THE HERALD

Is Published

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The Herald.

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54 GERMAIN STREET,

ENCYCLICAL LETTER.

OF

OUR MOST HOLY FATHER,

POPE LEO XIII.

To all the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic World, in Favor and in Communion with the Apostolic See.

LEO XIII., POPE.

VENERABLE BRETHREN, HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION:

Raised only a short time to the height of the Apostolic dignity, by an inscrutable decree of God, and without meriting it, we feel ourselves impelled by an ardent desire, and, so to speak, even a necessity to address you by letter, not alone for the purposes of manifesting our feelings of deep affection for you, but also in the fulfilment of the charge which God has intrusted to us, with the object of encouraging you who are called on to share our solicitude, and of confirming you in the struggle with the present age, which, in common with us, you ought to sustain for the Church of God and the salvation of souls.

From the commencement of our Pontificate there was forced on us the sad spectacle of the evils which on all sides overwhelm the human race. We see the general subversion of the supreme truths on which human society is based as on a foundation—the stubbornness of mind which cannot endure any legitimate authority—the perpetual desire of dissension, from which arise intestine quarrels and cruel and sanguinary wars—the rejection of the rules which govern morals and insure the carrying out of justice—the insatiable lust for transitory pleasures and the forgetfulness of things which are eternal, both extended to such a degree of insensate fury that frequently unhappy beings dare to lay violent hands even on themselves. We see again the inconsiderate government of States, the lavish expenditure and malversation of the public funds, the impudence of those who from the moment that they commit the worst treason endeavor to pass for champions of liberty and of all the privileges of humanity, and finally the kind of deadly pestilence which, penetrating into the very marrow of human society, leaves it no repose, and threatens it even with fresh revolutions and the most calamitous results.

But we are convinced that the principal source of these evils is the contempt and rejection of the holy and august authority of the Church which presides in the name of God over the human race, and which is the protector and guardian of all legitimate authority. The foes of public order are perfectly well aware of the fact, and, consequently, they have considered that nothing could aid more in upturning the foundation of society than to wage an incessant war on the Church of God, to render it odious and hateful by scandalous calumnies, such as representing it to be the enemy of true civilization, to weaken its strength and authority by continued attacks, and to destroy the supreme power of the Roman Pontiff, who is here below the protector interpreter of the eternal and immutable principles of right and justice. It is in accordance with this belief that we unhappily find laws subversive of the Divine constitution of the Catholic Church promulgated in the greater number of States. This is the reason of the contempt of the episcopal power and the difficulties thrown in the way of exercise of the ecclesiastical ministry, the dispersion of the religious orders, the confiscation and public sale of the property which served to support the servants of the Church and feed the poor. From this cause arise the measures leading to the removal of public institutions devoted to charity and beneficence from the salutary direction of the Church, as well as the unbridled freedom of teaching and publishing all that is evil, while, on the other hand, the right of the Church to instruct and bring up the youth is violated and oppressed in every possible manner. It is no other cause which has led to the occupation of the temporal principality which Divine Providence accorded centuries ago to the Bishop of Rome, so that he might exercise freely and without hindrance the power conferred on him by Jesus Christ for the eternal salvation of the people.

We have reminded you of this melancholy accumulation of evils, venerable brethren, not for the purpose of increasing the sorrow which such a deplorable state of affairs must in itself arouse in your breasts, but because we believe that at its mere mention you will clearly perceive how serious is the situation which calls for our zeal, and with what assiduous care we must labor with all our strength, especially in those perverse times in which we live, to defend and to vindicate the Church of Jesus Christ and the dignity of the Apostolic See, which is the object of so many calumnies.

It is an evident and well known fact, venerable brethren, that the cause of civilization is wanting in a solid foundation if it does not rest on the eternal principles of truth and on the unchangeable laws of right and justice; if a sincere charity does not pervade the sentiments of men, and render moderate the motives which regulate their reciprocal duties. Now, who will dare deny that it is the Church which, by preaching the Gospel among the nations, has carried the light of truth into the midst of populations who were savage and imbued with shameful superstitions, and which has brought them back to the knowledge of the Divine Maker of things, and to a respect for themselves? Who will say it was not the Church which, in suppressing the calamity of slavery, recalled man to the pristine dignity of his noble nature? Was it not the Church which, by raising the standard of redemption in every part of the world, by drawing toward it and covering with its protection the arts and sciences, by organizing those admirable institutions of charity in which every misery finds its solace, and by its foundation of places of beneficence, has everywhere civilized the human race in its private and public feelings, has lifted it out of its degradation, and, by every effort of care and solicitude, has led it into a way of life conformable to the dignity and hopes of man? And now if a man of common sense compares the age in which we live—an age so inimical to religion and to the Church of Jesus Christ—with those happy times in which the Church was honored as a mother, he will be fully convinced that this present period, full of troubles and of ruin, rushes directly and rapidly to its distruction, and that those former centuries have been the more flourishing in the excellence of their institutions, the tranquillity of life, in richness and prosperity, as the people showed themselves more submissive to the government of the Church and more observant of its laws.

