

prise on a large scale, we ask the co-operation of Churchmen everywhere. No other work to which they could put their hand or give their money, has in it the possibility and promise of so much good for the Church. Our people ask for information and guidance, and there is no more potent agency for the accomplishment of these ends, than a wise and wide circulation of the Church's literature. The Company have set before them three objects. First, the establishment of a Church paper, which, in information, editorial guidance, and literary character, shall be in some measure worthy of the Church of England. The issue of this paper is the first fruit of their desire in that direction.

Second, the establishment of a Church bookstore, which will keep on hand and be the ready instrument for procuring promptly Church Books and all other current literature which the reading public may require. Arrangements are being made to have this department in full operation in time for the fall trade of this year.

The third thing which the Company has set itself to accomplish, is the establishment of a Church Printing and Publishing House. This has already been initiated and will be carefully and gradually expanded as the need grows.

The Middle Party.

At a luncheon in connection with the re-opening of the Church at Castle Donington, the Bishop of Peterborough remarked:—"All who remember what the Church of England was forty years ago must feel that there had been a great revival over the whole of it. Old principles had been revived, old ways (as far as they could be) restored, old feelings of attachment rekindled and awakened again. In the main, he believed that, taking the great body of the clergy, of the Church of England, they were loyal to the principles of their Church, and heartily desirous to restore what should be restored, and only to remove what should be removed. In that work of Church restoration many differences arose, as he had said, but he could not but hope and believe and pray that when the abuse and noise of angry men on either extreme, right or left, had spent itself, there would be heard the deeper, calmer, and yet more powerful voice, that came from the great middle party of the Church of England—that middle party which touched on either side, right and left, but still held on to its own great middle course—and he believed it rested with those who belonged to the great middle party of the Church to save the Church, to restore the Church, and by restoring it to preserve it."

The Pope's Letter.

Leo the XIII. has addressed a long letter to the English people. Or, rather to that part of them "who seek the Kingdom of Christ in the Unity of Faith." The letter is remarkable as being the first peace-loving appeal to the English people by the Papal See for more than three hundred years. In very different tones have the predecessors of Leo XIII. spoken to the Christians of this land. It is remarkable too, for the gentle and devout spirit which breathes through it all. It is permeated by an earnest pleading desire for the restoration of the Church's broken unity. And no one who is conscious of the terrible evils of our present divisions and distractions can fail to rejoice that the craving for unity which is so deeply stirring the hearts of all thoughtful men in this age, has made itself felt even in the Vatican, and has moved the Head of the Latin Church to take the action that he no doubt deems best for the attainment of this object of ever widening and deepening desire. But in spite of all this, the letter is puerile in its conception and expression. It displays a strange ignorance of the actual facts of English History, and one would almost think a disregard of the feelings and attitude of the English people towards the Papal See at the present time. It is moreover a studied insult to the English Church. The letter is not addressed to the Church of England or her Bishops and Clergy, but to the English people and

the question at once suggests itself, what right has the Bishop of Rome to address British Christians except through their lawful Bishops and Pastors?

Leo XIII., enlightened and devout man as he is reputed to be, has the traditional Roman notion about what the Catholic Church is. England has not only "been wrenched from communion with the Apostolic See, but has been bereft of that holy faith in which for long centuries it had rejoiced and found liberty." The idea of unity which pervades his holiness' letter is not that of reconciliation, and restored inter-communion between the different parts of the divided Church, but simple submission to the Roman See, which is by itself, in his apprehension, the Catholic Church. So that there can be no reconciliation or restoration of unity except by an acceptance of the entire Papal claims, Papal usages and Papal doctrines. No reconsideration of any of these is hinted at. No reform is needed. We can only return to unity by accepting them all. In reply to this invitation we would wholly endorse and re-echo as our own the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury spoken with reference to the recent proposals of Lord Halifax. "I have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion any corporate union with Rome so long as she retains her distinctive and erroneous doctrines, and advances her present unprimitive and unscriptural claims is absolutely visionary and impossible." Nay, we would add—not to be desired or even thought of. The strange blindness of Pope Leo in flinging some of the worst of these ever-separating Roman corruptions in the teeth of those with whom he is pleading, is proof enough of the puerility and ignorance of which we have spoken. He calls the English people to address their prayers for unity not to God or to the Adorable Trinity or the Blessed Son but to St. Peter and St. George and above all to Mary the Holy Mother of God." And he adds we are pleased of our own will and authority to grant to all those who piously recite the prayer appended to this letter, an *indulgence* of three hundred days. Moreover a plenary indulgence once a month on the observance of the usual conditions to those who have recited it daily. And here is the prayer.

To the Blessed Virgin. Prayer for England.

O Blessed Virgin, Mary, Mother of God and our most gentle Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England thy "Dowry," and upon us all who greatly hope and trust in thee. By thee it was that Jesus our Saviour and our hope was given unto the world; and He has given thee to us that we might hope still more. Plead for us thy children, whom thou didst receive and accept at the foot of the Cross. O sorrowful Mother! intercede for our separated brethren, that with us in the one true fold they may be united to the Supreme Shepherd, the Vicar of thy Son. Pray for us all, dear Mother, that by faith fruitful in good works we may all deserve to see and praise God, together with thee, in our Heavenly home. Amen.

Is it not sad? Is it not amazing that such a prayer should be commended to the use of Christian people at the end of the nineteenth century? If this is not idolatry—worshipping creature instead of the Creator—then we are at a loss to know the meaning of that term. The Blessed Mother is asked to bring it to pass, that separated England may be united to the "Supreme Shepherd, the Vicar of thy Son." The supremacy of the Pope, and of course his infallibility, indulgences, the worship of the Virgin, prayer to the Saints. These are just some of the things, which the benign Leo assumes that we will accept as a matter of course.

His holiness bases his appeal to the English people to return to this kind of unity, on the ground of the gratitude which the people of England owe to the Papal See, for the love and care of the Roman Pontiffs for England from the days of "Our holy predecessor Gregory the Great, to whom the English nation owes a deep debt of gratitude for converting the Anglo-Saxons under the leadership of St. Augustine." For his Holiness says: "That Christianity which the Church (he means the Roman) had conveyed to Britain and spread and defended there against rising heresy, after having been blotted out by the invasion of heathen races, was now by the care of Gregory happily restored." It is not easy to imagine a scholarly man crowding so many statements, which historical investigation has completely exploded, into so short a space;