

These simple truths are, indeed, known to every Christian, but still by many they are neither remembered nor valued as they should be. It is for this reason that we insist the more strenuously on the confidence which should be placed in prayer, and recall the words and example of the fatherly love of the same Christ our Lord. Words of deepest import and highest encouragement; words, also, which show forth now, in the counsels of God, prayer is at the same time the expression of our helplessness and the sure hope of obtaining the strength we need. "Amen, I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you; for everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And the Son of God Himself shows us that if our prayers are to be acceptable to the Divine Majesty they must be united with His name and merits. "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name. Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full." And He enforces this by reference to the tender love of parents for their children. "If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Good Spirit to them that ask Him."

And how abundant are not the choice gifts contained in that Good Spirit. The greatest of them all is that hidden power of which Christ spoke when He said: "No man can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me before Him."

It is impossible that men grounded in this teaching should not feel drawn and even impelled to the habit of faithful prayers. With what steady perseverance will they not approach it, with what fervor pursue it, having before them the very example of Christ Himself, Who, having nothing to fear for Himself, and needing nothing, for He was God, yet passed the whole night in prayer and with a strong cry and tears offered up prayers and supplications, and doing this "He wished to stand pleading before His Father, as if remembering at that time that He was our teacher," as Venerable Bede, that ornament of your nation, wisely considers. But nothing proves so clearly and forcibly both the precept and example of Our Divine Lord in regard to prayer as His last discourse to the Apostles during these sad moments that preceded His passion, when, raising His eyes to Heaven, He again and again entreated His Holy Father, praying and beseeching Him for the most intimate union of His disciples and followers in the truth, as the most convincing evidence to the world, of the Divine mission on which He was about to send them.

And here no thought is more welcome to Our soul than that happy unity of Faith and wills for which our Redeemer and Divine Master prayed in that earnest supplication—a unity which, if useful at all times for temporal interests, both at home and abroad, is shown by the very divisions and confusions of these days to be more than ever needful. We, on Our part, watching the signs of the times, exhorting and taking thought for the future, urged thereto by the example of Christ and the duty of Our Apostolic Office, have not ceased to pray, and still humbly pray, for the return of Christian nations, now divided from us, to the unity of former days. We have more than once of late years given expression to this object of Our desires, and have devoted sedulous care to its realization. The time cannot be far distant when We must appear to render an account of Our Stewardship to the Prince of Pastors, and how happy, how blessed should

We be if We could bring to Him some fruit—some realization of these Our wishes which He has inspired and sustained. In these days Our thoughts turn with love and hope to the English people, observing as We do the frequent and manifest works of Divine Grace in their midst, how to some, it is plain, the confusion of religious dissensions which divide them is a cause of deep concern; how others see clearly the need of some sure defence against the inroads of modern errors which only too readily humor the wishes of fallen nature and depraved reason; how the number of those religious and discreet men, who sincerely labor much for reunion with the Catholic Church, is increasing. We can hardly say how strongly these and other signs quicken the Charity of Christ in Us, and redoubling Our prayers from Our inmost soul We call down a fuller measure of Divine Grace, which, poured out on minds so well disposed, may issue in that ardently desired fruit, the fruit, namely, that we may all meet into the unity of Faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, one body and one Spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling—one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

With loving heart, then, we turn to you all in England, to whatever community or institution you may belong, desiring to recall you to this holy unity. We beseech you as you value your eternal salvation, to offer up humble and continuous prayer to God, Our Heavenly Father, the Giver of All Light, who with gentle power impels us to the good and the right; and without ceasing to implore light to know the truth in all its fulness, and to embrace the designs of His mercy with single and entire faithfulness, calling upon the glorious name and merits of Jesus Christ, Who is "the author and finisher of our faith." Who loved the Church and delivered Himself for it that He might sanctify it and might present it to Himself a glorious Church. Difficulties there may be for us to face, but they are not of a nature which should delay Our Apostolic zeal or stay your energy. Ah, no doubt the many changes that have come about, and time itself, have caused the existing divisions to take deeper root. But is that a reason to give up all hope of remedy, reconciliation and peace? By no means if God is with us. For we must not judge of such great issues from a human standpoint only, but rather must we look to the power and mercy of God.

In great and arduous enterprises, provided they are undertaken with an earnest and right intent, God stands by man's side, and it is precisely in these difficulties that the action of His Providence shines forth with greatest splendor. The time is not far distant when thirteen centuries will have been completed since the English race welcomed those Apostolic men, sent, as We have said, from this very city of Rome, and casting aside the pagan deities, dedicated the first fruits of its faith to Christ our Lord and God. This encourages Our hope. It is, indeed, an event worthy to be remembered with public thanksgiving; would that this occasion might bring to all reflecting minds the memory of the faith then preached to your ancestors, the same which is now preached, Jesus Christ yesterday, to day, and the same forever, as the Apostle says, who also most opportunely exhorts you, as he does all, to remember those first preachers "who have spoken the Word of God" to you, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

In such a cause, We, first of all, call to Our assistance as Our allies the Catholics of England, whose faith and piety we know by experience.

