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ENCYCLICAL LETTER

OF

OUR HOLY FATHER, THE POPE.

To our Venerable Brethren, all the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops having the grace and communion of the Apostolic See, Pius IX., Pope.

Venerable Brethren, Health and Apostolic Benediction.

You know, Venerable Brethren, with what care and what pastoral vigilance the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, fulfilling the charge entrusted to them by our Lord Jesus Christ himself in the person of the blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, have unfailingly observed their duty in providing food for the sheep and the lambs, in assiduously nourishing the flock of the Lord with the words of faith, in imbuing them with salutary doctrine, and in turning them away from poisoned pastures; all this is known to you, and you have appreciated it. And certainly our predecessors, in affirming and in vindicating the august Catholic Faith, truth, and justice, were never animated in their care for the salvation of souls by a more earnest desire than that of extinguishing and condemning by their Letters and Constitutions all the heresies and errors which, as enemies of our Divine Faith, of the doctrines of the Catholic Church, of the purity of morals, and of the eternal salvation of man, have frequently excited serious storms and precipitated civil and Christian society into the most deplorable misfortunes. For this reason our predecessors have opposed themselves with Apostolic fortitude to the criminal enterprises of those wicked men, who, spreading their disturbing opinions like the waves of a raging sea, and promising liberty when they are slaves to corruption, endeavor by their pernicious writings to overturn the foundations of the Catholic religion, and of civil society; to destroy all virtue and justice, to deprave all minds, and especially those of inexperienced youth, from the healthy discipline of morals, to corrupt it miserably, to draw it into the meshes of error, and finally to tear it from the bosom of the Catholic Church.

But as you are aware, Venerable Brethren, We had scarcely been raised to the Chair of St. Peter, far above all our merits, by the mysterious designs of Divine Providence, than seeing with the most profound grief of our soul the horrible storm excited by evil doctrines, and the very grave and deplorable injury caused especially by so many errors to Christian people, in accordance with the duty of our Apostolic ministry, and following in the glorious footsteps of our predecessors, we raised our voice, and by the publication of several Encyclical Letters and Allocutions held in Consistory, and other Apostolic Letters, we have condemned the principal errors of our sad age, reanimated your utmost Episcopal vigilance, warned and exhorted upon various occasions all our dear children in the Catholic Church to repel and absolutely avoid the contagion of so horrible a plague. More especially in our first Encyclical of the 9th November, 1846, addressed to you, and in our two Allocutions of the 9th December, 1854, and the 9th June, 1862, to the Consistories which we held, we condemned the monstrous opinions which particularly predominate in the present day to the great prejudice of souls, and to the detriment of civil society, doctrines which not only attack the Catholic Church, her salutary teaching and her venerable rights, but also the natural unalterable law inscribed by God upon the heart of man and sound reason itself, and from which doctrines almost all other errors derive their origin.

But, although We have not hitherto omitted to proscribe and reprove the principal errors of this kind, yet the cause of the Catholic Church, the safety of the souls which have been confided to us, and the well-being of human society itself absolutely demand that we should again exercise our pastoral solicitude to destroy new opinions which spring out of these same errors as from so many sources. These false and perverse opinions are the more detestable as they especially tend to shackle and turn aside the salutary force that the Catholic Church, by the example of her Divine Author and His order, ought freely to exercise until the end of time, not only with regard to each individual man, but with regard to nations, peoples, and their chief rulers, and to destroy that agreement and concord between the Priesthood and the Government which have always existed for the happiness and security of religious and civil society. For, as you are well aware, Venerable Brethren, there are a great number of men in the present day, who, applying to civil society, the impious and absurd principle of *naturalism*, as it is called, dare to teach that the perfect right of public society and civil progress absolutely require a condition of human society, constituted and governed without regard to any consideration of religion, as if it had no existence, or at least without making any

distinction between the true and false religion. And, contrary to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, of the Church, and of the Fathers, they do not hesitate to affirm 'that the best condition of society is that in which the government is not compelled to inflict the penalties of law upon violators of the Catholic religion, unless so far as the public peace may demand.' Actuated by an idea of social government so absolutely false, they do not hesitate further to propagate their erroneous opinion, very hurtful to the safety of the Catholic Church and of souls, and termed *delirium* by our predecessor Gregory XVI., of excellent memory, viz., 'liberty of conscience and of worship is the right of every man, a right which ought to be proclaimed and established by law in every well constituted State, and that citizens are entitled to make known and declare, with a liberty which neither the ecclesiastical nor the civil authority can limit, their convictions of whatever kind, either by word of mouth or through the press or by other means.' But, in making these rash assertions, they do not reflect, they do not consider, that they preach the liberty of perdition, and that, 'if it is always free to human conviction to discuss, men will never be wanting who struggle against the truth, and to rely upon the loquacity of human wisdom, when we know by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ how faith and Christian sagacity ought to avoid this very culpable vanity.

