

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

IN putting forth a publication like the present, the authenticity of which will undoubtedly be strongly contested by those who are interested in so doing—one, moreover, which does not belong to the class of writings emanating from the Societary School, and which I edit in my own individual capacity, I am bound to accompany it with a testimonial, and with some personal explanations.

I.

I had long been aware of the existence of the *Secret Plan*, of which I had received accounts from many of my friends in Geneva. Their esteem and affection for M. Leone were of a very warm nature. They spoke of him in terms that excluded all suspicion of fraud. The objects too of his constant studies, the elevation of his ideas, and his religious labours in the *Edificateur*, indicated a man of serious character, loving goodness, and pursuing truth with natural and sincere ardour. Notwithstanding all these grounds for a favourable prejudice, I confess that I could not bring myself to believe what had been told me of the *Jesuit Conference*.

Visiting Geneva in September, 1846, I heard the *Secret Plan* much talked of, and on all hands I received the most positive assurances of M. Leone's good faith. Among those to whom he had made complete disclosures—and there were a great number of such persons—I did not meet with one who was not convinced of the authenticity of the *Conference*, and of the narrator's veracity. Nevertheless it was not until I had had some very serious conversations with men whose perspicacity and good sense it would have been absurd in me to disregard—men who had long held intercourse with M. Leone, and frequently heard his manuscript read—that my incredulity was shaken.

I felt, indeed, that after all I was infinitely less competent to decide in the matter than those whose judgment upon it was opposed to mine, and that not having seen the documents or conversed with the witness, it would have been presumptuous and irrational in me to settle dogmatically that they were wrong and that I was right. I therefore suspended my judgment, and abstained from forming any positive opinion on the subject.

It was in Paris, towards the close of 1846, that I first saw M. Leone. I scarcely spoke to him about his manuscript, for which I was informed he had found a publisher. I awaited the appearance of the work to become acquainted with its contents.

I must confess that at that time I did not believe much in the Jesuits, and therefore I was disposed to

attach but little importance to the publication of the *Conference*. It had always struck me that the public did the Jesuits too much honour in giving themselves so much concern about them. I believed indeed that the order was deeply committed to very retrograde ideas, but I did not give it credit for the activity, profundity, or Machiavellian ubiquity generally imputed to it. In a word, to use a phrase that accurately expresses what I then thought, I calculated that at least a discount of from sixty to eighty per cent should be struck off from the current estimate respecting the Jesuits.

As for their obscurantist and retrograde conspiracy, I thought it of no more account against the development of human progress and liberty, than the barriers of sand raised by children against the tides of the ocean. And even now, though enlightened as to the character and intrinsic power of the celebrated Company, I still persist in that opinion; for, however strong the arms that raise it, the anti-democratic barrier is still but a rampart of shifting sand, incapable of stopping the rising tide: at most it can but trouble the clearness of the foremost waves.

II.

By-and-bye M. Leone was a more frequent attendant at our weekly conversations on Wednesday at the office of the *Démocratie Pacifique*. He spoke to me of a work on which he was engaged, and appointed a day on which to read me a copious exposition of the

argument. I listened to it with the liveliest interest, and was deeply impressed by its contents. They related to the publication of extremely important documents, stamped with the highest ecclesiastical sanction, absolutely authentic beyond all cavil, and formed to shatter the coarse and oppressive carapace of the Catholic Theocracy,* and place in the most shining light the democratic and humanitarian Christianity of the gospel, and the fathers of the first three centuries. It is the lamp that sets fire to the bushel.

The publication of this work, resting on the most solid bases, and of a theoretic value altogether superior, appeared to me most important. The Introduction

* THEOCRACY. Excepting the rigorously defined terms used in mathematics, almost all words in the language have very diverse meanings; yet with good faith and some intelligence a mutual understanding is always possible.

But to avoid every false interpretation of the word *Theocracy*, which occurs frequently in the preface, I declare that both therein, and in the rest of the work, it is employed in its historical signification, and not at all in its grand and beautiful etymological sense.

Theocracy, in its historical import, is the usurpation of the temporal government by a caste or sacerdotal body, separated from the people, and exercising political, social, and religious despotism. For this Theocracy religion is but a means, domination is the end.

