



### APOSTOLIC LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIII. UPON THE REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM. TO THE PRINCES AND PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

HEALTH AND PEACE IN THE LORD. The splendid testimonies of public congratulation which reached Us in the course of last year from all parts of the world on the occasion of Our Episcopal Jubilee, which lately reached their height in the marked devotion of the Spanish nation, have chiefly consoled Us by the thought that in this unanimity of sentiment shone forth the unity of the Church and their wonderful union with the Supreme Pontiff.

not supplicate Almighty God that He would mercifully deign to multiply priests worthy of the apostolate, in order that, to extend the reign of Christ, they may not hesitate to sacrifice their health, and, if needs be, their life also. And Thou, O Saviour and Father of the human race, our Lord Jesus, hasten and do not delay the fulfillment of Thy promise that when Thou wert lifted up all men shall be drawn to Thee. Come now therefore and reveal Thyself to the multitudes who are now altogether deprived of the most precious benefits which Thou hast gained for mortals with Thy precious blood; appeal to those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, that, enlightened by the splendour of Thy wisdom and power, in Thee, and by Thee, they may be united in one.

UNITY OF FAITH NECESSARY. Dwelling in Our thoughts upon the need of unity, We thought of all those nations whom the Divine Spirit drew a long time since from their former errors to the wisdom of the Gospel. In truth, nothing gives more joy than to remember, with abundant thanks to the providence of God, than these ancient ages when the Christian faith was universally regarded as the common and undivided patrimony: when nations diverse in locality, in genius, and in customs, although often disagreeing with each other, and even in conflict, nevertheless in matters of religion were unanimous in the faith of Christ. Remembering these facts, it is too painful to think that in succeeding ages distrust and enmity, the result of ill-omened events, have snatched from the bosom of the Roman Church great and flourishing peoples. Notwithstanding this, confiding in the grace and mercy of Almighty God, who alone knows the hour of assistance, and in whose hand it remains to give to these same peoples, We address Ourselves, and with paternal love We exhort and beseech them that, putting aside all dissensions, they may turn to unity.

What justification shall we plead before God for being separated from our brethren, although to unite them into one fold He Himself came down from heaven, was born and crucified? What defence will be ours before posterity? Let us not suffer such shame, venerable fathers: far from us be such an advice; let us not deal so badly for ourselves and our children."

TO ALL CATHOLICS. To complete the harmony of this much desired unity, it only remains now to give instructions to all those throughout the world to whose salvation We have long devoted Our solicitude and care—that is to say, to Catholics, who by the Roman faith which they profess are at the same time subjects of the Apostolic See and members of Jesus Christ. Certainly We do not need to exhort them to a true and holy unity, as they are already, by the goodness of God, participants of it; but We wish to warn them to strengthen themselves against all dangers, and not to risk the loss by negligence or indifference of that greatest gift of God—their faith. In this connection it is fitting that We should point out the true mode of thinking and carrying out the instructions which We Ourselves have given you many times, either to all the Catholic nations together, or separately to some of them: and, above all, We wish to lay down this law—obedience in all cases to rulers and to the authority of the Church, not grudgingly, but with good will. Let them consider how hurtful to Christian unity is this error which under different forms of opinion has darkened in many, if not effaced, the essential character and the true idea of God's Church. In fact, by the will of God, We should be free in all her spheres of action. But this liberty is not of a kind which should give rise to rivalry for the Church is not ambitious, and does not desire any private end; but this she wishes, this is her only object, to teach mankind the duties of virtue, and to thus provide for their eternal salvation. And it has always been her custom to act indifferently as a mother, while, on the other hand, she would sometimes, to meet the requirements of the occasion, forego some of her rights, as is clearly shown by the various Concordats. Nothing is more odious than the thought of invading in any way the rights of the State; but it is only just that the State on its side should respect the rights of the Church, and be careful not to interfere with the least portion of them. But to anyone who considers the actual state of events, it is continually to suspicion of the Church, contempt, and hatred, and spitefully calumniate her: and what is more serious, men study every method and try every means to subject her to the power of the Governments. Hence they have robbed her of her own property and restrained her liberty: they have placed difficulties in the way of the education of the clergy; they have passed laws of exceptional severity against them; they have dissolved and prohibited religious confraternities, who were soldiers of the Church; in a word, they have renewed with the greatest asperity the worst persecutions of the past. This is a violation of the sacred rights of the Church, and has CAUSED IMMENSE INJURIES TO CIVIL SOCIETY.