There can be no doubt that, weighing earnestly the value and effects of holy prayer, the virtue of which we have truly declared, they will strive by every means to succor their fellow-countrymen and brethren by invoking in their behalf the Divine clemency. To pray for oneself is a need, to pray for others is a counsel of brotherly love; and it is plain that it is not prayer dictated by necessity so much as that inspired by fraternal charity, which will find most favor in the sight of God. The first Christians undoubtedly adopted this practice. Especially in all that pertains to the gift of faith, the early ages set us a striking example. Thus, it was the custom to pray to God with ardor that relations, friends, rulers, and fellow citizens might be blessed with a mind obedient to the Christian faith.

And, in regard to this, there is another matter which gives Us anxiety. We have heard that in England there are some who, being Catholics in name, do not show themselves so in practice; and that in your great towns there are vast numbers of people who know not the elements of the Christian faith, who never pray to God, and live in ignorance of His justice and of His mercy. We must pray to God, and pray yet more earnestly in this sad condition of things, since He alone can effect a remedy. May He show the measures proper to be taken; may He sustain the courage and strength of those who labor at this arduous task; may He deign to send laborers into His harvest.

Whilst we so earnestly press upon Our Children the duty of prayer, We desire at the same time to warn them that they should not suffer themselves to be wanting in anything that pertains to the grace and the fruit of prayer, and that they should have ever before their minds the precept of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians—Be without offence to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and to the Church of God. For besides those interior dispositions of soul necessary for rightly offering prayer to God, it is also needful that they should be accompanied by actions and words, befitting the Christian profession—first of all, and chiefly, the exemplary observance of uprightiness and justice, of pitifulness for the poor, of penance, of peace and concord in your own houses, of respect for the law—these are what will give force and efficacy to your prayers. Mercy favors the petitions of those who in all justice study and carry out the precepts of Christ, according to His promise. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will and it shall be done unto you." And therefore do We exhort you that, uniting your prayer with Ours, your great desire may now be that God will grant you to welcome your fellow citizens and brethren in the bond of perfect charity. Moreover it is profitable to implore the help of the Saints of God, the efficacy of whose prayers, specially in such a cause as this, is shown in that pregnant remark of St. Augustine as to St. Stephen. If holy Stephen had not prayed, the Church to day would have had no Paul.

We therefore humbly call on St. Gregory, whom the English have ever rejoiced to greet as the apostle of their race, on Augustine, his disciple and his messenger, and on those other saints of God, through whose wonderful virtues and no less wonderful deeds England has merited the title of "Island of the Saints; on St. Peter and St. George, those special patrons, and above all on Mary, the Holy Mother of God, whom Christ Himself from the Cross left to be the mother of mankind, to whom your kingdom was dedicated by your forefathers under that glorious title 'The Dowry of Mary.' All these We call upon with full confidence to be Our pleaders before the throne of God that, renew-

ing the glory of ancient days, He may "fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost." Care should be taken that the prayers for unity already established amongst you Catholics on certain fixed days should be made more popular and recited with greater devotion. Especially that the pious practice of the Holy Rosary, which We Ourselves have so strongly recommended, should flourish, for it contains as it were a summary of the gospel teaching and has always been a most salutary institution for the people at large. Moreover, We are pleased of Our own will and authority to add still another to the sacred indulgences which have been granted from time to time by Our predecessors. We grant, that is, to all those who piously recite the prayer appended to this letter, to whatever nation they may belong, an indulgence of 300 days; moreover, plenary indulgence once a month on the observance of the usual conditions to those who have recited it daily.

Finally may the Divine prayer of Christ Himself for unity fill up the full measure of Our desires, a prayer which on this day, through the mystery of His Most Holy Resurrection, We repeat with the utmost confidence—*"Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We also are one. . . Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. . . And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that all may be one, as Thou Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us. . . I in them and Thou in Me: that they may be made perfect in one; and the world know that Thou hast sent Me and hast loved them as Thou hast also loved Me."*

Finally, We desire all manner of blessings from God for the whole of the British people, and with all Our heart We pray that those who seek the Kingdom of Christ and salvation in the unity of faith, may enter on the full realization of their desires.

Given at St. Peter's in Rome, on the 14th of April, 1895, in the 16th year of Our Pontificate.

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 one Heavenly home. Amen.

The New York Sun, which often treats Catholic themes in an admirable way, evidently places very little reliance on the statement which the daily press circulated last week, to the effect that some Catholic clergymen were not inclined to enforce the decree lately enacted by Rome against secret societies. "We do not believe it," said the Sun of that assertion. "The priests of the Catholic church, and all the prelates of it, are bound to enforce the decree, bound to inflict the proscribed penalty upon every man calling himself a Catholic, and receiving the sacraments of the church, who disobeys it." Our New York contemporary, furthermore, declared that it doubted if any one priest in the United States would have to be disciplined for not obeying orders in this matter.