But if the numerous benefits of which we have just reminded you, and which owe their origin to the Ministry of the Church and its salutary influence, are really the results which human civilization ought to produce and glory in, it cannot be said that the Church of Jesus Christ abhors civilization and repulses its advances; for it is to the Church, on the contrary, that entirely belongs the honor of being its nurse, its patroness, its mother. Furthermore, the kind of civilization which, on the contrary, would be repugnant to the holy doctrines and laws of the Church, would be only such in appearance, and should be looked on as a mere name without substance. We have a remarkable proof of this among the populations on which the light of the Gospel has not shone. In their life a species of exterior culture may be perceived, but the real and solid advantages of civilization are not to be found. It cannot be regarded as a perfection of civil life to see an audacious disdain of all legitimate power; neither can we salute by the name of liberty the pursuit of a disgraceful and unhappy course leading to the unchecked propagation of errors, the unhindered satisfying of the worst passions, the impunity with which crimes may be committed, and the oppression of honest citizens of every class. These are false, erroneous and perverse principles—they can assuredly be of no assistance in rendering human nature perfect, or in making it more prosperous, for, *miseros facit populos peccatum*, "sin maketh nations miserable." On the contrary, it is absolutely inevitable that these principles, after having corrupted the spirit and mind, will, by their own natural influence, precipitate the people into all sorts of misfortunes, that they will reverse all legitimate order, and thus, sooner or later, lead to the final destruction of the State and of the public tranquility.

But if, on the other hand, the works of the Roman Pontificate are contemplated, what can be more iniquitous than to deny how well and noble the Pontiffs have deserved of all civil society? Our predecessors, desirous of contributing to the welfare of the people engaged in struggles of every description, supported the severest trials, and never hesitated to expose themselves to the most arduous difficulties. With eyes fixed on Heaven, they never bowed the head before threats of the wicked or debased themselves so far as to consent to be seduced from their duty by promises of flattery. It was the Apostolic See which gathered up the remains of ancient society, which had been destroyed, and reunited them. That See was also the friendly torch which illuminated the civilization of Christian times, the anchor of safety in the midst of the most terrible tempests which ever tossed about the human race, the holy bond of concord which united far distant nations of different customs, and, in fact, the common centre at which were sought advice and promises of peace as well as the doctrines of faith and instruction in religion. And more, it has been the glory of the Roman Pontiffs that they constantly and unceasingly opposed themselves as a wall and a rampart against the return of human society into the degradation of the ancient superstition and barbarism. Would that God had granted that this salutary authority had never been neglected or repudiated! The civil power in that case would assuredly not have lost the august and holy *aut* which is formerly possessed of religion, and which alone renders the state of obedience noble and worthy of man. There would not have been so many of these révolutions and wars which have desolated the earth by rapine and murder, and so many kingdoms at one time flourishing, but now fallen from the height of their prosperity, would not lie crushed under the weight of such grievous miseries. We have an instance of the misfortunes caused by the repudiation of the authority of the Church in the peoples of the East, who, having broken the mild bonds which united them to the Apostolic See, have lost the splendor of their ancient reputation, the glory of science and art, and the dignity of their empire.

These precious advantages which the Apostolic See has expanded all over the world, and which are evidenced by the most illustrious monuments of every age, have been specially felt in this Italian nation, which has received much more abundant benefits from the Holy See on account of its natural situation. It is certainly to the Roman Pontiffs that Italy ought to attribute the tangible glory she has achieved and the greatness which has distinguished her over all other nations. Their authority and paternal care have often preserved her from the attacks of her enemies, and have given her the encouragement and help necessary for the full maintenance of the Catholic faith in the hearts of the Italian people. These merits of our predecessors, not to mention any others, are attested by the history of the times of St. Leo the Great, Alexander III., Innocent III., St. Pius V., Leo X. and many other Pontiffs, by whose care and under whose auspices Italy escaped the total ruin with which she was menaced by the barbarians, preserved intact the ancient faith, and in the midst of a darkness and barbarism of an ignorant age developed the light of science and the splendor of the arts, and kept them in a flourishing condition. They are testified as well by this holy city, the seat of the Pontiffs, which has drawn from them this great advantage of not being the strongest citadel of the faith, but still more of having gained the admiration and the respect of the entire world in becoming the asylum of the fine arts and the home science. As the greatness of these facts have been transmitted to the eternal remembrance of posterity by the monuments of history, it is easy to understand that alone a hostile mind and an outrageous calumny could, with the object of deception, pretend by speech or writing that the Apostolic See has been an obstacle to the civilization of the people and the happiness of Italy.

