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THE POPE'S FIVE PEACE-POINTS

THE Christmas Allocution of His Holiness Pope Pius XII addressed to the College of Cardinals may well be regarded as the most solemn and formal pronouncement hitherto made by the Holy Father since the beginning of his pontificate. The address, *In Questo Giorno*, has been published in full by the Catholic Truth Society in an admirable English translation from the pen of Canon G. D. Smith,¹ and it should be in the hands of all Catholics and of all those sincerely interested in peace and justice amongst nations.

After a brief but compelling review of the immediate past and of the tragic present, the Holy Father sets forth the 'Requisites for a just and honourable peace,' and these we quote from the above-mentioned translation in the hope that all our readers will be moved to obtain for themselves without delay a copy of that important publication:

I. A fundamental postulate of any just and honourable peace is an assurance for all nations great or small, powerful or weak, of their right to life and independence. The will of one nation to live must never mean the sentence of death passed upon another. When this equality of rights has been destroyed, attacked or threatened, order demands that reparation shall be made, and the measure and extent of that reparation is determined, not by the sword nor by the arbitrary decision of self-interest, but by the rules of justice and reciprocal equity.

II. The order thus established, if it is to continue undisturbed and ensure true peace, requires that the nations be delivered from the slavery imposed upon them by the

¹ C.T.S., 38-40 Eccleston Square, S.W.1, price 2d.

race for armaments, and from the danger that material force, instead of serving to protect the right, may become an overbearing and tyrannical master. Any peaceful settlement which fails to give fundamental importance to a mutually agreed, organic, and progressive disarmament, spiritual as well as material, or which neglects to ensure the effective and loyal implementing of such an agreement, will sooner or later show itself to be lacking in coherence and vitality.

III. The maxims of human wisdom require that in any reorganisation of international life all parties should learn a lesson from the failures and deficiencies of the past. Hence in creating or reconstructing international institutions which have so high a mission and such difficult and grave responsibilities, it is important to bear in mind the experience gained from the ineffectiveness or imperfections of previous institutions of the kind. Human frailty renders it difficult, not to say impossible, to foresee every contingency and guard against every danger at the moment in which treaties are signed; passion and bitter feeling are apt to be still rife. Hence in order that a peace may be honourably accepted and in order to avoid arbitrary breaches and unilateral interpretations of treaties, it is of the first importance to erect some juridical institution which shall guarantee the loyal and faithful fulfilment of the conditions agreed upon, and which shall, in case of recognised need, revise and correct them.

IV. If a better European settlement is to be reached there is one point in particular which should receive special attention: it is the real needs and the just demands of nations and populations, and of racial minorities. It may be that, in consequence of existing treaties incompatible with them, these demands are unable to establish a strictly legal right. Even so, they deserve to be examined in a friendly spirit with a view to meeting them by peaceful methods, and even, where it appears necessary, by means of an equitable and covenanted revision of the treaties themselves. If the balance between nations is thus adjusted and the foundation of mutual confidence thus laid many incentives to violent action will be removed.

V. But even the best and most detailed regulations will be imperfect and foredoomed to failure unless the peoples and those who govern them submit willingly to the influence of that spirit which alone can give life, authority and binding force to the dead letter of international agreements. They must develop that sense of deep and keen responsibility which measures and weighs human statutes according to the sacred and inviolable standards of the law of God; they must cultivate that hunger and thirst after justice which is proclaimed as a beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount and which supposes as its natural foundation the moral virtue of justice; they must be guided by that universal love which is the compendium and most general expression of the Christian ideal, and which therefore may serve as a common ground also for those who have not the blessing of sharing the same faith with us.

We are not insensible of the grave difficulties which lie in the way of the achievement of these ends which We have described as needful for establishing and preserving a just peace between nations. But if ever there was an objective deserving the collaboration of all noble and generous minds, if there was ever a spiritual crusade which might assume with a new truth as its motto, 'God wills it,' then it is this high purpose, it is this crusade, enlisting all unselfish and great-hearted men in an endeavour to lead the nations back from the broken cisterns of material and selfish interests to the living fountain of divine justice, which alone is able to provide that morality, nobility, and stability of which the need has been so long experienced, to the great detriment of nations and of humanity.

For the accomplishment of this admittedly difficult ideal the Holy Father concludes with a moving reminder of the one thing that makes it possible of realisation: '*Let us go to Bethlehem and see.*'

EDITOR,