

Familiar Explanation of Christian Doctrine

by Rev. Michael Müller, C.S.S.R.

Adapted for the Family and More Advanced Students in Catholic Schools and Colleges.

with the Approbation of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith

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Testimonials.

Church of St. Charles Borromeo,
Sydney Place,
Brooklyn, August 28, 1874.

Rev. dear Father Müller:

I have carefully read and examined your excellent manuscript, entitled "Familiar Explanations," etc. As far as I can judge, it is a clear, sound, orthodox explanation of Catholic doctrine, in a form of question and answer, which cannot fail to be extremely useful for the right understanding of the truths, commandments, and sacraments of our holy religion. Particularly useful seem to be the parts which explain the True Faith, the True Church, the Infallibility of the Pope, and, well, I should have to mention every chapter, from the beginning to the end. It is another great Godsend for these days of unbelief and corruption.

I am your humble servant in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Francis J. Freel, D.D.

Rev. and dear Father Müller:

I have most carefully read and examined your excellent manuscript, "Familiar Explanation of Christian Doctrine." I took the liberty to make a few alterations. I do not hesitate for a moment to pronounce this work of yours one of the most useful for our time and country. It is written in the true spirit of St. Alphonsus. Its theology is sound and solid, its spirit most devout, and its language simple and popular. I was particularly pleased with those chapters which treat on the Church, Papal Infallibility, Indifference to Religion, Prayer, and Grace. Your book cannot but prove most useful to those who are learning and to those who teach the Christian Doctrine. Its diligent and frequent perusal cannot fail to confirm converts in their faith, and supply Catholics with quite popular and solid arguments to refute the fallacious objections of non-Catholics. I feel confident that both the clergy and laity will hail with delight the publication of a book so well calculated to remedy the two great evils of our time and country—want of faith and true piety.

Congratulating you on having so successfully accomplished one of the most difficult works,

I am your devoted confrere,

A. Konings, C.S.S.R

PREFACE

About five months ago, a zealous priest, after speaking of the books that I have published, wrote in his letter as follows:

"Permit me to suggest to you what, in my humble opinion, is badly wanted in our barren religious literature and heretical language: A series of correct and concise Catechisms. I know of nothing more needed, and better calculated to do good. Three numbers would abundantly suffice.

"No. 1. For little children in spelling classes—for adults lamentably uninstructed in what is necessary to know and to believe, in order to save their souls, and who, at the same time, are so slow of intellect that only the simplest and most necessary elements of the Catholic faith and practice can be imparted to them—for colored people, and others that cannot read, and especially for that legion of stray sheep in humbler walks of life, who are picked up and brought to the priest for instruction, confession and communion on occasions of missions or

in Paschal time, and who have neither time, inclination, nor sufficient instruction to read bulky mission books or dry catechisms filled with long technical answers, or learn much by heart.

“What is necessary for these classes, is not so much that they may be able to explain, as they should know what they must believe and do in order to save their souls. Therefore, in first catechisms, meant for the uninstructed, not to say stupid, the questions should be longer, and the answers shorter, in order that the child may be instructed in, and, as it were, introduced to, the proper answer, by the very wording of the question, that the feeble memory may not be burdened by a load of words, which it is unable to carry with ease or profit. The true idea of a catechism for the classes of people just mentioned is, that by frequent questions on each point, it wakens the intellects of the uninstructed or the torpid to the matter it is wished to communicate. Hence, not only great care must be taken in framing the questions correctly, but these questions must be multiplied for the entirely uninstructed, especially so as to ask attention to each point that it is desired to teach. To illustrate: It would be a very faulty infants’ catechism that would have under one question and answer —‘Q. How many Gods are there? A. There is but one God in three persons, each equal to the other Persons, whom we call the Holy Trinity.’

“No. 2. For the use of Parochial Schools, and of catechumens who have more opportunity or more capacity.

“No. 3. For colleges, academies, high schools, for persons of cultivation, old as well as young, for professional men, etc. This number should especially be plain, popular, comprehensive, and interesting, not so dry and clumsy, nor so full of unsatisfactory, as most books of this class are. Objections, however stupid and threadbare, should be noticed and briefly refuted.

“The object of such a series of catechisms is, clearly and deeply to impress the truths of religion upon the minds of the young. A clear knowledge of these truths will, with the grace of God, gradually gain the affections of youth for the Divine Teacher of our religion, Jesus Christ, our Blessed Lord and Redeemer. In order, however, to reach this great object, it is necessary that in each number should be found, as much as possible, the same order and the same questions and answers for the chief truths of religion, so that these truths, by the additional questions and answers in another number, may be but more clearly explained and more solidly established. This rule, I think, ought to be followed in a series of catechisms, as otherwise confusion might be created in many a child’s mind and memory. On the contrary, truths clearly proposed and explained and often repeated in the same words, and in the same order, cannot fail to remain deeply impressed upon mind and memory.

“As we live in a heretical country, the best and most natural order to be followed in preparing a series of catechisms seems to me to be this: God has been the teacher of mankind from the beginning of the world, and by means of His Church, He will, to the end of time, continue to teach men,

“I. What they must believe.

“II. What they must do.

“III. The means of grace which they must use in order to be saved.

“The explanation of the commandments should be a safe guide of conscience or popular moral theology. In this explanation, therefore, should be stated not only the duties of each commandment, but also the sins which are mortal and which are venial.

“In my humble opinion there are two great truths of our religion to the explanation of which there should be devoted almost as much time and space as to all the rest. These truths are

the Divine Mission of the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Eucharist. Today, more than ever, these truths should be made plain and impressed upon the minds and hearts of the young—the Divine Mission of the Church, because she is the divinely appointed teacher of mankind—the Holy Eucharist, because it is the center of our religion, its life, strength, and support.

“The objection that the explanation of these truths at length would make the catechism rather diffuse is scarcely worthy of consideration. What is objectionable in a catechism is not so much diffuseness as obscurity in meaning, or deficiency in clearly explaining the doctrines of our religion. It is true, nothing new can be taught in a catechism, since the truths of our holy religion are always the same. But the manner of proposing and explaining those truths may be new. It certainly admits of improvement in our English literature. Whenever a doctrine is clearly proposed and explained it is easily understood and remembered, and makes a lasting impression. But whenever a doctrine is proposed and explained in a dry and obscure manner, it is apt to create disgust, and leave both heart and mind empty. In rendering not only clear, but distinct, every proposition that should be admitted in a catechism, lies the highest art of its composer, as his science is tried by his including in a given catechism all that ought to be put into it in view of the persons for whom and objects for which it is prepared, and of excluding all else.

