Lux Veritatis
Lettera Enciclica del 25 dicembre 1931

Nel XV Centenario del Concilio di Efeso

To Our Venerable Brethren, Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries enjoying Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.
Venerable Brethren and Beloved Children, Health and Apostolic Benediction.

1. History, the light of truth, and the witness of the ages, if only it be rightly discerned and diligently examined, teaches us that the divine promise of Jesus Christ: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matthew xxviii, 20), has never failed the Church His Bride, and therefore that it will never fail her in time to come. Nay, further, the more turbulent the waves by which the divine bark of Peter is tossed, in the course of ages, the more present and powerful is her experience of the help of heavenly grace. This happened more especially in the first age of the Church, not only when the Christian name was regarded as an execrable crime, to be punished by death, but also when the genuine faith of Christ, confounded by the perfidy of the heretics who were spreading, chiefly in the eastern regions, was placed in grave jeopardy. For even as the persecutors of the Catholic name, one after another, perished miserably, and the Roman Empire itself came to ruin, so all the heretics, as withered branches (cf. John xv, 6) torn from the divine vine, could neither drink the sap of life nor bring forth fruit.

2. The Church of God, on the contrary, in the midst of so many storms and the vicissitudes of things that perish, trusting in God alone, has ever gone on her way, with firm, secure steps, and has never ceased from her strenuous defence of the integrity of the sacred deposit of Gospel truth, entrusted to her by her Founder.

3. These things come to our mind, Venerable Brethren, when we are about to speak to you, in these letters, concerning that most auspicious event, namely, the Ecumenical Synod which was held at Ephesus, fifteen hundred years ago; for there, assuredly, the crafty perversity of those who erred was exposed, and there, too, was manifest the most firm faith of the Church upheld by heavenly aid.

4. We know, indeed, that two Committees of distinguished men have been set up, at Our desire, to secure that this centenary commemoration may be worthily celebrated not only here in the city which is the capital of the Catholic world, but also among all nations. (See the letter to the most eminent Cardinals, B. Pompili and A. Sincero, December 25, 1930. Acta Apostolicae Sedis, Vol. XXIII, pp. 10-12). And we are well aware that those to whom we have committed this special office have spared no care and labour and have used every effort to secure its successful accomplishment. These generous efforts have, almost everywhere, met with a willing and spontaneous response, with remarkable unanimity, from both Pastors and

people; all which is a matter for heartfelt congratulation, because we are confident that it will prove to be a source of no mean benefits to the cause of Catholicism.

5. But when we carefully consider this event and all the facts and circumstances connected therewith, we feel that it becomes the office committed to Us by God, that We Ourselves should speak with you in these Encyclical Letters concerning this most important matter, before the end of the celebration, and just when we have come again to the sacred season when the Blessed Virgin Mary brought forth our Saviour for us. For We cherish a good hope that not only will these words of ours be pleasing and profitable to you and to your flock; but also that if the same are considered and weighed by some of those who differ from the Apostolic See, brethren and sons most dear to us, moved thereto by the desire of the truth, it may well be that, taught by history the guide of life, they will at least be affected by a longing, or nostalgia, for the one fold and the one Shepherd, and for embracing that genuine faith which is ever preserved safe and whole in the Roman Church. For in the plan which the fathers of the council followed in their attack on the Nestorian heresy, and in the whole celebration of the Ephesian Synod, three dogmas of the Catholic religion, with which we are chiefly concerned here, were luminously manifest to the eyes of all; namely, that there is one person in Jesus Christ and this is Divine; that the Blessed Virgin Mary is to be acknowledged and venerated by all as really and truly the Mother of God; and likewise that in matters of faith and morals, the Roman Pontiff has a God-given authority, supreme, high, and subject to none over all and several faithful Christians.

6. Wherefore, let us pursue the subject in order, taking as our beginning the doctrine and the admonition which the Apostle of the Gentiles addressed to the Ephesians: "Until we all meet into the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ: That henceforth we be no more children tossed to and from, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive. But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body being compacted and fitly joined together, by what ever joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the editing of itself in charity." (Ephesians iv, 13-16.)

7. Now, even as the Fathers of the Synod of Ephesus followed these apostolic injunctions by that wonderful union of minds, so we would fain have all, without distinction, and laying aside prejudiced opinions, take these words as addressed to themselves and happily put them into practice.

8. As all know, Nestorius was the author of the whole controversy; not that he had produced a new doctrine by his own ingenuity and study; for he had, rather, borrowed it from Theodore the Mopsuestine Bishop; and having developed it more fully, and clothed it with an appearance of novelty, with a great apparatus of words and sentences—for he was gifted with a flow of eloquence—he began to proclaim it, and used every effort to

spread it abroad. Born at Germanicia, a town in Syria, he went to Antioch as a youth, in order that he be educated there in sacred and profane learning. In this city, which was very famous in that age, he first of all entered the monastic life; and then left it, from mobility of mind; and being made a priest, gave himself wholly to the office of preaching, desiring the applause of men rather than the glory of God. But the fame of his eloquence so affected the people, and spread so far and wide, that he was called to Constantinople, which was then widowed of its Pastor: and, amid great expectations on the part of all, he was raised to the episcopal dignity. Seated in this famous See, far from abandoning his novel doctrine, he persisted in teaching it and propagating it, with greater authority and more arrogance of mind.