The etymological meaning of the same word is, on the contrary, the *government of God*, the coming of that reign of God, which Jesus commands us to pray for to our heavenly Father, and to establish amongst us; that is to say, the ideal of government here below—democracy, evangelically, harmoniously, and religiously organised. In this sense, far from repudiating Theocracy, no one would desire it more ardently than I!

was complete, and was about to be published separately in one volume, for which I was making the necessary corrections, when Leone received from one of our common friends in Geneva intelligence of a breach of confidence committed by his copyist, and the advertisement of the approaching publication of the *Secret Plan* in Berne.

On receiving this news, the details of which are given in the subsequent introduction, Leone changed his plans. He begged me to lay aside the first work, and immediately publish the *Secret Plan* in Paris, so as if possible to anticipate the necessarily faulty, truncated, and wholly unsubstantiated edition that was about to appear in Switzerland. But the notice he had received was too late, and ere long he had in his hands a copy of a bad edition, containing a part only of his MS., printed at Berne, without name or testimonial, and which in its anonymous garb—the livery of shame—did not and could not obtain any general notice. Thenceforth Leone's solicitude was not so much to hasten as to perfect the publication which was already in the press, and to make the third part (corroborative proofs), which is entirely wanting in the Berne edition, as complete as circumstances could require or allow.

III.

At that period there no longer remained any doubt in my mind as to the authenticity of the *Secret Conference* and Leone's sincerity.

To suppose that his story was a romance, the *Conference* a lying fabrication, and that Leone made me at once the dupe and the accomplice of a calumnious hoax, it would be necessary to esteem him the vilest and most despicable of men, considering the mutual relations that had grown up between us. But those relations had fully justified in my eyes the high estimate which our common friends in Geneva, who had known him long and intimately, had formed of his integrity, high-mindedness, and goodness of soul. I therefore declare, that if the circumstances detailed in the following narrative present to the reader's eyes an extraordinary character and a romantic appearance, calculated to stagger his belief, I for my part would regard as a still more inexplicable mystery, the quantum of baseness, and the power of fraud, which Leone must have been endowed with, in order so long to beguile the attached friends he had found in Geneva and Paris. Leone has given us such strong positive proofs of disinterestedness, single-minded sincerity, and incapacity to play an assumed part, that far from ascribing to him the faculty of mystifying and duping others, those who know him see in him, along with an unswerving devotedness to principle and truth, one of those natures which, while they preserve in mature age the confiding simplicity and sensibility of early youth, are much rather themselves exposed to be deceived every day.

IV.

But the guarantees afforded by the character of the witness are not the only motives that have convinced me of the authenticity of his testimony. Thousands of proofs, incidents of conversation, questions put at long intervals on delicate points, and imperceptible circumstances of the drama, have always resulted in an agreement so exact, positive, and formal, that truth alone could produce such perfect coaptation. One example will be sufficient to explain the nature of the proofs I am now alluding to.

Among other points in the narrative, it had struck me as an extraordinary and quite romantic circumstance, that, when the young neophyte entered the rector's apartment in the convent of Chieri, and took for his amusement a book from one of the library shelves, he should have found in the very first instance, behind the very first book he laid his hand on, the registry of the *Confessions of the Novices*, and again, immediately behind it, that of the *Confessions of Strangers*, and the rest. I had often reflected on the singularly surprising nature of this chance, and I had intended to mention my perplexity on this subject to Leone. Now it happened one morning while I was writing, and while he was conversing near me with other persons to whom he was relating his adventure, I heard him say, in the course of a narrative delivered with all the precision of a very lively recollection, "I laid my

hand on the *first* book on the library shelf." This trivial detail, which was not in the first manuscript, and which Leone thus gave, unasked for, in the course of a recital the animation of which vividly recalled the scene to his memory and made him describe all its circumstances, explained to me in the most natural and satisfactory manner a thing which had previously appeared to me in the light, not indeed of an impossibility, but of a serious improbability.

This example is enough to show the nature of the counterproofs I have mentioned; and so great a number of similar ones have occurred to me, in the infinite turns and changes of conversation, during the four or five months I have been led to apply myself, often for several hours daily, to the correction of Leone's manuscript and proofs, that for my own part, independently of the arguments drawn from the character of the man, they are enough to erase from my mind all doubt as to the veracity of his tale. The utmost skill in lying could not produce a tissue always perfectly smooth in its most delicate interruptions. Imagination may, no doubt, very ingeniously arrange the plot and details of a fiction; but if at long intervals, in the thousand turns of conversation, and without letting the author perceive your drift, you make him talk at random of all the details which the story suggests, then certainly if the web is spurious you will discover many a broken thread. Now, this web of Leone's I have examined with a microscope for months together

in every part, and I have not been able to detect in it one broken thread or one knot. I have no doubt, therefore, if the authenticity of the narrative become the subject of serious discussion, that the narrator will rise victorious over every difficulty that can be raised up against him; for I do not think that he can encounter any stronger or more numerous than I myself and some of my friends have directly or indirectly set before him.