“There are some who think and say that our religion may be taught in a few lessons. Be it so. But, generally speaking, a few lessons in religion will not make practical Catholics, or else we should not see so many of the young fall away from the faith. Had they learned better what the Church and the Holy Eucharist are, many of them, instead of having become bitter enemies of the Church, would have become her most strenuous defenders by word and example. A clear, satisfactory explanation of these two great truths in a catechism is alone sufficient to recommend it both to the clergy and laity.

“Each number should contain an appendix with a brief summary of the chief duties which every Christian must know and observe, on Sundays and weekdays, in and out of church, in order to be saved, and with short prayers for morning, night, during the day, at church, for confession, Holy Communion, etc. Thus they would serve for convenient prayer-books in the absence of others. Of course, these books must be small in size, and large of print, so as to serve for pocket use, and not injure the eyes.

“I have been sighing for years for such a series of Catechisms, and cannot conceive how you, in your laudable zeal to profit souls, and to assist your brethren of the clergy, school-brothers, and school-sisters, Sunday-school teachers, and parents, could have overlooked them, or not have felt their necessity yourself.

“What I suggest to you is, undoubtedly, one of the most difficult undertakings. It is a work which, no doubt, will be criticized either in a friendly or in a captious spirit. No attention should be paid to the criticisms of those who are not able or willing to supply an admitted want, but who, from unholy motives, labor to search out trifling faults in excellent and necessary works of this kind, without suggesting anything better and more practical. But by the suggestions of many of those competent, that which is already good becomes perfect. Thus at last a series of Catechisms may be given us, which we can put, pure and simple, into the hands of children and their instructors, as teaching the doctrines Catholic faith, without need of supplementary explanations.

“Now, should you—as I scarcely dare anticipate—think seriously on my humble proposals, and furnish us with the above mentioned series of Catechisms, you would thereby certainly earn the undying thanks of thousands, especially of priests, parents, school-brothers, school-sisters, and Sunday-school teachers, more worthy and deserving of consideration than your humble but admiring servant in Christ.”

I am not quite certain whether or not the good and zealous priest would object to the publication of his letter. So I suppress his name, deservedly held in veneration, and by no

one in higher veneration than by myself. In compliance with his request I have prepared this series of Catechisms, and in preparing it, have been guided by his views, as they perfectly agree with mine on the subject. I am impressed more strongly than ever with a sense of the great difficulty of the task. It has always been a matter of considerable difficulty even to the most learned theologians to write a plain, practical Catechism. I should have wished that some one more competent, and more experienced in writing, had engaged in the difficult undertaking. Hence I am ready to charge myself with presumption for venturing on so difficult a task, which has occupied the pens of the ablest theologians.

I can find for myself no excuse but in the sincerity with which I have sought principally to benefit that portion of the flock of Jesus Christ which is dearest to His sacred heart—little children.

What has greatly encouraged me to place these Catechisms before the public, is the favorable reports made by those who read them in manuscript, and were competent to judge their theological accuracy, their earnestness and simplicity of language.

As to the defects of my undertaking—which unquestionably are many—I hope the sincerity of a good will, and the earnest desire of benefiting Catholic youth, will be sufficient to plead my cause with my indulgent and considerate brethren of the clergy and laity. And thus, imperfect as the new production may be, I present it to my brethren of the clergy and laity, hoping that it may meet with sound criticisms, communicated to me either publicly or privately.

I have now only to add that I submit this, and whatever else I have written, to the better judgment of our Bishops, but especially to the Holy See, anxiously desirous to think nothing, to say nothing, to teach nothing but what is approved of by those to whom the sacred deposit of Faith has been committed—those who watch over us and are to render an account to God for our souls.

Now, should the Prelates of the Church deem this series of Catechisms well calculated to promote the great cause for which it has been prepared, the writer will believe himself amply rewarded for his labor, and will feel extremely grateful if they encourage their introduction by recommending them to the clergy and laity of their dioceses.

New York:
Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1874.
St. Alphonsus' Church, 234 South 5th Ave.

Introduction—Why We Are in this World

Question: Who created you?

ANSWER: God created me.

Q. Out of what did God make you?

A. God made me out of nothing. 2 Mach. vii. 28.

Q. Of what are you composed?

A. Of two parts—a soul and a body.

Q. To whose likeness did God create you?

A. "God created me to his own image and likeness." Gen. 1. 26.

Q. Is this likeness in your body or in your soul?

A. It is principally in my soul.

Q. Is your soul then a spirit like to God?

A. It is.

Q. Is your soul one like God?

A. It is.

Q. Will your soul live forever like God?

A. It will.

Q. In what else is your soul like to God?

A. In its love for God.

Q. How does this love make the soul like to God?

A. Because in loving God it loves what is infinitely good and perfect, and so loving, tries to make itself good and perfect like to God.

Q. Does God then love Himself?

A. Yes; because being all wise, He knows Himself, who is all wisdom; and being in Himself infinite perfection must love Himself always, and all His creatures in proportion as they resemble Him.

Q. In the one God there are three distinct persons. Is there anything in the soul like to this?

A. Yes; in the soul there are three distinct powers.

Q. What are these powers?

A. The understanding, will, and memory.

Q. Of what use are these three powers to man?

A. By means of them he can learn languages, build churches, palaces, great cities, steamboats, and railroads, write and print books, count days, dates, distances, money, and above all, know and love God.

Q. Can animals do this?

A. No.

Q. Why can they not?

A. Because they have not rational souls.

Q. What lesson are we to learn from this?

A. That man is not a mere animal, made simply for this world, but that he has a soul made to know, love, and serve God, its Creator, whose image and likeness it is.

Q. What is the plain answer to be made to men who say they have no soul?

A. If they say they have no soul they must consider themselves simply animals, and since they are pleased to be animals they had better go and live with the class of beings to which they belong.