9. In order that the case may be rightly understood it may be well to touch briefly on the chief points of the Nestorian heresy. For that arrogant man, thinking that two whole hypostases, namely, that of Jesus which was human and that of the Word which was divine, came together in one "prosopon," as he called it, denied that wondrous and substantial union of the two natures which we call hypostatic; and for this reason he asserted that the Only begotten Word of God was not made man but was in human flesh, by indwelling, by good pleasure and by the power of operation. Wherefore he was to be called "Theophoros," or God-bearer, in much the same way as prophets and other holy men can be called God-bearers by reason of the divine grace imparted to them.

10. From these perverse novelties of Nestorius it was an easy step to recognize two persons in Christ, one divine and the other human; and it followed further by necessity that the Blessed Virgin Mary was not truly the Mother of God or Theotocos; but was, rather, the Mother of the man Christ, or Christotocos, or at most Theodocos; that is to say, the receiver of God (cf. Mansi Conciliorum Amplissima Collectio IV, I.c. 1007; Schwartz, Acta Conciliorum Ecumenicorum, 1, 5, p. 408).

11. These evil dogmas, which were not taught now covertly and obscurely by a private individual, but were openly and plainly proclaimed by the Bishop of the Constantinopolitan See himself, caused a very great disturbance of the minds of men, more especially in the Eastern Church. And among the opponents of the Nestorian heresy, some of whom were found in the capital city of the Eastern Empire, the foremost place was undoubtedly taken by that most holy man, the champion of Catholic integrity, Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria. For as he was most zealous in his care of his own sons and likewise in that of erring brethren, he had no sooner heard of the perverse opinion of the Bishop of Constantinople than he strenuously defended the orthodox faith in the presence of his own flock, and also addressed letters to Nestorius and endeavoured in the manner of a brother to lead him back to the rule of Catholic truth.

12. But when the hardened pertinacity of Nestorius had frustrated this charitable attempt, Cyril, who understood and strenuously maintained the authority of the Roman Church, would not himself take further steps, or pass sentence in such a very grave matter, until he had first applied to the Apostolic See and had ascertained its decision. Accordingly he addressed

most dutiful letters to "the most blessed Father Celestine, beloved of God," wherein among other things he writes as follows: "The ancient custom of the Churches admonishes us that matters of this kind should be communicated to Your Holiness. . . " (Mansi, l.c. IV. 1011.) "But we do not openly and publicly forsake his Communion (i.e. Nestorius') before indicating these things to your piety. Vouchsafe, therefore, to prescribe what you feel in this matter so that it may be clearly known to us whether we must communicate with him or whether we should freely declare to him that no one can communicate with one who cherishes and preaches suchlike erroneous doctrine. Furthermore, the mind of Your Integrity and your judgment on this matter should be clearly set forth in letters to the Bishops of Macedonia, who are most pious and devoted to God, and likewise to the Prelates of all the East." (Mansi, l.c. IV. 1015.)

13. Nor was Nestorius ignorant of the supreme authority of the Roman Bishop over the universal Church, for more than once in letters addressed to Celestine he attempted to justify his own teaching and to prevent the mind of the most holy Pontiff and win it over to himself. But all in vain; for the ill-considered words of the heresiarch contained serious errors, and when once the Bishop of the Apostolic See clearly discerned them he forthwith applied his hand to a remedy, and lest the plague of heresy should become more perilous through delay he had them examined by a synodical judgment and solemnly condemned them, and decreed that they must be condemned by all.

14. And here, Venerable Brethren, We would have you consider carefully how much the Roman Pontiff's manner of acting in this case differed from that which had been followed by the Bishop of Alexandria. For the latter, although he occupied the See which was held to be the first in the Eastern Church, would not, as we have said, decide a very grave controversy concerning the Catholic faith for himself before he had certain knowledge of judgment of the Apostolic See. Celestine, on the contrary, having summoned a Roman Synod and weighed the matter maturely in virtue of his supreme and absolute authority over the whole of the Lord's flock, made and solemnly sanctioned these decrees concerning the Bishop of Constantinople: "Know clearly, therefore," he wrote to Nestorius, "that this is Our judgment: that unless you preach concerning Christ our God those things which are held by the Romans, the Alexandrian and the whole Catholic Church, and which the holy Church of the City of Constantinople most rightly held up till your time; and unless you shall condemn in an open and written confession this perfidious novelty which seeks to separate that which the venerable Scripture joins together; within ten days, to be numbered from the first day on which this decision becomes known to you, you are cast out from the communion of the Universal Catholic Church. We have sent this form of Our judgment to you by Our said son, the deacon Possidonius, together with all the documents addressed to Our holy brother priest, the aforesaid Bishop of the city of Alexandria, who has given us further information on this matter; we have sent these so that he may act in Our place so that Our statute may be known, whether to you or to all the brethren; for all ought to know what is being done in a matter wherein the cause of all is concerned." (Mansi, I.c. IV. 1034 sq.)

15. The Roman Pontiff ordered the Patriarch of Alexandria to execute his sentence in the following grave words: "Wherefore in virtue of the authority of Our See, and acting in Our stead, you will strictly enforce this sentence that he must either within ten days to be numbered from the day of this decision condemn his evil preachments in a written profession, and prove that he holds the same faith concerning the birth of Christ our God which is held by the Roman Church and that of your holiness and by the devotion of all; or if he will not do this, then your holiness to make provision for that Church, must know that he must by all means be removed from our body." (Migne, P.L. 50, 463; cf. Mans, I.c. IV. 1019 sq.)