Since, also, religion has been banished from civil government—since the doctrines and authority of Divine revelation have been repudiated, the idea intimately connected therewith of justice and human rights is obscured by darkness and lost sight of, and in place of true justice and legitimate right brute force is substituted which has permitted some, entirely oblivious of the plainest principles of sound reason, to dare to proclaim 'that the will of the people, manifested by what is called public opinion or by other means, constitutes a supreme law superior to all Divine and human right, and that accomplished facts in political affairs, by the mere fact of their having been accomplished, have the force of law.' But who does not perfectly see and understand that human society, released from the ties of religion and true justice, can have no further object than to amass riches, and can follow no other law in its actions than the indomitable cupidity of a mind given up to its own pleasures and advantages.

For this reason also these same men persecute with so relentless a hatred the Religious Orders who have deserved so well of religion, civil society, and letters; they loudly declare that the Orders have no right to exist, and in so doing make common cause with the falsehoods of the heretics. For, as taught by our predecessor of illustrious memory, Pius VI., 'the abolition of religious houses injures the state of public profession, of the Evangelical counsels, injures a mode of life recommended by the Church and in conformity with the Apostolic doctrine, does wrong to the celebrated founders whom we revere before the altar, and who constituted these societies under the inspiration of God.'

In their impiety these same persons pretend that members of the Church should be deprived of the opportunity of 'openly receiving alms from Christian charity,' and that the law forbidding 'servile labor on account of Divine worship upon certain fixed days' should be abrogated upon the fallacious pretext that this opportunity and this law are contrary to the principles of political economy. Not content with eradicating religion from public society, they desire further to banish it from families and private life. Teaching and professing these most fatal errors of *Socialism* and *Communism*, they declare that 'domestic society, or the entire family, derives its right of existence solely from civil law, whence it is to be concluded that, from civil law descends all the rights of parents over their children, and, above all, the right of instructing and educating them.' By such impious opinions and machinations do these false spirits endeavor to eliminate the salutary teaching and influence of the Catholic Church from the instruction and education of youth, and to infect and miserably deprave, by their pernicious errors and their vices, the tender and pliant minds of youth. All those who endeavor to trouble sacred and public things, to destroy the good order of society, and to annihilate all Divine and human rights, have always concentrated their criminal schemes, attention, and efforts upon the manner in which they might above all deprave and elude unthinking youth, as we have already shown. It is upon the corruption of youth that they place all their hopes. Thus they never cease to attack the Clergy, from whom have descended to us, in so authentic a manner, the most certain records of history, and by whom such considerable benefit has been bestowed in abundance upon Christian and civil society, and upon letters. They assail them in every shape—going so far as to say of the Clergy in general, that, 'being the enemies of the useful sciences, of progress, and of civiliza-

tion, they ought to be deprived of the charge of instructing and educating youth.'

Others, taking up wicked errors many times condemned, presume with notorious impudence, to submit the authority of the Church and of this Apostolic See, conferred upon it by God Himself, to the judgment of civil authority, and to deny all the rights of this same Church and this See with regard to exterior order. They do not blush to affirm 'that the laws of the Church do not bind the conscience if they are not promulgated by the civil power; that the acts and decrees of the Roman Pontiffs concerning religion and the Church require the sanction and approbation, or at least the assent of the civil power, and that the Apostolic Constitutions condemning secret societies, whether these exact or do not exact an oath of secrecy, and branding with anathema their secretaries and supporters, have no force in those regions of the world where these associations are tolerated by the civil Government; that the excommunications launched by the Council of Trent and the Roman Pontiffs against those who invade the possessions of the Church and usurp its rights, seek, in confounding the spiritual and temporal orders, to attain solely an earthly object; that the Church can decide nothing which may bind the consciences of the faithful in a temporal order of things; that the law of the Church does not demand that violations of sacred laws should be punished by temporal penalties; and that it is in accordance with sacred theology, and the principles of public law, to claim for the civil government the property possessed by the Church, the Religious Orders, and other pious establishments.'—And they have no shame in avowing openly and publicly the thesis and principle of heretics, from whom emanated so many errors and perverse opinions. They say 'That the ecclesiastical power is not of right divine, distinct, and independent from the civil power, and that no distinction, no independence of this kind can be maintained without the Church invading and usurping the essential rights of the civil power.' Neither can we pass over in silence the audacity of those who, insulting sound doctrines, assert that 'the judgments and decrees of the Holy See, whose object is declared to concern the general welfare of the Church, its rights and its discipline, do not claim acquiescence and obedience under pain of sin and loss of the Catholic profession, if they do not treat of the dogmas of faith and morals. How contrary is this doctrine to the Catholic dogma of the full power, divinely given to the Sovereign Pontiff by our Lord Jesus Christ, to guide, to supervise, and govern the Universal Church, no one can fail to see and understand clearly and evidently. Amid so great a perversity of depraved opinions, We, remembering Our Apostolic office, and solicitous before all things for our most holy religion, for sound doctrine, for the salvation of the souls confided to Us, and for the welfare of human society itself, have considered the moment opportune to raise anew Our Apostolic voice; and therefore, do We, by Our Apostolic authority, condemn and prescribe generally and particularly all the evil opinions and doctrines specially mentioned in this letter, and We will and command that they be held as reprobated, proscribed and condemned by all the children of the Catholic Church.