Q. Why did God make us to His own image and likeness?

A. That He might bestow upon us His own happiness in heaven. "I am thy reward exceeding great." Gen. XV. 1.

Q. On what condition will He bestow upon us His own happiness?

On condition that we always serve Him on earth. "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve." Matt. iv. 10

Q. How must we serve God?

A. By doing God's will. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. vii. 21.

Q. Were all men made to be forever happy with God in heaven?

A. Yes, all without exception. "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of truth." 1 Tim., ii. 4.

Q. Why are many not saved?

A. Because instead of serving God they seek only the riches and pleasures of this world.

Q. May we not seek and use the goods of this world?

A. We may, so far as they help us to serve God.

Q. How must we regard those goods and pleasures which keep us from serving God?

A. We must neither seek nor use them.

Q. Why?

A. Because God has said: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul." Matt. xvi. 26

Q. How can the goods and pleasures of this world cause us to lose our souls?

A. By drawing us away from God.

Q. Cannot the riches and pleasures of this world make us happy?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because the soul was not created for and by them, but by God for Himself. It was not created for time, but for eternity. the riches and pleasures of this world end with this world; and if we set our happiness on them, it must end with them.

Q. But cannot we love those pleasures and God at the same time?

A. We cannot love both, above all things, at the same time. If we make the riches and pleasures of this world the sole object of our lives, we must forget God, our Creator.

Q. Where then are we to seek true happiness?

A. In God alone.

Q. How are we to seek for true happiness only in God?

A. By serving God according to His will.

Q. What do we say of the man who serves God as God wishes to be served?

A. That he is united with God, or that he is a follower of the only true religion.

Q. Who then is a follower of the true religion?

A. He alone who serves God according to God's will.

Q. What will happen to us after death if we have not served God?

A. God will cast us into the everlasting torments of hell. As we have cast Him off, so will He cast us off, and have nothing to do with us.

Q. What then must always be our greatest care?

A. To do the holy will of God.

PART I.

Lesson I.—God , Our Teacher

Question. Who can teach us how to serve God according to His will?

Answer. Either God Himself, or he to whom God has made His will known.

Q. Has God ever spoken to men, and made His will known to them?

A. Yes; very often.

Q. To whom did he speak?

A. To the patriarchs and the prophets.

Q. What do you mean by "patriarchs?"

A. All those holy men who lived before Moses.

Q. Name some of them.

A. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.

Q. What did God say to them?

A. He told them who He was, why He had made them, in what manner they must worship Him, and what they must believe and do to be happy with Him in heaven, and escape the everlasting pains of hell.

Q. What else did God say to those holy men?

A. He commanded them to tell their fellow-men what he had spoken to them.

Q. What do you mean by "prophets?"

A. Men filled with the Spirit of God.

Q. What Spirit was this?

A. The Holy Ghost, the Lord and Life-giver.

Q. Name some of the prophets.

A. Moses, Elias, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel, Malachias, etc.

Q. Why are they called prophets?

A. Because they foretold things to come.

Q. How could they know things to come?

A. Because God made them known to them.

Q. What did they foretell?

A. They foretold especially the time of the coming of the Redeemer, the circumstances of His birth, of His life, passion, and death.

Q. What else did the prophets foretell of the Redeemer?

A. His resurrection and Ascension, and the sending down of the Holy Ghost, the destruction of Jerusalem, the rejection of the Jews, the conversion of the Gentiles, and the founding, spreading, and duration of His Church.

Q. Why was all this foretold by the prophets?

A. That all men might prepare for the coming of the Redeemer, know Him by the prophecies, and believe and do all that He would command them.

Q. How were men to know for certain that God had spoken to the patriarchs and prophets?

A. Because God Himself bore witness to the truth of their words by miracles.

Q. What do you mean by a miracle?

A. Miracles are most extraordinary works which cannot be done by mere natural powers, but by the power of God alone; such as the raising of the dead to life, giving sight to the blind, and the like.

Q. If holy men work miracles in confirmation of the truth of their words, must we, then, believe that God has spoken through them?

A. Yes; because God cannot permit a miracle except in confirmation of the truth, and therefore, when God speaks, whether it be through man, or in His own divine person, we must listen and obey, simply because it is the voice of God.

Q. Why cannot God permit a miracle in confirmation of error?

A. Because He cannot deceive us.

Q. When did God begin to speak to men?

A. When He first created man.

Q. How long did God continue to speak to men through the patriarchs and prophets?

A. For about four thousand years.

Q. Did God, after that time, speak no more?

A. At the end of that time, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to teach men.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. Jesus Christ is the son of God, true God and true man in one divine person.

Q. In what condition was mankind when the Redeemer came?

A. The grossest darkness of the understanding, and the most lamentable depravity of the will prevailed almost over the entire world.

Q. What was the consequence of this darkness and depravity?

A. All mankind, with the exception of the Jews, having lost the knowledge of God, worshiped creatures, even the very demons, as gods, and the most shameful vices were praised as virtues.

Q. Why did not the Jews also worship false gods?

A. Because the Jews or Israelites were a people chosen by God from the corrupt mass of mankind, and watched over with special care.

Q. Why did God choose the Jews for his people, and watch over them with special care?

A. Because, notwithstanding their sins, God took pity on men, and wished that through the Jews all those laws and truths which He had made known to mankind should be preserved, and that through them salvation might come to the whole world.

Q. For what other reason did God choose the Jews for his people?

A. God also wished that from them at last should be born one holy enough to be the mother of the Redeemer.

Q. What remedy did Jesus Christ apply to heal those universal evils of the understanding?

A. He enlightened men by His divine doctrine and example

Q. What remedy did our blessed Redeemer apply to heal the great evils of the will?

A. He gave us the sacraments and prayer as means to obtain those graces which He merited for us by His life and death, whereby we would be enabled to believe and practise what he had taught us.

Lesson II.—God, Our Teacher by his Church

Q. What did Jesus Christ do in order that all men, even to the end of the world, might learn His holy Doctrine, and have the means of grace by which alone they could be saved?

A. He established a well-organized society of those who believed in Him and professed His whole Doctrine.

Q. What did Jesus Christ call this society?

A. He called it His Church.

Q. Who were the first members of that society?

A. The Immaculate Virgin Mary, the twelve Apostles, the seventy-two disciples, and some other followers of Jesus Christ.

Q. How did Jesus Christ organize His society?

A. From among His followers He chose twelve men to be the witnesses and teachers of His Doctrine and works.

Q. What were these twelve men called?

A. Apostles.

Q. Where were the Apostles to be the witnesses of Christ's doctrine and works?

A. "In Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth." Acts i. 8.

Q. What did Jesus Christ give the Apostles to understand when He said to them that they would be witnesses unto Him all over the world?

A. That He had chosen them in order that, after His ascension into heaven, they should preach to all nations what they had seen and heard from Him.

Q. How did He prepare the Apostles for so difficult and important an office?

A. He first instructed them publicly and privately, for three years and a half, and during forty days after His resurrection, in all the doctrines which they should make known to all nations, and then sent to them the Holy Ghost to enlighten and strengthen them in their office.