16. But some writers of the past age and of more recent days, seeking to evade the luminous authority of the documents which we have cited, have given the following account of the whole matter, which they often set forth in somewhat arrogant fashion. It may be granted, they say readily, that the Roman Pontiff issued a peremptory and absolute judgment which the Bishop of Alexandria had provoked in his animosity for Nestorius, and which he very gladly made his own; none the less, the council afterwards summoned at Ephesus took the matter already judged and together condemned by the Apostolic See, and judged it afresh from the beginning and decreed by its supreme authority what must be believed about it by all. From this they say it may be gathered that an Ecumenical Council is possessed of rights altogether more powerful and more valid than the authority of the Roman Bishop.

17. But in this they have constructed a fabric of falsehood clothed with a specious appearance of truth. This may be readily seen by any one who, laying aside preconceived opinions, looks at the faithful record of fact and diligently examines the documentary evidence. For, in the first place, it must be observed that when the Emperor Theodosius, acting also in the name of his colleague Valentinian, summoned the Ecumenical Council, the judgment of Celestine had not yet arrived at Constantinople, and nothing was known about it there. Moreover, when Celestine found that a Synod at Ephesus had been ordered by the Emperors, he made no manner of objection against it; nay, more, in letters to Theodosius (Mansi, I.c. IV. 1291) and to the Bishop of Alexandria (Mansi, I.c. IV. 1292) he both praised this proposal and delegated and proclaimed his legates who were to preside at the Council, namely, the Patriarch Cyril, the Bishops Arcadius and Projectus, and the Priest Philip. But by acting thus the Pontiff did not leave an unjudged case to the decision of the Council; but, as he said himself, the things which he had already decreed (Mansi, I.c. IV. 1287) were still to remain, and he ordered the Fathers of the Council to execute the sentence passed by himself, yet so that, by taking counsel together, and offering prayers to God, they were to strive, as far as possible, to bring back the erring Bishop of Constantinople to the unity of the faith. Thus, when Cyril asked the Pontiff how he was to act in this matter, that is to say, "whether the holy Synod ought to receive the man on his condemning the things which he had preached, or whether, because the appointed time had now run out, the sentence long since passed must abide," Celestine answered as follows: "It is for your holiness, together with the venerable council of brethren, to see that the disturbances that have arisen in the Church may be repressed, and when by the help of God the

matter is finished, We may learn this from the correction which has been decided. We do not say that We are absent from your assembly; for We cannot be absent from those with whom, wheresoever they may be, We are joined together by one faith. . . We are there because We are thinking that which is being done there for all; We do that spiritually which We seem not to do in a bodily manner. We yearn for Catholic peace; We yearn for the salvation of him who is perishing, yet so if he will but confess his sickness. We say this that We may not seem to be wanting to one who is willing to correct himself. May he prove that We do not have feet swift to shed blood, when he knows that a remedy is offered also to him." (Mansi, l.c. IV. 1292.)

18. But if these words of Celestine show us his fatherly heart, and make it abundantly clear that he desired nothing more earnestly than that the light of the true faith should illuminate the eyes that were blinded, and that he would rejoice when those who were in error came back to the Church, at the same time, the instructions which he gave to his Legates, when they were setting out for Ephesus, prove how great was the Pontiff's care and solicitude in bidding them preserve the divinely given rights of the Roman See safe and intact. Thus, among other things, he says: "We command you that the authority of the Apostolic See ought to be safeguarded; for the instructions delivered to you tell you this, that you are to be present in the assembly, and if they come to a discussion you are to judge of their opinions but are not to engage in the contest." (Mansi, 1.c. IV. 556.)

19. And the Legates acted in this way with the assent of the Fathers of the sacred Synod. For, following firmly and faithfully the aforesaid absolute commands of the Pontiff when they arrived at Ephesus after the first act was completed, they demanded that all the things decreed in the previous assembly should be submitted to them so that they might be confirmed and ratified in the name of the Apostolic See: "We pray you to order that all things that have been done in this holy Synod before our arrival may be shown to us, so that we also may confirm them according to the judgment of our blessed Pope and of this present holy Synod. . . " (Mansi, 1.c. IV. 1290.)

20. Philip the Priest also, in the presence of the whole Council, gave utterance to that excellent pronouncement on the Primacy of the Roman Church which is cited in the dogmatic Constitution Pastor Aetemus of the Vatican Council (Conc. Vatic. sess. IV. cap. 2): Namely: "No one doubts, as it was known in all ages, that the holy and most blessed Peter, the prince and head of the Apostles, the pillar of the faith, and the foundation of the Catholic Church, received from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, the keys of the kingdom; and the power of binding and loosing sins was given to him; and unto this time, and ever, he lives and exercises judgment in his successors." (Mansi, I.c. IV. 1295.)