But you know further, Venerable Brethren, that in our time insulters of every truth and of all justice and violent enemies of our religion have spread abroad other impious doctrines by means of pestiferous books, pamphlets, and journals which, distributed over the surface of the earth, deceive the people and wickedly lie. You are not ignorant that in our days men are found who, animated and excited by the spirit of Satan, have at the excess of impiety as not to fear to deny our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and to attack His divinity with scandalous persistence. We cannot abstain from awarding you well-merited eulogies, Venerable Brethren, for all the care and zeal with which you have raised your episcopal voice against so great an impiety.

In our present letter therefore we speak to you most lovingly, to you who, called to partake Our cares, are Our greatest support in the midst of Our very great grief, our joy and our consolation, by reason of the excellent piety of which you give proof in maintaining religion, and the marvellous love, faith, and discipline with which, united by the strongest and most affectionate ties to Us, and this Apostolic See, you strive to valiantly and accurately fulfil your grave episcopal ministry. We ought then to expect from your excellent pastoral zeal that, taking the sword of the spirit, that is to say the Word of God, and strengthened by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ you will watch with redoubled care that the Faithful committed to your charge abstain from evil pasturage which Jesus Christ does not cultivate, because it was not sown by His Father. Never cease then to inculcate in the faithful that all true felicity proceeds to men

from our august religion, its doctrine and practice, and that that people is happy who have the Lord God with them: teach 'that kingdoms rest upon the foundation of the Catholic faith, and that nothing is so mortal, so prompt to engender every evil, so exposed to danger for those who think it can alone suffice, as the free will which we received at birth, if we ask nothing further from the Lord; that is to say, if forgetting our author we abuse His power to show that we are free; and do not omit to teach 'that the royal power has been established not solely to exercise the government of the world, but above all for the protection of the Church, and that there is nothing more profitable and more glorious for the sovereigns of States and kings than to leave the Catholic Church to exercise its laws, and not to permit any to attack its liberty, as our most wise and courageous predecessor, St. Felix, wrote to the Emperor Xenon, 'for it is certain that it is advantageous when the cause of God is in question, that they should study to submit and not to impose their royal will on the priests of Jesus Christ.'

It is always, but especially at present, your duty, Venerable Brethren, in the midst of the numerous calamities of the Church and of civil society, in view of the terrible conspiracy of our adversaries against the Catholic Church and Our Apostolic See, and the great accumulation of errors—it is our duty, We say before all, to go with faith to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find fitting succor. We have therefore judged the moment to have come to excite the piety of all the faithful in order that, with us and with you all, they may pray without ceasing to the Father, supplicating and beseeching Him fervently and humbly for instruction and mercy in order also that in the plenitude of their faith they may seek refuge in Our Lord Jesus Christ who has redeemed us with His divine blood, that by their multiplied efforts they may obtain from that burning heart, victim of its charity for us, the gift of drawing all by the bonds of His love, of inspiring all men inflamed by His holy love, with the desire of living according to His heart, pleasing God in all things and fruitful in all good works. But as there is no doubt that the prayers most agreeable to God are those of all faithful men who approach Him with a heart pure from all stain. We have thought it good to open to all faithful Christians, with Apostolic liberality, the heavenly treasures of the Church confided to our dispensation, so that the faithful, more strongly drawn towards true piety and purified from the stain of their sins by the Sacrament of Penance, may more confidently offer up their prayers to God, and obtain His mercy and grace.

By these letters emanating from Our Apostolic authority, We grant to all and each of the faithful of both sexes throughout the universe a Plenary Indulgence during one month up to the year 1865, and not longer, to be carried into effect by you, Venerable Brethren, and the other legitimate Ordinaries, in the form and manner laid down at the commencement of our Sovereign Pontificate, by Our Apostolic Letters issued as a brief upon the 20th November, 1846 and sent to your whole episcopal Order, commencing with the words, 'Araoano Divinae Providentiae consilio,' and with the faculties given by Us in those same letters. We desire, however, that all the prescriptions of our letters shall be observed saving the exceptions we have declared admissible. We have come to this determination notwithstanding all which might be ordered to the contrary by special and individual mention and which might be worthy of departure from that decision; but, in order that every hesitation and difficulty should be removed, We have ordered that a copy of our letter should be again forwarded to you.