V.

I will now examine considerations of a third kind, which have this advantage over the preceding ones, that they can be directly appreciated by everybody—for they are derived from internal evidence.

I say, without hesitation, that to me it is not matter of doubt that every cool impartial person, who has some experience of the affairs of life and of literature, and who shall have read very *attentively* the speeches in the *Secret Conference*, will recognise in them the distinct stamp of reality.

It seems evident to me that these speeches cannot be the produce of a literary artist's imagination: the imitation of nature is not to be carried to such a pitch. Certainly, it is not a young man, a young Piedmontese priest, though endowed with talent, sensibility, imagination, and good sense, who could have produced such a work. To this day, though his intellect is much more mature and his acquirements considerably

enlarged, I do not hesitate to declare Leone quite incapable of composing such a piece. I go further and assert, that there is not one among all the living writers of Europe who could have been capable of doing so. There is in those speeches a mixture of strength, weakness, brilliancy, a variety of styles and views, a composite of puerilities, grandeur, ridiculous hopes, and audacious conceptions, such as no art could create.

Yes, they are surely priests who speak those speeches—not good and simple priests, but proud priests, versed in a profound policy, nurtured in the traditions of an order that regards itself as the citadel and soul of Catholic Theocracy—whose gigantic ambition, whose hopes and whose substance, it has gathered up and condensed; an order whose constant thought is a thought of universal sway, and which ceases not to strive after the possession of influences, positions, and consciences, by the audacious employment of every means. Yes, those who speak thus are indeed men detached from every social tie—emancipated from every obligation of ordinary morality—reckoning as nothing whatever is not the Order, in which they are blended like metals in the melting pot; the corporation, in which they are absorbed as rivers in the sea; the supreme end, to which they remorselessly sacrifice everything—having begun by sacrificing to it each his life, his soul, his free-will, his whole personality. Yes, those are truly the leaders of a mysterious formidable initiation—patient as the drop of water that wears

down the rock—prosecuting in darkness its work of centuries over the whole globe—despising men, and founding its strength upon their weakness—covering its political encroachments under the veil of humility and the interests of Heaven—and weaving with invincible perseverance the meshes of the net with which, in the pride that is become its faith, its morals, and its religion, it dreams of enclosing Kings and Peoples, States and Churches, and all mankind.

History demonstrates that it is the nature of all great human forces, material or intellectual, military or religious, individual or corporate, to be incarnated in a People, an Order, an Idea, a Religion, or to have borne mere names of men, such as Alexander, Cæsar, Mahomet, Charlemagne, Hildebrand, Napoleon, &c.; it is the nature of all these great forces to gravitate by virtue of their inward potency towards the conquest and unity of the world.

It is a phenomenon likewise proved by history, that hitherto the laws of ordinary morality—the duties considered by practical conscience as the imperative rules of men's individual relations—are drowned and annihilated in the gulphs opened by those vast dominating ambitions, which substitute the calculations of their policy and the interests of their sovereign aim for the rules of vulgar conscience. At those heights in the subversive world in which humanity is still plunged, men are soon considered by those ambitions which work on nations and events, as but means or obstacles.

Now, the Theocratic genius, founding its domination on the alleged interests of God—covering them with the impenetrable veil of the Sanctuary—marching with the infinite resources acquired in a long practice of confession, in a profound study of the human heart, and in the arsenal of all the seductions of matter and mysticism; taking for the auxiliaries of its inimitable design human passions, obscurity, and time;—the Theocratic genius—if, with a deliberate consciousness of its aim, it has constituted itself a hierarchical militia, detached from all ties of affection—must necessarily carry to its maximum of concentration and energy that politic spirit before which persons and the morality of actions disappear, and which retains but one human sentiment and one moral principle—that of absolute devotedness to the animus of the corporation, to its aim and its triumph. And who, then, save eight or ten of those strong heads among the higher class of the initiated—those politic priests, those brains without heart, puffed up by the defeat of the modern spirit (1824), intoxicated by a recent triumph, and by the perfume of that general Restoration which had already given them back a legal and canonical existence, and the favour of the governments of Italy, France, Austria, &c.—who but such men, taking measure at such a moment of their forces for conquest, could have held such language?