Q. What else did He do?

A. He gave His Apostles those very powers which He Himself exercised on earth.

Q. What were those powers?

A. His power as Teacher, as Priest, and as Ruler or King of an everlasting kingdom.

Q. When did Jesus Christ bestow His powers upon His Apostles?

A. When He said to them: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." Matt. xxviii. 18. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." John xx. 21.

Q. What were the Apostles' powers as Teachers?

A. Power to spread abroad, explain, and preserve uncorrupted the holy doctrines of Jesus Christ, and to condemn all false teaching.

Q. In what words did Jesus Christ bestow this power upon the Apostles?

A. In these words: "Go and teach all nations, preach the Gospel to every creature." Matt. xxviii. 18.

Q. What were the Apostles' powers as Priests?

A. Power to offer sacrifice, and administer the sacraments of Christ.

Q. In what words did He bestow this power upon them?

A. In these words: "Do this that I have done," that is, sacrifice this, "in remembrance of me." Luke xxii. 19. "Go, baptize mankind in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19. "Whosoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven them." John xx. 21.

Q. What were the Apostles' powers as Rulers?

A. Power to govern the Church, make laws for the people, and enforce those laws.

Q. In what words did He bestow this power upon them?

A. In these words: "Teach mankind to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. xxviii. 18. "I give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xvi. 19

Q. Were these powers of Teacher, Priest, and Ruler given to all men alike, who believed in Jesus Christ?

A. No; to the Apostles only and their successors.

Q. When, then, our Lord bestowed on His Apostles His own powers of teaching, administering the sacraments, and governing the Church, did He at the same time command all men to hear and obey them?

A. He did, in these words: "Whosoever will not believe, shall be condemned;" and, "He who heareth you heareth me;" and, "He who will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen and publican." Matt. xviii. 17.

Q. What do we learn from all this?

A. That the Church of Jesus Christ was made up of two classes of men: of teachers and hearers; of priests and people; of rulers and subjects; so that we are bound to believe what the Church teaches, receive her sacraments, and obey her laws.

Lesson III.—St. Peter the Head of Christ's Church

Q. Were the Apostles to exercise their powers as they pleased?

A. They were only to exercise their powers under the supreme authority of St. Peter.

Q. Why?

A. Because Jesus Christ appointed St. Peter to be His Representative on earth, and the visible Head of His whole Church.

Q. But is not Christ Himself the Head of the Church?

A. Christ is the invisible Head, but Peter is the visible Head of the Church.

Q. Was it necessary that the Church of Christ should have a Visible Head as well as the Invisible One?

A. Yes; because the entire community of pastors and the faithful are the visible body of the Church of Christ, and a visible body or society must also have a visible head.

Q. Why?

A. Because the principle of supreme authority is a *fundamental* principle of reason and experience.

Q. What do you mean by this?

A. I mean that reason and experience teach us that there can be no order, no law, no civilization without supreme authority; in other words, supreme authority is the foundation of order and law.

Q. Can we see the necessity of such authority whithersoever we turn?

A. We can.

Q. Give some examples?

A. Every ship or steamboat must have its captain. Every railroad engine must have its engineer. In every society we find a president. In every government there must be a

president or a monarch.

Q. Do we find the principle of authority in practice even amongst the savages?

A. Yes; and even amongst brute beasts, even among the tiny insects. We find, for instance, that the ants and the bees have their queen or supreme ruler.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That the same God who observes such wonderful order in the most simple works of nature; the same God who planted in our reason the principle of order and authority, must necessarily observe this order in the greatest of His works—in the establishment of His Church.

Q. How do we know that Christ has established this principle of supreme authority in His Church?

A. We know it from the fact that He gave greater powers to St. Peter than to the rest of the Apostles.

Q. How do we know this?

A. From the words of Christ Himself, who said to Peter: "I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18.

Q. What did our Lord understand by this "rock?"

A. St. Peter himself.

Q. Why so?

A. Because Christ called him Cephas, which is a Syriac word, and means a rock.

Q. What else did our Lord say to St. Peter on this occasion?

A. "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth it shall be loosed also in heaven." V.19

Q. But did not Jesus Christ say the same to the rest of the Apostles?

A. He addressed these words to all the Apostles in common, but He addressed them to St. Peter in particular, saying: "I say to THEE, thou art Peter," etc.

Q. Why did He say so?

A. To show clearly that He wished to bestow on St. Peter some especial power.

Q. Did our Lord make this more clear on some other occasion?

A. Yes; when He said to St. Peter: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." John xxi. 15-17.

Q. What did He mean by lambs?

A. The faithful.

Q. What did He mean by sheep?

A. The pastors.

Q. Why did Jesus Christ speak thus?

A. To show that just as sheep feed the lambs, so also pastors feed the souls of the faithful.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That Christ intrusted to Peter both the pastors and the faithful.

Q. Did the Apostles themselves recognize Peter's supremacy?

A. They did.

Q. Who called together the disciples, and presided over the council which they held in Jerusalem to elect a new Apostle in the place of Judas?

A. St. Peter.

Q. Might this new Apostle have been chosen by St. Peter himself?

A. Yes; undoubtedly.

Q. Who says so?

A. St. John Chrysostom, who lived in the fifth century.

Q. Who first preached Jesus crucified, and converted by his sermon three thousand persons?

A. St. Peter.

Q. Who first declared that the Gentiles were to be admitted to Baptism, according to a divine revelation which he had received on that subject?

A. St. Peter.

Q. Who first decided in an assembly of the Apostles at Jerusalem that Christians were no longer to be subjected to the Jewish law of circumcision?

A. St. Peter.

Q. What are we to learn from this?

A. That St. Peter was the Head of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Q. Why?

A. Because he exercised the office of supreme Head of the Church on all those occasions.

Q. When the evangelists give the names of the Apostles whom do they always name first?

A. St. Peter.

Q. What are the words of St. Matthew, x.2?

A. "The names of the twelve apostles: The first Simon, who is called Peter."

Q. Might it not be said that St. Peter was always named the first either because he was the eldest or because he had been called to the apostleship before the rest?

A. No; because St. Andrew was both older than Peter and had become a disciple of Christ before him.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That the rest of the Apostles acknowledged Peter as the head of the Church.

