

Let us well understand, as the Holy Father assures us, that the salvation not only of individuals, but also of all Christian society, depends upon this so ardently desired return of our separated brethren. The entire world in fact cannot enjoy true peace, if it does not become one fold under one shepherd. It is by entering into these beautiful sentiments, that we shall plainly prove to our separated brethren, that Catholics are very far from wishing to damn protestants, as the latter are sometimes fond of repeating to throw odium on the former. It is true, that Catholics believe, and assert in conformity with their belief, that as there is but one God, there can only be one religion which is pleasing to him, and in which man can be saved; they say of those who, knowing the true religion neglect to embrace it, what they say of bad catholics, who, living in the true faith, do not live up to it, and die in their sins.

It is also true that we do not say and cannot say that every religion is good, since this would be admitting that error and truth, justice and iniquity are one and the same thing, which is revolting to faith and even to reason itself. But we nothing the less desire the salvation of our separated brethren, and we share the admirable sentiments which St. Augustin felt in himself and expressed in the following terms so full of force and unction.

"Let those treat you with rigor, he said to the Donatists, who know not how difficult it is to find the truth and to avoid error: let those treat you with rigor, who are ignorant how painful it is to rise above the vain phantoms with which one has once been impressed; let those treat you with rigor, who know not the extreme difficulties one meets with to purify the eye of the interior man, in order to render it capable of seeing the truth which is the sun of the soul. But for our part, we are very far from following this conduct towards persons estranged from us, not by errors which they have invented themselves, but because they were entangled in the wandering of others. On the contrary, we offer our prayers to God, that whilst refuting the false opinions of those whom you follow with a steadfastness which we tax rather with imprudence than malice, he will grant us the grace to bring no other than the spirit of peace, which is touched with no other impressions than those of charity, with no other interests