VI.

There are mad flights of pride so delirious, that no imagination could invent them. To set them forth with the fire, brilliancy, and energetic audacity, they display in a great number of passages in the *Secret Conference*, the Word that speaks must itself be wholly possessed by them. That sombre and subterraneous profundity—that laborious patience, proof against the toil of ages—that sense of ubiquity—that absolute devotedness to a purpose whose fulfilment is seen through the vista of many generations—that absorption of the personal and transient individual in the corporate and permanent individual—and above all, if I may so express myself, that transcendant immorality, which all stamp upon the *Secret Conference* the character of a monstrous and insane grandeur; these are surely the tokens of a paroxysm of *subversive unitism*, such as could only be manifested, the moment after a European resurrection and victory, by Policy and Theocracy allied in an Order self-constituted as the occult brain of the Church, and the predestined supreme government of the world.

And truly, when we reflect on the organic virtue of that theocratic power, which feels itself immutable amidst the vacillations of the political world, we are constrained to own, that such is the nature of its means, such the temper of its weapons, that it might with more reason than any conqueror, or even than

any people, aspire to universal dominion, if instead of seeking to cast back the nations into the past, and to plunge mankind again into the night of the middle ages, a thing which is purely impossible, it had undertaken the glorious task of guiding men towards the splendours of freedom and the future. That Order, which for many a century has braved kings and nations—which neither the decrees of princes, nor the bulls of popes, nor the anathemas of the conscience of nations, nor the terrible wrath of revolutions, have been able to crush—whose severed fragments reunite in the shade like those of the hydra—that Order, everywhere present and impalpable, which feels itself living, with its eternal and mute thought, in the midst of all that makes a noise and passes away—that Order, on comparing itself with those governments whose vices, corruption, and caducity, would make them pliant subjects for its crafty magnetism—must certainly have conceived through its chiefs the plan developed in the *Secret Conference*, and none but the initiated could have given to that plan the profound, eloquent, and impassioned forms, which that grand folly there assumes. The fumes of pride have mounted to the brain of the mysterious colossus, and he has failed to perceive that his feet are of clay, and that the inevitable flood of the modern spirit is reaching them and washing them away.

Boundless ambition, a mighty organization, indomitable perseverance, and absolute devotedness, all

directed to the attainment of an impossible object, an absurd chimera pursued by a transcendent system of means as immoral as they are puerile—such are, in brief, the characteristics of that modern incarnation of Theocracy which is called Jesuitism.

VII.

I am not the only person who has remarked a strange form that frequently recurs in the speeches of the reverend fathers of the *Secret Conference*, namely those harangues to imaginary auditors, of which they almost all present specimens, or fragments, in their addresses to their colleagues. There are some to whom this form seems extraordinary and unnatural. Extraordinary I own it is, but as to its being unnatural, the circumstances and the men considered, I am quite of the opposite opinion.

Men who for fifteen, twenty, or thirty years, more or less, have been in the daily practice of public speaking, whose incessant task is proselytism, the seduction of consciences, the propagation of their policy, the conquest of souls, and who when met together to concert and mutually make known their means of action and their modes of proceeding, are glad to display each his own individual skill, such men would naturally have recourse to the form of communication in question. On reflection, then, it is evident that this singularity is perfectly natural in the special case in which it occurs. The more improbable

it seems in an abstract point of view, the more strongly does it argue in favour of the authenticity of the *Conference*; for most assuredly the idea of putting all those numerous harangues into the mouths of the reverend fathers would never have occurred spontaneously to one who should have sat down to compose a fiction. The thing is one of those which we can account for when they are done, but which we can hardly imagine beforehand. Leone himself has never, so far as I am aware, given the explanation of the matter which to me appears so simple. The answer I have heard him return to objections of this kind has always been, "I can only say that the thing was so."

VIII.