If, then, all the hopes of Italy and of the entire world are based on a force so favorable to the well-being and usefulness of all under the authority of the Apostolic See, and under the fast bond which unites all the faithful to the Roman Pontiff, we are aware that we ought to have nothing so much at heart as to maintain intact and in its integrity of the Chair of Peter, and to draw more closely together the members and the head—the sons of the father.

Therefore it is that in order to maintain above all, and to the best of our power, the rights and liberty of the Holy See, we shall never cease to use every effort to exact the obedience due to our authority, to remove the obstacles which prevent the free exercise of our ministry and our power, and to obtain the restoration of that position of affairs in which the design of divine wisdom had formerly placed the Roman Pontiffs. And it is neither by a passion for ambition nor a desire for domination, venerable brethren, that we seek this restitution; but solely on account of the duties of our charge and by the terms of the oath which binds us. In addition, we are actuated not only by the consideration that the temporal power is necessary to us, in order to defend and preserve the freedom of the spiritual power, but also because it is clearly shown that in the sovereign temporality of the Holy See is involved the public well-being and the safety of human society. Consequently, in virtue of the duties of our mission, which obliges us to defend the rights of the Holy Church when the temporal power of the Apostolic See is in question, we cannot avoid renewing and confirming in these letters all the protestations and declarations that our predecessor, Pius IX., of holy memory, has on many occasions published and reiterated as much against the occupation of the temporal power as against the violation of the rights of the Catholic Church. But, at the same time, we address ourselves to the Princes and supreme heads of the nations, and ask them urgently, by the august name of the Almighty God, not to reject the aid which the Church offers them at a time when it is so needful for them to receive it. We ask them to draw near in an amiable spirit of concord and peace to the source of authority and safety, and to become united more and more with the Holy See in the bonds of a deep love and respect. May it please God that they shall recognize the truth of what we have said, and be persuaded that the doctrine of Jesus Christ, as St. Augustine says, *magnum, si obtemperetur salutem esse reipublicæ*—"if it be observed is the great safety of the country itself," and that the public peace and safety as their own are contained in the security of the Church and the obedience given to it. May they devote their thoughts and their cares to the relief of the evils with which the Church and its visible head are afflicted, and may it be finally brought about that the people whom lead, having entered on the ways of peace and justice, may enjoy a happy era of prosperity and glory.

But then, in order that the concord of the entire Catholic flock with the Supreme Pastor should be strengthened day by day, we address to you here an especially affectionate appeal, venerable brethren, and warmly exhort you by your sacerdotal zeal and pastoral vigilance to inflame the love of religion in the hearts of the those intrusted to your care, so that they may be attached more closely and intimately to this chair of truth and justice, that they may receive all its doctrines with the deepest submission of spirit and will, and absolutely reject all the opinions, even the most widespread, which may be opposed to the teachings of the Church. Remembering the words of St. Paul—"Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ"—Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, and in particular Pius IX., of holy memory, in the Council of the Vatican have never omitted, when it was necessary, to reprove the current errors, and condemn them with apostolic censure. Following in the footsteps of our predecessors, we confirm and renew all those condemnations from our apostolic See of truth, and at the same time we fervently pray to the Father of Light to grant that all the faithful, fully united in the same feelings and sentiment, may think and speak in accord with us. It is your duty, venerable brethren, to devote your assiduous cares to scatter afar in the field of the Lord the seed of your celestial doctrines, and to cause the principles of the Catholic faith to penetrate early in the souls of the faithful, so that they may push their roots deeper and be preserved in that shelter from the contagion of errors. The greater the efforts of the enemies of religion to present to inexperienced persons, and especially to youth, teachings which may obscure their minds and corrupt their hearts, the more must you labor zealously for the success, not alone for a good and solid method of education, but especially to make the teaching itself conformable in science and discipline to the Catholic faith, especially in philosophy, on which depends in a great manner the jurisdiction of other sciences, and which, far from tending to destroy the Divine relation, is likely rather to smooth the way for it and to defend it against its enemies, as has been taught us in the example and writings of the great Augustine and other doctors of Christian science.