21. What more need be said? Did the Fathers of the Ecumenical Council make any objection to this manner of acting adopted by Celestine and his Legates, or oppose it in any way? By no manner of means. On the contrary, written monuments remain which plainly show their own dutiful observance and reverence. For when, in the second session of the sacred synod, the Papal Legates, reading the letters of Celestine, said among other things: "In

Our solicitude, We have sent to you our holy brothers and fellow-priests of one mind with Ourselves, those trustworthy men Arcadius and Projectus the Bishops, and Philip our Priest, that they may be present at what is being done, and may execute the things which have already been decreed by Us; whereunto we doubt not that your holiness will give your consent" (Mansi, 1.c., IV. 1287); the Fathers of the Council were so far from refusing this sentence as it were of a supreme judge that, praising it with one voice, they saluted the Roman Pontiff with these abundant acclamations: "This is a just judgment! The whole synod gives thanks to Celestine the new Paul, to Cyril the new Paul, to Celestine the guardian of the faith, to Celestine one at heart with the Synod, to Celestine the whole Synod gives thanks; there is one Celestine, one Cyril, one faith of the Synod, one faith of the whole world." (Mansi, 1.c., IV. 1287.)

22. But when they came to the condemnation and rejection of Nestorius, the same Fathers of the Council did not think that they were free to judge the whole cause afresh; but openly profess that they are prevented and compelled by the sentence of the Roman Pontiff: "Understanding that he (Nestorius) thinks and preaches impiously, and compelled by the sacred canons and by the letter of our most holy Father and fellow minister Celestine the Bishop of the Roman Church, we come of necessity, and with tears, to this lamentable sentence against him. Wherefore our Lord Jesus Christ, who was assailed by this man's words of blasphemy, has declared, through this most holy Synod, that the said Nestorius is deprived of the Episcopal dignity, and is a stranger to the whole fellowship and company of Priests." (Mansi, 1.c. IV. 1294 sq.)

23. And in the second session of the Council, Firmus Bishop of Caesarea, in like manner, openly professed the same thing in these words: "The Apostolic and Holy See, through the letters of the most Holy Bishop Celestine, which he sent to the most religious Bishops, prescribed beforehand the judgment and rule concerning the present matter, which we also have followed; and because Nestorius, having been cited by us has not appeared, we have put that form in execution, declaring the canonical and apostolic judgment against him." (Mansi, 1.c., IV. 1287 sq.)

24. Now all the various documents which have been rehearsed by Us, one after another, prove so expressly and significantly that already, throughout the universal Church, there was a strong and common faith in the authority of the Roman Pontiff over the whole flock of Christ, an authority subject to no one and incapable of error, so that these things bring back to Our mind the clear and luminous words of Augustine, uttered a few years before this, concerning the judgment passed by Pope Zosimus against the Pelagians in his Epistula Tractatoria: "In these words of the Apostolic See, the Catholic faith is so venerable, so firmly founded, so certain and so clear, that it were impious for a Christian to doubt of it." (Epist. 190; Corpus Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum, 57, p. 159 sq.)

25. Would that that most holy Bishop of Hippo could have been present at the Synod of Ephesus; how much his marvellously acute intellect, perceiving the dividing line in the discussions, would have illustrated the dogmas of

Catholic truth, and how he would have defended them with all his strength of mind! But when the imperial legates, bearing the letters of invitation, arrived at Hippo, there was nothing left them to do but to lament that that great luminary of Christian wisdom was extinguished and that his See was laid waste by the Vandals.

26. We are well aware, Venerable Brethren, that some of those who, especially in the present age, devote themselves to historical research, use every effort to clear Nestorius from the stain of heresy; and that they also accuse the most holy Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, of unjust animosity, saying that, because Nestorius was obnoxious to him, he calumniated him and strove with all his strength to procure his condemnation for things which he had never taught. Our most blessed predecessor Celestine, whose simplicity is said to have been abused by Cyril, and the holy Synod of Ephesus also, are involved in this most grave accusation by these defenders of the Bishop of Constantinople.

27. The Church, however, protests against this futile and temerarious attempt; for she has at all times acknowledged the condemnation of Nestorius as rightly and deservedly decreed; and has regarded the doctrine of Cyril as orthodox; and has counted the Council of Ephesus among the Ecumenical Synods, celebrated under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and has held it in veneration. For, to omit very many luminous monuments of documentary evidence, all know, assuredly, that many associates of Nestorius, who had seen with their own eyes the whole course of events, and who had no friendly intimacy with Cyril: despite the fact that they were drawn to the opposite side, by their friendship with Nestorius, by the great charm of his writings, and by the very heat engendered in the disputations; nevertheless, after the Synod of Ephesus, moved as it were by the light of truth, gradually deserted the heretical Bishop of Constantinople, who by the just law of the Church was to be avoided. Some of these were certainly still living when Our predecessor of happy memory, Leo the Great, wrote in these terms to Paschasinus, Bishop of Lilybeta, and his own legate to the Council of Chalcedon: "Know that the whole Church of Constantinople, with all its monasteries and many Bishops, has given its consent, and has subscribed to the anathematization of Nestorius and Eutyches and their dogmas" (Mansi, 1.c. VI. 124); but in his dogmatic letter to the Emperor Leo, he quite openly rebukes Nestorius as a heretic and a teacher of heresy, without any one gainsaying it; for he says: "Let Nestorius, therefore, be anathematized, who believed the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother, not of God, but of man only, so that he made one person of the flesh, and another of the Godhead, and did not perceive that there was but one Christ, in the Word of God and in the flesh; but preached separately and severally one the Son of God, and the other of man." (Mansi, 1.c. VI. 351-354.) The same thing, as every one knows, was solemnly sanctioned by the Council of Chalcedon, when it condemned Nestorius again, and praised the teaching of Cyril. And Our most holy predecessor Gregory the Great, when he had just been raised to the Chair of Blessed Peter, in his synodical letter to the Eastern Churches, having mentioned these four Ecumenical Councils, namely, those of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, speaks of them in these words of great moment and nobility: " . . . On these, as on a

four square stone, the structure of the holy faith arises; and of whatever life or office he may be, whosoever does not hold their solidity, even though he is seen to be a stone, yet he lieth outside the edifice." (Migne, P.L. 77, 478; cf. Mansi, l.c. IX. 1048.) Wherefore all should hold it as certain that Nestorius really preached heretical novelties; that the Patriarch of Alexandria was a strenuous defender of the Catholic faith; and that the Pontiff Celestine, together with the Synod of Ephesus, maintained both the ancient doctrine of the fathers and the supreme authority of the Apostolic See.