Q. What Father of the Church writes: "It was not St. Andrew that was appointed head; it was St. Peter"?

A. St. Ambrose, who lived in the fourth century. C. 12, in 2 Corinth.

Q. What Father used this expression: "Behold the Apostle St. Peter, in whom power shines with so much brightness"?

A. St. Augustine, who lived in the fourth century. 2 Lib. de Bapt.

Q. And who writes: "St. Peter was made the chief of the Apostles in order that unity should be preserved in the Church"?

A. St. Optatus, who lived in the fourth century. 2 Lib. adv. Parmen.

Q. And who again wrote as follows: "It is known in all ages that Peter was the Prince and Head of the Apostles, the foundation-stone of the Catholic Church. This is a fact which no one doubts"?

A. The Fathers of the General Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431.

Q. What doctrine do we learn from the writings of those Fathers of the Church?

A. That they and the faithful of all ages acknowledged Peter as the Head of the Church of Christ.

Q. Was it Christ's will that this office of head should be continued from St. Peter to his successors to the end of the world?

A. It was.

Q. Why?

A. Because Christ founded His Church to last to the end of time.

Q. Who has always been acknowledged as the visible Head of the Church of Christ after the death of St. Peter?

A. The Pope or Bishop of Rome.

Q. Why do you say that the Popes or Bishops of Rome are the successors of St. Peter?

A. Because St. Peter established his See at Rome, and died there.

Q. How do you answer those who say that St. Peter never went to Rome?

A. I would ask them three questions:

1. If St. Peter did not suffer martyrdom at Rome, under the Emperor Nero, where did he die?
2. If St. Peter did not die at Rome, from what place, and at what time were his remains carried thither?
3. Did not the Fathers of the Church who lived in the first ages of Christendom, know better who was the first Bishop of Rome than the Protestants of our day can know?

Q. What does St. Augustine say about Peter being at Rome?

A. "After Peter came Linus, and Clement followed after Linus." Epist. ad Generos.

Q. What other Father writes: "St. Peter was the first who occupied the See of Rome, after him came Linus, and after Linus came Clement"?

A. St. Optatus. 2 Lib. adv. Parmen.

Q. And who tells us that "Rome has become the capital of Christendom because it was there that St. Peter established his See"?

A. St. Leo the Great. Serm. I. in Nat. Apost.

Q. What clearly follows from the writings of those Fathers of the Church?

A. That the Popes or Bishops of Rome were always held to be the successors of St. Peter.

Q. Was the office of teacher, of priest, and of ruler in the persons of the other apostles also to continue throughout all time?

A. It was.

Q. How do we know this?

A. From the fact that Jesus Christ gave power to the Apostles to choose others, and ordain them as Bishops, and appoint them as rulers of His Church.

Q. In what words did He give this power?

A. In these: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."

Q. What is the meaning of those words?

A. The meaning is unmistakably this: As My Heavenly Father has empowered me to choose you to take My place on earth, so I empower you to choose others to take your place.

Q. From what other words of our Lord do we know that the threefold office of the Apostles was to continue to the end of the world?

A. From these words of our Lord: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20); that is, I am with you in your successors to the end of the world.

Q. When Jesus Christ chose the Apostles to preach His holy doctrine, and establish His Church all over the world, was it necessary for them to remember the whole doctrine of Christ, understand it perfectly, and preach it in that sense in which Jesus Christ had preached it and wished it to be understood by the whole world?

A. Yes; this was absolutely necessary.

Q. Did Jesus Christ assure the Apostles that He would bestow upon them the grace to remember His whole doctrine, and understand it well?

A. He did.

Q. On what occasion did He give them this assurance?

A. When He said: "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." John xiv. 26.

Q. What effect, then, did the Holy Ghost work in the Apostles when He came down upon them on Whitsunday?

A. He reminded them of all that they had seen and heard from Jesus Christ, and He enlightened them so as to understand His doctrine, and preach it in that sense in which Jesus Christ wished it to be understood and practised.

Q. What is this grace, which the Holy Ghost bestowed upon the Apostles, called?

A. The grace or gift of infallibility in teaching.

Lesson IV.—Infallibility of the Pope

Q. Did our Blessed Saviour foresee that certain men would corrupt or misinterpret His holy Doctrine?

A. He did.

Q. When certain men either corrupted or misinterpreted Christ's holy Doctrine, what was necessary to remove all doubts about its true meaning, and preserve it always pure and uncorrupted?

A. That there should be one particularly privileged by God to set forth and state plainly with *divine certainty* the true meaning of Christ's doctrine in all questions where His doctrine was concerned.

Q. What do we call such a privileged person?

A. The supreme judge in all points of divine law, from whose sentences there is no appeal.

Q. Why is such a judge necessary?

A. To put an end to all disputes about points of divine law.

Q. How so?

A. If every man in the country were to take the laws of the State, and to explain them as he pleased, there would be nothing but confusion and disorder in society. In like manner, if every man were to take the sacred, eternal law of God, the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and to interpret it as he pleased, there would be nothing but confusion in religion.

Q. What safeguard has human wisdom adopted to prevent confusion and disorder in society?

A. It has found it necessary to appoint a supreme judge to decide ultimately in all disputed points of civil law.

Q. What is the plain inference from this?

A. That if even human wisdom sees the necessity of appointing a supreme judge to decide ultimately in all points of civil law, it cannot be supposed that God, who is Infinite Wisdom, should neglect to appoint a supreme judge to decide ultimately in all points of divine law, in order thus to prevent all confusion in religion.

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Q. Was there ever a time when men were left to themselves, to fashion their own religion, to invent their own creed, their own form of worship, and to decide in matters of religion?

A. No; there always existed on earth a visible teaching authority, to which it was a bounden duty of every man to submit.

Q. Whom did God appoint to be this visible teaching authority before the coming of the Redeemer?

A. During the four thousand years that elapsed before the coming of the Redeemer, the doctrines that were to be believed, the feasts that were to be observed, the sacrifices, the ceremonies of worship, everything was regulated by the living, authoritative voice of the patriarchs, the priests, and the prophets.

Q. How do we know that God in the Old Law appointed a tribunal, presided over by the High-Priest, to judge in all controversies, both of doctrine and morals, and from whose decision there was no appeal?

A. The Jewish historian, Josephus, who was well acquainted with the laws and religion of his own nation, says: "The High-Priest offers sacrifice to God before the other priests; he guards the laws, judges controversies, punishes the guilty, and whoever disobeys him is punished as one that is impious towards God." Lib. 2, Contra Appium.