impressed with this truth, that "Justice exalteth a nation" (Proverbs xiv. 34). By no other means than these can the public safety be guarded more effectively. All can see that every day the safety and tranquility of the public becomes more menaced. The frequent occurrence of atrocities bears witness to the fact that the secret societies are conspiring for the ruin and destruction of all. Social and political questions are being discussed with great vehemence; these are both grave questions without doubt, and attempts are being made to solve them by studies of the principles of justice and moderation. Praiseworthy as these are, they will not succeed unless guided by the eternal principles of the Christian faith. It is not long since We treated of the social question, bringing to bear on it the principles of the Gospel and natural reason. As regards the political question which is agitated with the view of reconciling liberty with authority, with the result that many confound the two ideas, and become more separated in fact, revealed truth is the most opportune assistance which is available. Since it is accepted that whatever be the form of Government, authority comes from God, therefore reason finds it right that one should command and that others should consent to obey, and this without any loss of personal dignity, because one more readily obeys God than man. God has decreed that He will mete out severe justice to those who have power given them to command, where they do not represent Him with rectitude and justice. The liberty of some individuals cannot be questioned by others, because without injuring any one this action will not depart from righteousness, from truth, or from all that constitutes public tranquillity. Lastly, if we reflect that the Church is the mother and conciliatrix between the people and Princes, established to help each with her authority and advice, it will be evident how much it helps to public safety when the whole nation are united in their belief of the same principles and profess the same Christian faith. Thinking upon these matters very earnestly, We saw from afar off the new order of events which should reign universally, and We experienced the sweetest joy in thinking of the good which would result. It can scarcely be imagined what a happy advance in greatness and prosperity would inevitably and at once ensue if affairs were restored to tranquillity and peace, if real discipline were promoted, and, further, if there were constituted in a Christian manner, according to Our letters, societies of agriculture, labor, and industrial undertakings, by which usurious interest would be checked and the field widened for useful labor. The full amount of these benefits would not be confined to the people, but, like an overflowing river, would be distributed widely. It is therefore not to be denied that the principle which We enunciated at first is true, that innumerable people have for many ages looked for the light of faith and civil culture to be brought to them. It is certain that, as regards the eternal salvation of the nations, the counsels of divine wisdom are far removed from human intelligence. Nevertheless, in various regions of the earth there still exists deplorable superstitions, and in no small part of it dissensions have arisen in respect of religious questions. In truth, as it is given to human reason to discuss events, the mission given by God to Europe seems to be this, that she shall spread throughout the whole world the principles of Christianity. The commencement and progress of this magnificent enterprise, laboriously carried out in past ages, had resulted in the most happy increase, when in the sixteenth century unforeseen discord arose. Christianity was torn with disputes and dissensions, Europe was shaken by revolutions and wars, and the holy missions suffered from the shock. Now, as the cause of this disorder still continues, what wonder is it that so large a number of the human race should still remain slaves to barbarous customs and insane rites? Let us strive, then, zealously to restore for the people the ancient concord. For this purpose, in order to extend the benefits of the Christian religion, the time is most opportune, since the sentiment of human brotherhood never before penetrated so deeply the souls of men, and in no previous age were they known to seek out these fellow beings to know their requirements and to benefit them. We now traverse with incredible speed vast regions by land and sea, where many facilities are afforded in commerce and scientific discoveries, and so for the spread of the Gospel. We do not ignore how long and arduous labors are required to reconstruct the unsettled state of society: no doubt some persons will judge Our hopes to be in vain, because this is a matter more to be desired than expected. But We repose all Our hopes and trust in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, only remembering too well the great events which resulted from the "folly" of the cross and its preaching, to the utter confusion of "worldly wisdom." We entreat in particular Princes and Governments, appealing to their prudence,

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