28. But now, Venerable Brethren, let us examine more deeply those points of doctrine which the Synod of Ephesus, by the very fact of its condemnation of Nestorius, openly professed and sanctioned by its authority. Now, apart from the rejection of the Pelagian heresy and the condemnation of those who favoured it—one of whom, without doubt, was Nestroius—there was one matter mainly in question, and it was solemnly and almost unanimously confirmed by the Fathers, that is to say that the opinion of this heresiarch was wholly impious and repugnant to the Sacred Scriptures; and that, therefore, that which he denied was altogether certain, namely, that there is one Person in Christ, and that the same is Divine. For when Nestorius, as We have said, obstinately contended that the Divine Word was not united to the human nature in Christ substantially and hypostatically, but by a certain accidental and moral bond, the Fathers of Ephesus, in condemning Nestorius, openly professed the right doctrine concerning the Incarnation, which must be firmly held by all. And indeed, Cyril in the letters and chapters already addressed to Nestorius beforehand, and inserted in the acts of this Ecumenical Synod, in wonderful agreement with the Roman Church, maintained these things in eloquent and reiterated words: "In no wise, therefore, is it lawful to divide the one Lord Jesus Christ into two Sons.... For the Scripture does not say that the Word associated the person of a man with Himself, but that He was made flesh. But when it is said that the Word was made flesh, that means nothing else but that He partook of flesh and blood, even as we do; wherefore, He made our body His own, and came forth man, born of a woman, at the same time without laying aside His Godhead, or His birth from the Father; for in assuming flesh He still remained what He was." (Mansi, l.c. IV. 891.)

29. For we are taught, by Holy Scripture and by Divine Tradition, that the Word of God the Father did not join Himself to a certain man already subsisting in Himself, but that Christ the Word of God is one and the same, enjoying eternity in the bosom of the Father, and made man in time. For, indeed, that the Godhead and Manhood in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, are bound together by that wondrous union which is justly and deservedly called hypostatic, is luminously evident from the fact that in the Sacred Scriptures the same one Christ is not only called God and man, but it is also clearly declared that He works as God and also as man, and again that He dies as man and as God He arises from the dead. That is to say, He who is conceived in the Virgin's womb by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who is born, who lies in a manger, who calls Himself the son of man, who suffers and dies, fastened to the cross, is the very same who, in a solemn and marvellous manner, is called by the Eternal Father "my beloved Son" (Matthew iii. 17; xvii. 5; 2 Peter i. 17), who pardons sins by His divine

authority (Matt. ix. 2-6; Luke v. 20-24; vii. 48; and elsewhere), and likewise by His own power recalls the sick to health (Matt. viii. 3; Mark i. and 41; Luke v. 13; John ix; and elsewhere). As all these things show clearly that in Christ there are natures by which both divine and human works are performed, so do they bear witness no less clearly that the one Christ is at once both God and man because of that unity of person from which He is called "Theanthropos" (God-Man).

30. Moreover, this doctrine which has ever been handed down may be proved and con firmed, as all can see, from the dogma of man's Redemption. For how indeed could Christ be called "the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans viii. 29), or be wounded because of our iniquities (Isaias liii. 5; Matt. viii. 17), and redeem us from the servitude of sin, unless He had a human nature like as we have? And so, too, how could He make perfect satisfaction to the justice of the Heavenly Father which had been violated by mankind, unless He possessed an immense and infinite dignity by reason of His Divine Person?

31. Nor can this point of Catholic truth be disputed on the ground that, if our Redeemer had no human person, then it would seem that some perfection would be wanting to His human nature, which would make Him as man less than we are. For as it is acutely and sagaciously observed by Aquinas, "personality pertains to the dignity and perfection of any thing in so far as it pertains to the dignity and perfection of any thing that it should exist by itself, which is what we understand by the name of personality; but there is more dignity in any thing if it exists in another of greater dignity than itself, than if it existed by itself, and therefore there is more dignity in the human nature of Christ than in ours, on this very ground, that in us it has its own personality, as existing by itself, but in Christ it exists in the person of the Word; even as it pertains to the dignity of a form to be completive of the species; nevertheless, the sensitive is more noble in man, because of the conjunction with the more noble completive form, than it can be in a brute animal, in which it is itself the completive form." (Summ. Theol., III. ii. 2.)