It certainly cannot be said that there are not, in the preliminary narrative, or in the *Conference* itself, points as to which Leone has clearly perceived the difficulty of overcoming public incredulity. He has even debated with himself whether he should not suppress certain passages of the conference, knowing very well that they would prove stumbling-blocks, and that many persons refusing to believe them, might very probably reject all the rest along with them. Finally he resolved to set down everything he had heard with the most scrupulous fidelity, and in my opinion he has herein done wisely, notwithstanding the inconveniences resulting from such a course. Sound critics will see in the fact an additional evidence of

truth. They will say to themselves that were Leone an author instead of a narrator, he would have taken good care not to leave in a work, not hastily put forth, matters which he must have been well aware would appear incredible.

In like manner, if his story of the circumstances by which the *Secret Conference* was disclosed to him were a fiction, would it not have been very easy to make that fiction more probable? Tale for tale, there might have been devised a score that on the whole would have been much simpler and would have presented much fewer of those apparent difficulties on which common objectors tenaciously fasten. No; and as Leone is far from being a fool, I say (and for proof I might appeal to circumstances, such as the daring resolution he adopted at the very moment when he had been panic-stricken by a danger that still hung over him, and which he himself describes to satiety; the almost literally exact stenography of the conference; the accumulation in so brief a space of time of the two revelations, that of the secret books in the library, and that of the speeches of the reverend fathers, &c., &c.), I say for my part, instead of the veracity of the story being impugned by its improbability, that very improbability is a pledge of veracity.

IX.

I conclude with an observation. Leone gives with exact details the narrative of his own life at the

periods which have reference to the event of which he speaks. It is incontestible that he entered the monastery of Chieri with an extremely ardent, fixed, and profound determination; that he desired nothing so much as to become a Jesuit; that hopes had already been held out to him which could not but have whetted his desires; and that all at once, without any ascertained motive, he was seen, to the great amazement of everybody, flying from that monastery into which he had so eagerly desired admittance two months before, and where he had met with nothing but kindness, favour, and all sorts of winning treatment. It is certain, then, that he received some terrible shock in the monastery. The fact is attested by his flight, his subsequent illness, and his sudden abandonment of that Jesuit career which had been so much the object of his ambition, while at the same time he did not quit the clerical profession. This mysterious revolution, the meaning of which he could not then explain to any one of his friends or relations, and of which his old mother, who now lives in Paris, did not know the cause until the death of the head of the family allowed Leone to quit Piedmont—this revolution was certainly the effect of some extraordinary and formidable adventure, some sudden revelation, some appalling burst of light; for him, whom it had befallen, it was decisive of the whole bent of his life, and made the study of all that pertains to Jesuitism thenceforth his principal occupation.

In fine, the facts relating to all the circumstances

which form in the narrative the envelope, as it were, to the SECRET CONFERENCE, are of public notoriety in Leone's native land, and he narrates them publicly, mentioning names, places, dates, facts, and persons. Something most extraordinary, unknown to the Jesuits themselves, who were unable to account for his flight, must have perturbed his being, altered his health, and effected a total change in the bent of his mind and his ideas; and for my part I doubt not that the publication now made by Leone, is the true and sincere explanation of that mysterious point.

X.

I will now say a word as to my co-operation in Leone's publication, because, independently of what I have already made known, there was in this matter a circumstance which has strongly corroborated my conviction.

Leone as yet writes French but very imperfectly, so that I have been obliged to revise his whole manuscript, pen in hand, before sending it to press. Now I found an enormous difference as to style between the *second part* and the others. In the *Secret Conference* Leone was supported by the text, and often by the solidity of the speeches, which he had only to translate, and here he left me hardly anything to correct; whenever there was any awkwardness or ambiguity of expression, I had only to turn to the Italian text and find a more exact translation for the

passage. In this part of the work his French manuscript has only undergone slight modifications in a few passages.

In the other two parts (the first especially, for the third consists chiefly of extracts), I have had much more to do than I could have wished, and frequently whole pages to rewrite completely. The difference was so marked that it was impossible for me to retain the least doubt as to the duality of the sources whence it arose; and notwithstanding our conjoint labour, there still remains such a discrepancy between Leone's style and that of the *Secret Conference*, that the least observant reader will easily recognise a diversity of origin. As an example, I will particularly invite attention to the reflection with which Leone closes the *conference*, and which begins thus (see end of the second part), "*By these words, the echo and confirmation of others not less presumptuous.*" When we came to this passage in the course of our revision, Leone said to me, "Is it worth while, think you, to let that reflection stand?" "By all means, my dear friend," I replied with a smile, "let it stand. We must not think of suppressing this precious *naïf* reflection with which you, as a narrator, have quite naturally closed your report of the *conference*. There is, if you will allow me to say so, between your summing up and that of the president, paragraphs xix. and xxi., which precedes it, so enormous, so colossal a difference, that I know no more glaring proof of the authenticity of

the conference, and of the impossibility of your being its author. How pale and weak is what you say in comparison with the language of the general of the Order! How much does the expression of your sentiments on Jesuit ambition sink below the Word of the Company, the living incarnation of that ambition? The contrast seems to me so important, that far from suppressing your lines, you must forthwith grant me permission to repeat to the reader what I have just been saying to you."