Q. Is there still a greater authority than Josephus bearing witness to the fact?

A. Yes; the Word of God itself bears witness to the fact. "If thou perceive," says holy Scripture, "that there be among you a hard and doubtful matter in judgment between blood and blood, cause and cause, and thou seest that the words of the judges within the gates do vary, arise and go up to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come to the priests, and to the judge that shall be at that time, and thou shalt ask them, and they shall show thee the truth of the judgment. And thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say, and thou shalt follow their sentence. Neither shalt thou decline to the right hand nor to the left hand. But he that will be proud and refuse to obey the commandments of the priest, who ministereth at the time to the Lord thy God, and to the decree of the judge, that man shall die, and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel." Deut. xvii. 8-12.

Q. What do we see from this?

A. Here we see clearly a tribunal appointed by Almighty God Himself to decide in the last resort; a tribunal from whose sentence there is no appeal. There is no exception, the rule is for all, the terrible sentence is pronounced against every transgressor. Whosoever shall refuse to abide by the decision of the High-Priest shall die the death.

Q. How long did this tribunal remain intact?

A. Until the coming of the Saviour.

Q. Who assures us of this?

A. Our Blessed Redeemer Himself, in these words: "The Scribes and Pharisees have sat in the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do." Matt. xxiii. 2.

Q. Now, did our Lord Jesus Christ establish a supreme tribunal; did He give to the world and infallible judge and teacher, to decide ultimately in all controversies, both of faith and morals, whose decision is final, and without appeal?

A. Our Blessed Saviour came not to destroy the Law, but to make it perfect. He therefore established in the New Law that which the Old Law was most necessary for the preservation of faith and morals. He gave to the whole world an infallible judge and teacher, to decide ultimately in all points of faith and morals.

Q. Whom did Jesus Christ appoint as the infallible judge and teacher in all points of faith and morals?

A. St. Peter, the Head of His Church.

Q. Were not all the successors of the Apostles to possess the gift of infallibility?

A. No; the successor of St. Peter, the Pope of Rome, only.

Q. How do we know that the successors of the other Apostles, the Catholic Bishops, were not endowed with the gift of infallibility?

A. Because Jesus Christ never promised it to them.

Q. How do we know that Jesus Christ never promised it to them?

A. Because no such promise is recorded either in Holy Scripture or tradition.

Q. Why did Christ not promise to the Bishops the gift of infallibility?

A. Because He does not multiply and dispense His gifts without necessity.

Q. Was not the gift of infallibility necessary to the Bishops?

A. By no means.

Q. Why not?

A. Because after the Apostles had preached the full doctrine of Christ, their successors had only to guard this doctrine, and deliver it uncorrupted to the faithful.

Q. What does the Apostle St. Paul write to the Bishop St. Timothy on this subject?

A. "Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called." (1 Tim. vi. 20, and 2 Tim. i. 14.) "But evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, erring and driving into error. But continue thou in those things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee." 2 Tim. iii. 13.

Q. But did not Christ promise the Apostles and their successors: "The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, shall be in you, and abide with you forever"? John xiv. 16.

A. He did so promise.

Q. If, then, according to this promise, the Spirit of Truth shall abide forever with the successors of the Apostles, are they not personally infallible?

A. By no means.

Q. Why not?

A. The Spirit of Truth may abide in a person, and yet that person may not be infallible. The Spirit of Truth may abide in a multitude, and yet not each individual of the multitude may possess it in its entirety.

Q. Give an example.

A. A million men may not know the road to a certain city to which they must go. A single guide suffices to set this million on the right road. Once on it, they have only to follow their guide and they cannot go astray. Once the way is pointed out, all know it to be right, but only one could point out the right road to be followed.

Q. Do you mean that Christ wished that in this same manner the Spirit of Truth should abide with the Catholic Bishops?

A. Precisely so; for Christ gave them and all the faithful, in the person of the Head of His Church, an infallible teacher of all the truths which He and His Apostles taught. By invariably following this teacher the Spirit of Truth will always abide with them.

Q. How do we know that the Pope as successor to St. Peter possesses the gift of infallibility?

A. Christ Himself assured St. Peter and his successors of this.

Q. On what occasion?

A. When He told St. Peter that by His prayer to His heavenly Father He had obtained this gift

of infallibility for him and all his successors. "I have prayed for thee (Peter) that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren." Luke xxii. 31, 32.

Q. Why did Christ pray to His Father that St. Peter and his successors should be endowed with the gift of infallibility?

A. Because Christ wished that the never-failing faith of St. Peter and his successors should be forever the foundation-stone of His Church.

Q. On what occasion did Christ assure us of this?

A. When He asked the Apostles: "Whom do you say that I am?" Matt. xvi. 15.

Q. Which of the Apostles made answer to this question?

A. St. Peter.

Q. What was his answer?

A. "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

Q. What answer did Christ make to this reply of St. Peter?

A. He said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church."

Q. What is the meaning of these words of our Lord?

A. Jesus Christ means to say that, as it is My Father who has made known to you, Peter, that I am His Son, I also make known to the whole world, that you and your successors will always know and understand who I am, and what I have taught.

Q. When did Christ build His Church upon Peter, that is, intrust him with the whole flock?

A. When He said to him: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." John xxi. 16.

Q. What is the meaning of this?

A. Christ says that His whole flock, teachers and hearers, priests and people, rulers and subjects, must believe and teach as Peter and his successors believe and teach.

Q. Why?

A. Because his faith, according to Christ's solemn words, shall not fail, since no power shall prevail against Peter or any of his successors so as to cause them to teach anything else than what Christ has taught. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against my Church," built upon Peter's faith. Matt. xvi. 18.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That where Peter, that is, the Pope, is, there is the Church of Christ, or in other words, that all those who believe and teach as the Pope does, form the true Church of Christ. St. Ambrose.

Q. Who, by his own motion, often condemned heresies, both before and after the

first general council?

A. The Pope.

Q. To whom did the Catholic Bishops always have recourse in all controversies both of faith and morals?

A. To the Pope.

Q. If the obstinacy of the party condemned by the Pope made it advisable to have recourse to general councils, were these councils, then, after the most mature deliberation, ever found to do anything else than to confirm the sentence already passed by the Pope?

A. They were not. (See Q. and A. in Additional Questions and Answers)

Q. Did any Pope ever issue any decree concerning the truths of the faith or sound morality, which was not afterwards received by the great body of the Bishops, as containing the most solid and wholesome doctrine?

A. Such a thing never happened.

Q. Could the greatest enemies of the Catholic faith ever prove that any Pope taught any doctrine contrary to the sacred truths taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles?