32. Moreover, it may be worth while to remark here that, just as Arius, that most crafty subverter of Catholic unity, attacked the Word's Divine nature consubstantial to the Eternal Father, so Nestorius, taking quite another way, namely by rejecting the Redeemer's hypostatic union, denied the full and perfect divinity of Christ, though not of the Word. For if, as he wrongly imagined, it was only by a moral union that the divine and human nature were joined together in Christ—to which, indeed, as We have said, the prophets, also, and the other heroes of Christian sanctity, have in some manner attained, according to their respective union with God—the Saviour of mankind would differ but little, or not at all, from those whom He redeemed by His grace and by His precious blood. Thus, when once the doctrine of the hypostatic union is abandoned, whereon the dogmas of the Incarnation and of man's Redemption rest and stand firm, the whole foundation of the Catholic religion falls and comes to ruin. Wherefore, we do not wonder that, when the peril of the Nestorian heresy arose, the whole Catholic world was shaken: We do not wonder that, when the Bishop of Constantinople rashly and wrongly opposed the faith of the fathers, the

Synod of Ephesus keenly contended against him, and carrying out the sentence of the Roman Pontiff, struck him down with a dire anathema.

33. We, therefore, in full accordance with all the ages of Christian history, venerate the Redeemer of mankind not as "Elias . . . or one of the Prophets," in whom the heavenly Godhead dwelt by His grace, but together with the Prince of the Apostles, who knew this mystery by divine revelation, we make profession with one voice: "Thou are Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. xvi. 16.)

34. When once this dogma of the truth is securely established, it is easy to gather from it that by the mystery of the Incarnation the whole creation of men and of mundane things has been endowed with a dignity than which, certainly, nothing greater can be imagined, and surely grander than that to which it was raised by the work of creation. For here in the race of Adam we have one, namely Christ, who has attained unto the eternal and infinite Godhead, and is joined thereto in a most close and mysterious manner; Christ, indeed, we call our brother, endowed with human nature, but also God with us, or Emmanuel, who by His grace and His merits, draws us all back to our divine Author and also recalls us to that heavenly beatitude from which we had miserably fallen away by original sin. Let us, therefore, turn to Him with a thankful heart; let us follow His precepts; let us imitate His examples. For thus shall we become sharers of His divinity "who deigned to become a partaker of our humanity" (Roman Missal).

35. But if, as We have said, at all times throughout the course of ages, the true Church of Christ has most diligently defended this genuine and uncorrupted doctrine concerning the personal unity and the divinity of her Founder, it has not been so, alas! with those who wander unhappily outside the one fold of Christ. For whenever anyone pertinaciously withdraws himself from the infallible teaching authority of the Church, We grieve to say that he gradually loses the true and certain doctrine concerning Jesus Christ. And, indeed, with regard to the many and various religious sects, especially those dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which still bear the Christian name, and which, at the beginning of their separation, firmly professed that Christ is God and man; if we ask them now what they hold about Him, we shall certainly receive diverse and contradictory answers. For a few among them, indeed, have kept the full doctrine and the full faith concerning the person of our Redeemer; but others, if in a manner they affirm something like it, yet they seem to savour of vaporous scents whose reality is departed. For they set Jesus Christ before us as a man endowed with divine gifts and in a mysterious manner united to the Divinity beyond all others and very near to God; but they are far removed from the full and sincere profession of the Catholic faith. Others again, recognising nothing of the Divine in Christ, profess that He is a mere man, adorned indeed with excellent gifts of soul and body, but subject to errors and to human infirmity. From which it is clearly seen that all these, no less than Nestorius, make a temerarious attempt to "dissolve Christ," and that, therefore, on the testimony of John the Evangelist, they are not of God (cf. 1 John iv. 3).

36. Wherefore, with a fatherly heart, from the summit of this Apostolic See,

We exhort all those who glory in being the followers of Christ, and who place in Him their own hope and salvation and that of human society, that they should ever join themselves more firmly and more closely to this Roman Church, in which alone Christ is believed in with whole and perfect faith, is worshipped with the sincere worship of adoration, and is beloved with the perpetual flame of burning charity. Let them remember, and in particular those who preside over a flock separated from Us, that the faith which their fathers solemnly professed at Ephesus is preserved unchanged and is strenuously defended, as in past ages so also in the present, by this supreme Chair of Truth. Let them remember that the unity of this genuine faith rests and stands firm only on the one rock set by Christ, and can be preserved safe and intact by the supreme authority of the successors of Blessed Peter.

37. We spoke more fully, indeed, on this unity of the Catholic religion, a few years ago, in Our Encyclical letter Mortalium animos; still it may be useful to recall the matter briefly here; for the hypostatic union of Christ, solemnly confirmed in the Synod of Ephesus, bears and sets before us the image of that unity with which our Redeemer willed that His mystical body, that is to say the Church, should be adorned; "one body" (I Corinthians xii. 12) "compacted and fitly joined together" (Ephesians iv. 16). For if the personal unity of Christ is the mystical exemplar to which He Himself willed that the union of Christian society should be conformed, every wise man will see that this can only arise, not from any pretended conjunction of many disagreeing among themselves, but from one hierarchy, from one supreme teaching authority, from one law of believing, and from one faith of Christians. (See the Encyclical Letter Mortalium animos.) To this unity of the Church, consisting in communion with the Apostolic See, Philip, the Legate of the Roman Bishop, bore admirable testimony in the Synod of Ephesus; for when the Fathers of the Council, with one voice, were applauding the letters sent by Celestine, he addressed them in these memorable words: "We give thanks to the holy and venerable Synod that, when the letters of our holy Pope were recited, as holy members by your holy voices and exclamations, ye joined yourselves to the Holy Head. For your beatitude is not ignorant that the Blessed Peter is the head of the whole faith, as also of the Apostles." (Mans, I.c. IV 1290.)