Moreover, it is necessary that this excellent education of youth, in order to insure the veritable faith and religion, and be a real safeguard to morals, should commence with the earliest years and in the very interior of the family. Now, that family, so deplorably disturbed in our time, can be re-established in its dignity by no other means than by the laws according to which the Divine Maker Himself established it in the Church, Jesus Christ, in elevating into the dignity of a sacrament the ceremony of marriage, which he wishes to use as a symbol of His union with the Church, has not only rendered more holy the conjugal union, but has prepared for the parents as well as for the children the most efficacious aids by which they may more readily arrive, in accomplishing their mutual duties, at the possession of temporal and eternal felicity. But when impious laws, having no regard to the respect due to this great sacrament, have placed it in the same category as purely civil contracts, the result is the deplorable consequences that, the dignity of Christian marriages being violated, the citizens have substituted legal concubinage for the legitimate union, the married couple have neglected their mutual duties of fidelity, the children have not observed the respect and obedience which they owed to their parents, the ties of domestic affection have been relaxed, and, what is a most detestable example, the gravest prejudice to public morals, pernicious and regrettable separations have very often succeeded to an insensate love. It is impossible, venerable brethren, that the sight of these lamentable calamities should not awaken our zeal, and should not incite you to recommend seriously and constantly to the faithful confided to your vigilance, to lend a docile ear to the doctrines which treat of the sanctity of Christian marriage, and to obey the laws by which the Church regulates the duties of parents and children.

You will thus bring about the desirable reform in the morals and manner of living of each man in particular, for as an unsound tree produces rotten branches and miserable fruit, the sad blot which depraves families is contagious, and becomes a cause of vice and sin in each individual. On the contrary, if the family is governed by the rules of Christian life, each member of it gradually becomes accustomed to cherish religion and piety, to reject with horror false and pernicious doctrines, to practice virtue, to render obedience to the authorities, and to repress the insatiable egotism which so much lowers and enfeebles human nature. With this object it would certainly be very useful to direct and encourage those associations which have principally been established of late years to the great advantage of Catholic interests. Those matters which are embraced in our hopes and wishes are immense, venerable brethren, and above human strength; but as God has founded His Church for the salvation of the people, promising to aid them even unto the consummation of the world, we are firm in the confidence that the human race, stricken by so many woes and calamities, will end, thanks to your efforts, by seeking safety and prosperity in submission to the Church and in the infallible ministry of this Apostolic chair.

Besides, venerable, brethren, before closing this letter, we feel the necessity of communicating to you our joy at seeing the admirable union and concord which reign among you and unite you so thoroughly to this Apostolic See, and we are really persuaded that this perfect unity is not alone an impregnable bulwark against the assaults of our enemies, but also a happy presage of better times for the Church. It gives us a great encouragement in our weakness and raises our spirits in a wonderful degree, by assisting us to sustain with ardor the difficult mission which we have received, and all the fatigues and labors on behalf of the Church of God.

But we cannot separate from these reasons for joy and hope that we have manifested to you the declarations of love and obedience which in the commencement of our Pontificate you, venerable brethern, have offered to our humble person, as well as so many priests and faithful, proving this by the letters sent to us, by the offerings made, the pilgrimages accomplished, and so many other marks of piety that that devotion and charity which you had never ceased to witness toward my worthy predecessor still remain constant, stable and firm, and have not been weakened by the coming of a successor who so little merits this heritage. At the sight of such splendid testimonies of the Catholic faith, we must humbly confess that the Lord is good and merciful, and to you, venerable brethren, and all the dearly beloved children, from whom we have received them, we express the deep feelings of gratitude which flood our heart full of the confidence that in the distress and difficulties of the present time your zeal and affection, as well as those of the faithful, will never be wanting to us. We have no doubt that these remarkable examples of filial piety and Christian piety will powerfully touch the heart of the all-merciful God, and will cause Him to cast a merciful eye on His flock, and grant peace and victory to the Church. But as we are convinced that peace and victory will be more readily and easily accorded to us if the faithful constantly pour out their prayers to God to ask Him for it, we exhort you ardently, venerable brethren, to excite the zeal and fervor of the faithful by requesting them to seek the mediation at the Throne of God of the Immaculate Queen of Heaven, and as intercessors, St. Joseph, the celestial patron of the Church; the holy princes of the apostles, Peter and Paul, to whose powerful patronage we recommend our humble person; all the orders of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and all the flock of the Lord.

In addition, we desire that those days when we celebrate the solemn memory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ may be blessed and full of holy joy for you and for all the flock of the Lord; and we pray God, who is so good, to blot out the sins which we have committed, and so mercifully remit the punishments we have deserved by the virtue of the blood of the Immaculate Lamb, who has effaced the handwriting of our condemnation.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the charity of God and the participation of the Holy Ghost be with you all, venerable brethren, collectively and individually, and also to our beloved sons, the clergy and the faithful of your churches; and as a pledge of our special affection, and a warrant of the Divine protection, we must lovingly impart the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at St. Peter's, Rome, Easter Sunday, 21st April, 1878.

The first year of our Pontificate.

LEO XIII., Pope.

D. O'CONNOR,

Practical Tailor,

(Late of Boston,)

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