And indeed whoever compares the grandiloquent language of paragraph xix. and the concluding words of paragraph xxi., with Leone's final reflection, will, I think, admit with me that the latter is merely a narrator, and will own how far *external passion*, if I may be allowed the expression, falls short of *internal passion* in the expression of a sentiment. To body forth the theocratic will and purpose with those traits of fire that flash every moment from the pen of De Maistre, and often from the lips of the fathers of the *Secret Conference*, the writer must himself have raised an altar to theocracy in his soul, and have long kept up, upon that inward altar, the sombre fire its worship demands. Although it does not always show with equal brilliancy throughout the conference, every attentive critic will easily distinguish the language of the initiated from that of ordinary men.

XI.

Let me recapitulate.

In this affair I have examined the elements of the cause like a juror.

The character of the witness, my scrutiny into the circumstances of his story, and my study of the subject in itself, have left no doubt upon my mind as to the authenticity of the revelation, and I declare, on my soul and conscience, that I BELIEVE LEONE TO BE PERFECTLY FAITHFUL AND SINCERE.

Now, whereas I should deem it odious to make use, even against Jesuitism, of fraud and calumny, I have held it no less obligatory upon me, in the actual state of things, convinced as I am of the reality of the Jesuit plan, to assist Leone, who had been unable to find a publisher, in laying it before the public. This seemed to me a personal and conscientious duty.

When I came to the determination to edit the manuscript, the Jesuits were exhibiting in Switzerland what they were capable of. They tried every means to bring about there an intervention of the anti-liberal powers—a coalition into which the French government monstrously entered. Instead of conjuring civil war by a voluntary retreat, those pretended disciples of Jesus were seen artfully kindling the fanaticism and rancour of the abused populations of the Sonderbund, and doing all in their power to provoke a bloody conflict. Their aim was to recover, *by means of an intervention*, the

ground taken from them in the cantons and the diet by the progress of free ideas. They spared no effort to produce that odious result, which happily they failed to accomplish.

Moreover, it is well known what has been and what is still the part played by them in Rome, and what a weighty obstacle they are to the liberal intentions of the great Pontiff, who at every step in advance encounters their occult and potent influence. The publication of the *Secret Plan* will serve to unmask them. Their whole strength consists in the mystery in which they shroud themselves; let their projects be exposed to daylight, and the charm will be broken. These darksome and malignant associations are like the phantoms of the night that vanish the moment they are touched by one ray of sunshine.

I have said wherefore, and how, I came to take upon me the editing of this book, although certain of Leone's tendencies are not always perfectly in accordance with mine. The main thing for me in this matter has been to aid in unveiling that odious conspiracy (in which many still hesitate to believe, and I own that I was for a long time among the number) which has for its defined and specific end the re-establishment of darkness and despotism, and for its means the deliberate and conscious employment of the most abominable of lies—religious lying.

Those who may refuse to consider the *Secret Conference* as anything but a romance, cannot at least deny

that the romance is perfectly historical. The *third part* contains an assemblage of proofs putting this point beyond all cavil. The gospel is the code of human freedom and dignity; some would make it a code of brutification and slavery, or rather they would stifle the rays of light and love that beam from it, and substitute a despicable fanaticism for the spiritual and democratic religion of Jesus. They will not succeed in their design; but to insure the defeat of the theocratic conspiracy, the friends of progress and freedom must bestir themselves.

Catholicism is a great religious institution. It is necessary to the development of that living institution that the hierarchy which governs it be renovated and retempered in the living sources of the gospel. The first steps which the pontiff, who now wears the tiara, has made in the way of progress and liberty, are a capital revelation for Catholicism. *To be or not to be.*

Christianity is immortal. A religion which is summed up in these words, "Love one another, and love God above all things," cannot die out from mankind; for every progress of humanity is but a new and fuller unfolding within it of Christianity, that is to say of love and liberty. But the future destiny of the catholic institution, which is a government, now depends, like that of all other governments, on its reconciliation with the spirit of the gospel, which is the spirit of humanity.