A. Never. (See Q. and A. in Additional Questions and Answers)

Q. What are we to understand from all this?

A. That it has always been the belief of the Catholic Church that the Pope, in his solemn decisions in matters of faith and morals, is infallible.

Q. If this be true, how then could it happen that some years ago a few Bishops and Priests were said not to have held this to be a doctrine of Catholic faith?

A. Because the divine tradition of this doctrine had not been as yet explicitly defined by the Holy Father.

Q. Did those Bishops, assembled in the Council of the Vatican, continue to oppose the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope, after it was defined?

A. No. All, without exception, freely and joyfully subscribed their names to the decrees of the council, and professed their faith in the infallibility of the Pope.

Q. If, then, in a general council, or assembly of all the Catholic Bishops, the meaning of a certain doctrine of Christ was to be set forth in precise language, and the majority of Bishops would explain it in one sense, and the minority in another, on which side would be the truth?

A. On that side, though it be the minority of Bishops, which agrees with the Pope.

Q. Why?

A. Simply because Christ bound Himself solemnly *only to Peter and his successors that their faith should never fail*; that is, that every one of them would always be so enlightened by the Holy Ghost as to understand the true meaning of His doctrine, and state and teach it plainly with divine certainty. "*Where Peter is, there is the Church.*"

Q. Must we, then, believe that such decisions of the Pope in matters of faith and morals are infallibly true?

A. Yes; because this is an article of faith, which we must believe, as firmly as we believe that there is a God.

Q. If anyone should say, or even think otherwise, what would he be before God?

A. An apostate from the faith.

Q. Does the Pope then teach anything new, when in such misinterpretations of Christ's doctrine he declares what is to be believed?

A. No; he plainly states the truth in the sense in which Jesus Christ and the Apostles preached it.

Q. Can you now tell me whose office it is to guard the doctrine of Christ, as preached by the Apostles, and proclaim and apply it always and everywhere, one and the same, and to defend the rights of God on earth against every enemy, at all times, and in all places?

A. This is the Pope's office.

Q. Who is appointed by God Himself to declare and apply the invariable doctrine of Jesus Christ, and to govern all men and nations, kings and peoples, according to this invariable doctrine?

A. The Pope.

Q. Must the Pope as guardian and judge of the law of God, resist with all his might every passion or tendency of every age, nation, community, or individual, whenever it leaves the law of God?

A. He is bound in conscience to do so.

Q. When does the Pope speak "ex Cathedra," or infallibly?

A. He speaks infallibly whenever in the discharge of his office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, he defines (that is, finally determines), according to his supreme apostolic authority, a doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the Universal Church, or anything else that is conducive to the preservation of faith and morals.

Q. When the Pope, in accordance with the duty of his apostolic ministry and his supreme apostolic authority, proceeds, in briefs, encyclical letters, consistorial allocutions, and other apostolic letters, to declare certain truths, to reprobate perverse doctrines, and condemn certain errors, must such declarations of truth, and condemnations of error, be considered as infallible, and as binding in conscience, and requiring our firm interior assent, although they do not express an anathema on those who disagree?

A. Such declarations of truth and condemnations of error are infallible, or *ex cathedra* acts of the Pope, and, therefore are binding in conscience, and requiring our firm interior assent; to refuse which would be for us a mortal sin, since such a refusal would be a virtual denial of the dogma of infallibility, and we should be heretics were we conscious of such a denial. St. Alphonsus Liguori. Theol. Mor., Lib I., 104.

Q. Are not such doctrinal utterances of the Pontiff of imperfect and incomplete

authority until they are confirmed and accepted by the Bishops of the Church?

A. Nothing is ever farther from the thoughts of the bishops than that the papal declarations of truth, and condemnations of error, should need the confirmation and acceptance of the pastors of the Church to be true utterances of the Holy Ghost, and binding in conscience, because their confirmation and acceptance does not add certainty to that which is already infallible.

Q. What does the Vatican Council teach on this subject?

A. It teaches that "the definitions of the Roman Pontiff, concerning faith and morals, are irreformable of themselves, and not by force of the consent of the Church thereto." Sess. iv., c. iv.

Q. What have the Fathers of the Church styled the Pope?

A.

The mouth of the Church, ever living and open to teach the whole world;
The centre of Christian faith and unity, and the light of truth for the universe;
The Father of souls, the guide of consciences, and the sovereign judge of the religious interests of mankind;

The Prince of priests—a greater Patriarch than Abraham—greater than Melchisedech in priesthood—than Moses in authority—than Samuel in jurisdiction; a Peter in power, Christ by unction, pastor of pastors, guide of guides, the cardinal joint of all churches, the impregnable citadel of the communion of the children of God, the immovable corner-stone upon which the Church of God reposes.

Q. Why have the Fathers given these titles to the Pope?

A. Because the Pope is the infallible teacher of the Church of Christ.

Q. What sentiments, then, should every Catholic express concerning the Pope?

A. I acknowledge in the Pope an authority before which my soul bows, and yet suffers no humiliation.

Lesson V.—Propagation of Christ's Religion

Q. What did the Apostles do after they had received the Holy Ghost on Whitsunday?

A. They went forth into the whole world to instruct all nations, according to the orders given them by Jesus Christ.

Q. What did they do with those who believed their doctrine?

A. They gathered them into congregations.

Q. What came from these congregations of believers?

A. There arose, in many places, communities of Christians, whose rulers were the Apostles.

Q. What did the Apostles do when those communities of Christians became very numerous?

A. They chose from amongst them men whom they ordained Bishops, appointing them everywhere as the spiritual rulers of the new Christian communities, with the commission likewise to ordain and appoint others to like offices.

Q. Were all these communities united with one another?

A. Yes; because they all professed the same faith, partook of the same sacraments, and formed all together one great Christian community, under one common head, St. Peter.

Q. What did they call this great community of Christians under one common head?

A. The Catholic, that is, the universal Church, or, simply, the Church.

Q. What, then, is the Church at the present time?

A. The entire body of pastors and people, bound together by the same divine truths, laws, and means of grace, under one head, the Pope of Rome.

Q. Who are the true successors of the Apostles?

A. Only the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church.

Q. Why?

A. Because they alone are rightly consecrated and in communion with the Pope, the Head of the Church.

Q. Did Christ appoint the Pope alone to govern His Church?

A. The Bishops, too, aid in governing the Church, but only with and under their head, the Pope. "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops, to rule the Church of God." Acts xx. 28.