Let us implore, Venerable Brethren, from the bottom of our hearts and with all our souls, for the mercy of God. He has encouraged us to do by saying, 'I will not withdraw my mercy from them.' Let us ask and we shall receive, and if there is slowness or delay in its reception, because we have gravely offended, let us knock, because He opens to those who knock; for prayers, groans, and tears, by means of which we must persist and remain joined in unanimous prayer, and let each entreat God not for himself alone, but for all his brethren, as the Lord has taught us to pray. But in order that God may accede more easily to our prayers and yours and to those of all His faithful servants, let us employ, in all confidence, as our mediatrix with Him, the Virgin Mary, who has destroyed all heresies throughout the world, and who, the well beloved mother of us all, 'is very gracious . . . and full of mercy . . . allows herself to be touched by all, shows herself very clement towards all, and takes under her pitying care all miseries with unlimited affection,' and who, 'standing as queen upon the right hand of her Son our Lord Jesus Christ in a golden vestment, knows nothing which she cannot obtain from the Sovereign Master.' Let us implore

also the intervention of the blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and of his Co-Apostolic Paul, and of all those saints of Heaven who, having already become the friends of God, have been admitted into the celestial kingdom, where they are crowned and bear palms, and who, henceforth certain of immortality, are solicitous for our salvation.'

Lastly, beseeching of God from the bottom of our heart the abundance of all His celestial gifts for you, We ourselves bestow upon you, Venerable Brethren, and upon all Clerks and faithful of the laity committed to your care, Our Apostolic Benediction from the most loving depths of Our heart, in token of Our charity towards you.

Given at St. Peter's, in Rome, this 8th day of December, 1864, being the 10th anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary the mother of God, and in the 19th of our Pontificate.

Pius PP. IX.

CATALOGUE

OF THE PRINCIPAL ERRORS OF OUR TIME, INDICATED IN THE CONSISTORIAL ALLOCUTIONS, IN THE ENCYCLICAL AND OTHER APOSTOLICAL LETTERS OF POPE PIUS IX.

I.—*Panthéism, Naturalism, and Absolute Rationalism.*

1. There does not exist any divine power, supreme being, and distinct providence in the universality of things, and God is but the nature of things, and therefore immovable. God is in man, and in the world, and all things are God, and have the substance of God. God is then one and the same thing with the world, and hence, spirit is confounded with matter, necessity with liberty, the true with the false, the good with evil, the just with the unjust.
2. All actions of God on men and on the world ought to be denied.
3. Human reason, without any consideration of God, is the sole arbiter of the false and the true, of good and evil; it is a law to itself, and is sufficient to itself, by its own natural strength, to take care of the good of men and peoples.
4. All the truths of religion are derived from the native strength of human reason; hence reason is the principal rule by which man can and ought to arrive at the knowledge of all truth of every kind.
5. The divine revelation is imperfect and therefore subject to continual and indefinite progress, corresponding to that of the human reason.
6. The Christian faith is in opposition to human reason, and the divine revelation not only does not do any good, but injures the perfection of mankind.
7. The prophecies and the miracles uttered and recounted in the sacred books are only fables of poets, and mysteries of the Christian faith are the result of philosophical investigations. The books of the two testaments contain fabulous fictions, and Jesus Christ Himself is a myth.

II.—*Moderate Rationalism.*

8. Since human reason is the equal of religion, theological matter ought to be treated in the same manner as philosophical questions.
9. All the dogmas of the Christian religion, indifferently are the objects of natural science or philosophy, and human reason, instructed by history alone, can by its natural strength and its principles arrive at the knowledge of the most abstract dogmas, from the moment those dogmas have been proposed as objective to the human reason.
10. As the philosopher is one thing, and philosophy is another, the former has a right to submit himself to authority when he shall have recognised its truth, but philosophy neither can nor ought to submit to authority.
11. Not only should the Church not occupy herself with philosophy, but she ought to tolerate its errors, and leave to itself the care of correcting them.
12. The decrees of the Apostolic See and the Roman Congregations impede the free progress of science.
13. The methods and the principles by means of which the ancient and scholastic doctors cultivated theology are no longer in accord with the necessities of our times and the progress of science.
14. Philosophy ought to be studied without taking any account of a supernatural relation.

N.B.—The errors of Antoine Gauthier, which have been condemned in the letter to the Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne, are principally from the Rationalistic system.

III.—*Indifferentism, Latitudinarianism.*

15. Every man is free to embrace and to profess that religion which he shall believe to be true, guided by the light of reason.

16. Men may find the way of eternal salvation and obtain eternal salvation, in every form of religion.