The catholic government is still aristocratic and

despotic. Let it emancipate its serfs! let it recognise the rights of the secondary clergy and guarantee them; let it put itself in harmony with the sentiments of the primitive church, and strive to free the world instead of employing itself in the old work of oppression. Christianity is young and radiant; Theocracy is decrepid: let Roman Catholicism choose between the two. Any long delay would be perilous.

The Jesuits are the janissaries of theocratic Catholicism. The pope of Islam has perhaps shown the Catholic pope in what way a serious reform should be begun.

LONDON, *Jan. 27th*, 1848.

VICTOR CONSIDERANT,
The Editor,

Publisher, Member of the General Council of the Seine.

P.S.—PARIS, *May 28th*, 1848.—Since I wrote the above Preface to Leone's narrative in London, and at the moment when the work was about to appear simultaneously in England, France, Belgium, and Germany, the Revolution of February changed the face of things. The party of oppression, favoured by the impious alliance of the French government with the absolute courts, has been miraculously overthrown; the Jesuits themselves have been expelled from Rome.

Let us not be deceived, however; the battle is not won; peace and liberty are still far from being solidly established in the world.

Peace, liberty, complete reciprocity (*solidarité*), and universal brotherhood, will only be realised by the definitive incarnation of the spirit of the Gospel in humanity. The work now before us is to make a democratic and christian Europe, instead of the aristocratic and, socially speaking, heathen Europe, which was yesterday official and legal. The question is far more religious and social than political. It is the era of practical Christianity which we are called on to inaugurate.

Hence, though Leone's publication now no longer possesses the character it would have had in the very heat of the strife, before the Revolution, it nevertheless retains its value. It will serve the good cause by exposing the designs of the bad cause; it will help the development of the true Christianity, democratic Christianity, by exhibiting in its odious nakedness the pseudo Christianity, the Christianity of the profit-seekers, of Theocracy, of Despotism.

The two parties must be accurately segregated: on the one side daylight, on the other darkness.

The subordinate clergy, whose condition in France is an actual civil, political, and religious thralldom, has respired the air of freedom with hope and love. Let the Republic give it a democratic constitution—let it restore to it the rights and guarantees of which it cannot be much longer despoiled—and it will soon have made its conquest. The subordinate clergy begs only to be released from the yoke. It groans beneath

superiors who are imposed upon it, and whom it fears ; whereas it ought to elect and love them. Let us emancipate the sacerdotal people ; set it free, and the oppressive and shameful doctrines of Jesuitism will find in it their most formidable antagonist.

It is time that this be done. It is time that the ecclesiastical people communicate with the lay people in the sentiments of modern life and modern ideas. It is idle now to think of conserving dead interpretations. Society is athirst for liberty, equality, and fraternity : it is time to return to the holy source, and recover the liberating import of Christianity.

Providence had committed an august mission to the Church : to perpetuate Christ's teaching, to render him for ever living on earth, preciously to preserve and to realise daily more and more the gospel principles of unity, charity, and universal brotherhood. Instead of accomplishing this task, the theocratic spirit has striven to efface from the Church the traces of Him who had founded it—to filch away the liberal meaning of his instructions—to paralyse the intellectual life—and, in a word, to make mankind a flock of brutes, to be shorn by the Princes of the Church and the Princes of the World.

Disowned, let us hope, by the mass of the clergy, this theocratic spirit will soon be constrained, finally and for ever, to give up Europe to the genius of the new times, reconciled with the most sacred traditions of humanity. The moment is come for the Church to

repudiate all fellowship with a sect which has led it astray from its proper path, and to regain the ground it has lost in the confidence of men, by actively furthering all truly christian works—that is to say, all works of social and intellectual amelioration.

The Revolution of February has opened a magnificent field for the Church; the problem now to be solved is **THE CONSTITUTION OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY**. For eighteen hundred years has Christianity been preached to men;—how to incarnate it in society is now the problem. Political society itself invokes the Gospel formula, taking for its motto those three christian words, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!* Let the subordinate clergy and the liberal bishops, casting off the anti-christian and anti-catholic traditions of **Jesuitism**, press forward, full of faith, hope, and love, in the path which is opened to them. The mission of true Christianity is now to found universal Democracy.