38. But if at any time, now more than ever, does it behoove all the good to bind themselves by a sincere profession of faith to Jesus Christ and to the Church, His mystical Bride, now when so many men everywhere are striving to cast off the sweet yoke of Christ, when they reject the light of His doctrine, spurn the streams of His grace, and repudiate the divine authority of Him who has become, according to the words of the Gospel, "a sign which shall be contradicted" (Luke ii. 34). And now, since numberless and daily growing evils come forth from this lamentable falling away from Christ, let all seek an opportune remedy from Him who alone under heaven has been given to men whereby we must be saved (Acts iv. 12). For it is in this way only, when the Sacred Heart of Jesus inspires the minds of mortal men, that happier times can arise for each of us one by one, for family life, and for civil society, at present so sadly disturbed.

39. Now from this head of Catholic doctrine upon which We have touched hitherto, there follows of necessity the dogma of the divine maternity which We preach as belonging to the Blessed Virgin Mary. "Not that the nature of the Word or His Godhead"—as Cyril admonishes us—"took the source of its origin from the holy Virgin; but because He derived from her that sacred body, perfected by an intellectual soul, whereto the Word of God was hypostatically united, and therefore is said to be born according to the flesh." (Mansi, I.c. IV. 891.)
And, indeed, if the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary is God, assuredly she who bore him is rightly and deservedly to be called the Mother of God. If there is only one person in Christ, and this is Divine, without any doubt Mary ought to be called, by all, not the mother of Christ the man only, but Theotocos, or God-bearer. Let us all, therefore, venerate the tender Mother of God, whom her cousin Elizabeth saluted as "the Mother of my Lord" (Luke i. 43), who, in the words of Ignatius Martyr, brought forth God (Ad Ephes. vii. 18-20); and from whom, as Tertullian professes, God was born; whom the Eternal Godhead has gifted with the fullness of grace and endowed with such great dignity.

40. Nor can anyone reject this truth, handed down from the first age of the Church, on the pretext that the Blessed Virgin Mary did, indeed, supply the body of Jesus Christ, but did not produce the Word of the Heavenly Father; since, as Cyril already rightly and lucidly answered in his time (cf. Mansi, I.c. IV. 599), even as those in whose womb our earthly nature, not our soul is procreated, are rightly and truly called our mothers; so did she, from the unity of her Son's person, attain to divine maternity.

41. Wherefore, the impious opinion of Nestorius, which the Roman Pontiff, led by the Holy Spirit, had condemned in the preceding year, was deservedly and solemnly condemned again by the Synod of Ephesus. And the populace of Ephesus were drawn to the Virgin Mother of God with such great piety, and burning with such ardent love, that when they understood the judgment passed by the Fathers of the Council, they hailed them with overflowing gladness of heart, and gathering round them in a body, bearing lighted torches in their hands, accompanied them home. And assuredly, the same great Mother of God looked down from heaven on this spectacle, and smiling sweetly on these her children of Ephesus, and on all the faithful Christians throughout the Catholic world, who had been disturbed by the snares of the Nestorian heresy, embraced them with her most present aid and her motherly affection.

42. From this dogma of the divine maternity, as from the outpouring of a hidden spring, flow forth the singular grace of Mary and her dignity, which is the highest after God. Nay more, as Aquinas says admirably: "The Blessed Virgin, from this that she is the Mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity, from the infinite good which is God." (Summ. Theo., III. a.6.) Cornelius a Lapide unfolds this and explains it more fully, in these words: "The Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God; therefore she is far more excellent than all the Angels, even the Seraphim and Cherubim. She is the Mother of God; therefore she is most pure and most holy, so that under God no greater purity can be imagined. She is the Mother of God; therefore whatever

privilege (in the order of sanctifying grace) has been granted to any one of the Saints, she obtains it more than all" (In Matt. i. 6).

43. Why, therefore, do the Reformers (Novatores) and not a few non-Catholics bitterly condemn our piety towards the Virgin Mother of God, as though we were withdrawing the worship due to God alone? Do they not know, or do they not attentively consider that nothing can be more pleasing to Jesus Christ, who certainly has an ardent love for his own Mother, than that we should venerate her as she deserves, that we should return her love, and that imitating her most holy example we should seek to gain her powerful patronage?

44. Here, however, We would not omit to mention a matter which has given Us no little consolation, namely that in the present time, even among the Reformers, some understand the dignity of the Virgin Mother of God better, and are led and moved to reverence her duly, and hold her in honour. This, when it comes from the inward and sincere conscience, and is not as sometimes happens effected to conciliate the minds of Catholics, bids Us hope that by the prayers and efforts of all the good, and by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, who cherishes a mother's love for her erring children, they may at length be brought back to the one true flock of Jesus Christ, and therefore to Us who, though unworthily, hold His place and His authority on earth.

