewell Sermon of the same. Delivered April 27th, 1879. Published by the same.

Mistakes of Moses. By Robert Ingersoll. Published in Chicago by Rhodes & McClure.

Ingersoll's Lectures on Skulls, Ghosts, Hell, and Robert Burns.

Dr. Felix Adler's Sermons, as published in the New York papers.

Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion. By F. Max Müller, M. A. Published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

THIS last work is not properly an American work; but as it is one of the chief fountains from which our American rationalists draw their supplies, the Catholic critic should read it in order to understand fully the drift of the teaching of Ingersoll, Adler, and Frothingham. There are unquestionably more rationalists in America than these, but few living are of greater prominence. Mr. Ingersoll is decidedly the most pugnacious and aggressive of the three. He has a wonderful power of sarcasm, and is skilful in handling the sharpest weapon of the ancient scoffers,—ridicule. Voltaire is his master, Luther his model in style. One of the most bitter, contemptuous, and overwhelmingly destructive onslaughts ever made on the gloomy system of Calvinism occurs in his lecture on Robert Burns. Imagine an audience of grim-visaged Scotch Presbyterians listening to it. We saw such a one once, fairly wilting under his withering irony and eloquent denunciations. It is to be regretted that Mr. Ingersoll does not confine his contempt to the horrible doctrine of fore-ordained damnation, so revolting to human reason and to the nature of the beneficent Deity, but that he extends it to the whole of Christianity.

Mr. Adler is a young preacher, of Hebrew origin, who gives