The Pope has expelled the Jesuits. It remains for him to reinstal the Papacy in its spiritual and catholic functions by abdicating all temporal authority. It is its temporal interests that have corrupted the Church.

So long as the head of the Church shall remain *King* of the Roman States, the Catholic Church will be nothing but a Roman oligarchy. It must again become a spiritual and universal democracy; and its general councils must proclaim to the earth the true

sense, the liberating and emancipating sense, of the Scriptures.

A sincere return to the democratic spirit of the Gospel; a rupture of that simoniacal alliance which odiously perverted a religion of freedom and fraternity, making it into a yoke of oppression for the benefit of all who use up nations for their own profit; a formal repudiation of the feudal, theocratic, obscurantist, and Jesuitical spirit: such is the price at which the salvation of the catholic institution is to be secured.

V. C.

PP.S. *July 10th, 1848.*—Events follow upon each other with such rapidity that every day produces in a manner a new situation.

The day after the Revolution of February, the Republic was accepted by all in France. Louis Philippe left behind him neither affection nor esteem, nor roots of any sort. Rejoicing in his fall, the legitimists said to themselves that the time of monarchies was passed, and gave in their adhesion on all sides to the republican principle, the government of all, by all, and for all.

The grand and vast idea of universal union found in the language of Lamartine an utterance full of brilliancy, elevation, and authority.

Unfortunately, narrow categories, language of injudicious violence, and conquerors' airs, calculated to lead to the belief that the immense majority of the

French citizens, who were *republicans of the morrow*, were about to be governed as conquered populations by the *republicans of the eve*; all those violences of speech and demeanour, which had not even the logic of the strong hand in their favour, produced serious reactionary ferments in the country. The huge folly of postponing the elections considerably diminished the democratic element in the National Assembly, which instead of feeling itself united, confident, and strong, was from the very outset uncertain, distrustful of itself, irresolute, and divided.

Hence the critical situation in which we now behold the republic and society.

A deliberately reactionary party, which would not have existed, had not its creation and development been provoked as if on purpose, is rapidly organising. It is turning to its own account material interests, the nature of which it is to be blind, blind and violent egotisms, and the resuscitated hopes, enterprising and intriguing, of the various dynastic factions and of the theocratic faction.

All these elements constitute a formidable coalition, in which intrigue is organising the resistance of those interests which it can so easily mislead and impassion.

The Jesuit element, that mysterious army at the service of obscurantism, despotism, and social retrogradation, has thus suddenly found allies in those who but yesterday fought against it.

Under the restoration it had on its side in France only the party of the emigration.

Under the monarchy of July it had indeed enlisted among its allies the official and satisfied bourgeoisie, which entered into covenant with it in its retrograde tendencies. M. Guizot and his rotten majority supported the general tendencies of Jesuitism, and formally yoked themselves to its cause, by pledging the policy of France to the service of the Sonderbund.

To-day, a new stratum of French society has passed over to the enemy, to the fear of progress and of democratic and social principles—a stupid and fatal fear, for interests can only be saved by their alliance with sentiments and principles. This new retrogression is authenticated by this token, that M. Thiers—who is what is called a tactician, a practical man, a man of manoeuvres—and his organ the *Constitutionnel*, have, with brazen fronts, gone over to the party of which they had long been the bugbears.

M. Thiers, moreover, maintained a few days ago, in a committee of the Assembly, amidst the applause of many liberals of yesterday (liberals now entrusted with the task of founding the *democratic* republic), “that it was very dangerous to develop the instruction of the people, because instruction led infallibly to communism.”

The anti-democratic coalition is bound up with the National Assembly, and the compact is signed between all the parties of the past.

Out of doors the movement is being organised by the insidious arts employed to terrify and blind the most legitimate interests.

Furthermore, the re-actionists will rapidly use up all the men of the revolution ; then, when the industrial and commercial crisis shall have passed away, they will again repossess themselves of the powers of the state, and with the help of all the confederated enemies of liberty and progress, they will re-establish society on its OLD PRINCIPLES, "*the mischievous nature of the new principles being definitively proved by the evils which their invasion has for sixty years let loose on the modern world.*"

That is the plan.

It is a general coalition of all fears, all egotisms, and all intrigues, against the legitimate and regular development of democracy.

This is literally the very same purpose as that aimed at by the Company of Jesus ; accordingly, the alliance has been already concluded with the *political* representatives of the Company.

V. C.