45. But there is another matter, Venerable Brethren, which We think We should recall in regard to Mary's office of Maternity, something which is sweeter and more pleasing; namely that she, because she brought forth the Redeemer of mankind, is also in a manner the most tender mother of us all, whom Christ our Lord deigned to have as His brothers (Romans viii. 29). As Our predecessor of happy memory, Leo XIII, says: "Such a one God has given as one to whom by the very fact that He chose her as the Mother of His only begotten Son, He clearly gave the feelings of a mother, breathing nothing but love and pardon—such did Jesus Christ show her to be, by His own action, when He spontaneously chose to be under her, and submit to her as a son to a mother; such did He declare her to be, when, from the Cross, He committed all mankind, in the person of His disciple John, to her care and protection; and as such, lastly, she gave herself, when embracing with a great heart, this heritage of immense labour from her dying Son, she began at once to fulfil all a mother's duties to us all." (Encyclical Letter Octobri mense adveniente. September 21, 1892.) From this it comes that we are all drawn to her by a powerful attraction, that we may confidently entrust to her all things that are ours—namely our joys, if we are gladdened; our troubles, if we are in anguish; our hopes, if we are striving to reach at length to better things. From this it comes that if more difficult times fall upon the Church; if faith fail, if charity have grown cold, if private and public morals take a turn for the worse; if any danger be hanging over the Catholic name and civil society, we all take refuge with her, imploring heavenly aid. From this it comes lastly that in the supreme crisis of death, when no other hope is given, no other help, we lift up to her our tearful eyes and our trembling hands, praying through her for pardon from her Son, and for eternal happiness in heaven.

46. Let all, therefore, with more ardent zeal in the present necessities with which we are afflicted, go to her and beseech her with instant supplication "that, through her prayers to her Son, the erring nations may return to the Christian institutions and precepts, which are the firm support of public safety, and from which arises an abundance of much desired peace and of true happiness. Let them implore of her the more earnestly, what ought to be desired above all things by all the good, namely that the Church our mother may gain and tranquilly enjoy her liberty; which she always uses for the best advantage of men, and from which individuals and states have never suffered any losses, but have at all times experienced very many and very great benefits." (From the aforesaid Encyclical Letter.)

47. But one thing in particular, and that indeed one of great importance, We specially desire that all should implore, under the auspices of the heavenly Queen. That is to say, that she who is loved and worshipped with such ardent piety by the separated peoples of the East would not suffer them to wander and be unhappily ever led away from the unity of the Church, and therefore from her Son, whose Vicar on earth We are. May they return to the common Father, whose judgment all the Fathers of the Synod of Ephesus most dutifully received, and whom they all saluted, with concordant acclamations, as "the guardian of the faith"; may they all turn to Us, who have indeed a fatherly affection for them all, and who gladly make Our own those most loving words which Cyril used, when he earnestly exhorted Nestorius that "the peace of the Churches may be preserved, and that the bond of love and of concord among the priests of God may remain indissoluble." (Mansi, I.c. IV. 891.)

48. And would that that most happy day might speedily dawn upon us when the Virgin Mother of God, who is admirably depicted in the tessellated work of Our predecessor, Sixtus III, in the Liberian Basilica—which We Ourselves have had restored to its pristine beauty—may see all the sons separated from Us returning, that they may venerate her along with Us with one mind and with one faith. This will assuredly be for Us a source of the very greatest pleasure.

49. Moreover, We may well regard it as a happy omen, that it has fallen to Us to celebrate this fifteenth centenary: to Us, We say, who have defended the dignity and the sanctity of chaste wedlock against the encroaching fallacies of every kind (Encyclical Letter, Casti connubii, December 21, 1930), and who have both solemnly vindicated the sacred rights of the Catholic Church over the education of youth, and have declared and explained the manner in which it should be given, and the principles to which it should be conformed. (Encyclical Letter, Divini illius Magistri, December 21, 1929.) For the precepts which We have set forth, concerning both these matters, have in the office of the divine maternity, and in the family of Nazareth, an excellent example proposed for the imitation of all. As Our predecessor, Leo XIII of happy memory, says: "Fathers of families indeed have in Joseph a glorious pattern of vigilance and paternal prudence; mothers have in the most holy Virgin Mother of God a remarkable example of love and modesty and submission of mind, and of perfect faith; but the children of a family have in Jesus, who was subject to them, a divine model

of obedience, which they may admire, and worship and imitate." (Apostolic Letter, Neminem fugit, January 14, 1882.)

50. But in a more special manner it is fitting that those mothers of this our age, who being weary, whether of offspring or of the marriage bond, have the office they have undertaken degraded and neglected, may look up to Mary and meditate intently on her who has raised this grave duty of motherhood to such high nobility. For in this way there is hope that they may be led, by the help of grace of the heavenly Queen, to feel shame for the dishonour done to the great sacrament of matrimony, and may happily be stirred up to follow after the wondrous praise of her virtues, by every effort in their power.

51. If all these things prosper according to Our purpose, that is to say if the life of the family, the beginning and the foundation of all human society, is recalled to this most worthy model of holiness, without doubt We shall at length be able to meet the formidable crisis of evils confronting Us, with an effective remedy. In this way, it will come to pass that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" may "keep the hearts and minds" of all (Phil. iv. 7), and that the much desired Kingdom of Christ, minds and forces being joined together, may be everywhere established.

52. We will not close this Encyclical Letter, Venerable Brethren, without mentioning a matter which will surely be pleasing to you all. Desiring that there may be a liturgical monument of this commemoration, which may help to nourish the piety of clergy and people towards the great Mother of God, We have commanded Our supreme council presiding over Sacred Rites to publish an Office and Mass of the Divine Maternity, which is to be celebrated by the universal Church. And, meanwhile, as an earnest of heavenly gifts, and a pledge of Our paternal affection, We impart the Apostolic Benediction, very lovingly in the Lord, to you, Venerable Brethren, one and all, and to your clergy and people.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, 25 December the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the year 1931, the tenth of Our Pontificate.

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