Q. On what condition did Christ grant any power to His Apostles and their successors?

A. On condition that they would always believe and teach, as the visible Head of His Church believed and taught, and remain obedient to him.

Q. What does St. Irenæus say on the subject?

A. "The Apostles certainly delivered the truth and all the mysteries of our faith to their successors, the pastors. To these, therefore, we ought to have recourse to learn them, especially to the greatest church, the most ancient and known to all, founded at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, *which retains the tradition which it received from them*, and which is derived through a succession of Bishops down to us. To this Church of Rome, on account of its chieffer principality, it is necessary that every church, that is, the faithful everywhere, address themselves, in which Church the tradition from the Apostles is everywhere preserved." Lib. iii. c. 3.

Q. What does St. Cyprian say?

A. "There is but one God and one Christ; there is but one Church and one See, founded upon Peter by our Lord Himself." Lib. i. ep. 8.

Q. What did St. Jerome write to Pope Damasus?

A. "I am attached to your Chair, which is the Chair of St. Peter. I know that the Church is built upon this rock. Whosoever does not eat the Lamb in this house is profane, and whoever does not enter into this Ark, will perish in the waters of the deluge. I do not know Vitalis, I am unacquainted with Meletius, and Paulinus is unknown to me—whoever is not with you is against Jesus Christ, and whoever gathereth not with you, scattereth."

Q. What conclusion are we forced to draw from this constant tradition of the Fathers?

A. That all Christians are bound to be in full communion with the Church of Rome.

Q. Why is the Catholic Church called the Roman Church?

A. Because St. Peter established the See of his primacy in Rome, and because he handed down the same to be the See of all his successors.

Q. How do the Bishops rule the Church?

A. Each Bishop governs the diocese or bishopric assigned to him by the Pope, and according to the regulations of the Pope. They occasionally meet in council to give their opinion about the best way of advancing the welfare of the Church, and to make decrees and regulations, to be approved of by the Pope.

Q. Through whom do the Bishops exercise their office in the particular congregations (parishes) of their dioceses?

A. Through the priests or pastors whom they appoint.

Q. When may a priest discharge the duties of the priesthood?

A. When he has been expressly sent, or authorized, for that purpose, by his lawful Bishop.

Q. By what means are unity and good order maintained in the Church?

A. By the laity being always obedient to the priests, the priests to the Bishops, and the Bishops to the Pope. "Obey your prelates and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls." Heb. xiii. 17.

Lesson VI.—Marks of the Church

Q. How many churches did Christ establish?

A. He established *only one* Church.

Q. How do we know this?

A. Because He said to St. Peter: "Upon thee I will build My Church."

Q. Was it a visible or an invisible Church that Christ established?

A. Christ established a visible Church.

Q. How do we know this?

A. Because Christ has commanded us "to lay our complaints before the Church, that is, before her pastors, and abide by her decision" (Matt. xviii. 17); and because an invisible Church could neither *teach* the law of God nor administer the sacraments.

Q. How does it follow from this that Christ's Church is visible?

A. Because our Lord cannot command us to lay our complaints before *invisible* pastors.

Q. How, then, is the Church of Christ visible?

A. She is visible because all her pastors and members are visible, and have always suffered persecution because they were members of the Church of Christ.

Q. For how many years was this visible Church of Christ to last?

A. It was to last to the end of the world.

Q. How do we know this?

A. Because Jesus Christ said that His Church should last to the end of the world.

Q. What are his words?

A. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20); and, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against my church." Matt. xvi. 18.

Q. What would happen, then, if the Church were not to last to the end of the world?

A. Jesus Christ would have told an untruth; to say which would be blasphemous.

Q. How old is the Church to-day?

A. Over eighteen hundred years since our Saviour ascended into heaven.

Q. In which of the religious societies do we find these marks of the Church of Christ?

A. Only in the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

Q. Can the Roman Catholic Church be traced as far back as eighteen hundred years?

A. It can; because we can trace an uninterrupted succession of Popes and Bishops from Pius IX. to St. Peter, and it is impossible to show that it was established at any later period.

Q. Did the Roman Catholic Church ever cease to exist?

A. Never; for she has always existed, and it would be impossible for one to name a period when she did not exist since the time of her establishment.

Q. Do all admit that the Catholic Church was the first Church, that it is the oldest Church, and, consequently the Church established by Jesus Christ?

A. All must admit this; for it is a fact clearly proven by Scripture and by history.

Q. Who bear witness to this fact?

A. The Jews and the Gentiles bear witness to it, and even Protestants themselves acknowledge it.

Q. How do Protestants acknowledge it?

A. If asked why they call themselves Protestants, they answer: "Because we protest against the Catholic Church."

Q. What follows from this answer?

A. That the Catholic Church is older than Protestantism, otherwise they could not have protested against her.

Q. If we go still farther back, and ask the Greeks how they came to existence, what will be their answer?

A. They must answer: "We began by separating from the Catholic Church in the ninth century."

Q. What follows from this?

A. That the Catholic Church existed for eight hundred years before the Greek Church began, and, consequently, it is older than the Greek Church.

Q. If we thus go back to the very days of the Apostles, what do we find everywhere?

A. That every sect separated from the Catholic Church, and, consequently that the Catholic Church existed before any of them.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That the Catholic Church is the oldest Church, the first Church, and, consequently, the Church established by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Can anything like this be said of any of the non-Catholic religious sects now existing?

A. By no means; since the oldest of them was established only about three hundred years ago.

Q. Do you mean to say that the Protestant doctrine was not known before it was preached by Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII., and John Knox?

A. I do, for it is impossible to show from history what society held this doctrine before Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII., and John Knox.

Q. If the Protestant religion was established fifteen hundred years later than the true Church of Christ, what follows from this?

A. It clearly follows that the Protestant religion is *not* the true Church of Jesus Christ.

Q. But were, then, a Protestant to say to you that his doctrine is the same as that

held by the Apostles and the Church during the first four centuries, what would you answer him?

A. I would simply ask him whether or not he was foolish enough to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles were all Protestants.

Q. Are there still some other marks by which the true Church of Christ may be easily known?

A. Yes, by these four: She is one; she is holy; she is Catholic; she is apostolic.

Q. How many societies are there in this world, in which unity has always existed, and has never been broken?

A. There is only one such society, and this society is the Catholic Church.

Q. In what do her members differ from one another?

A. They differ in their character, their education, their modes of thought; they differ in their language, their habits of life, their sympathies, prejudices; in one word, they differ from one another in everything that distinguishes man from man.

Q. Is there one thing in which they do differ from one another?

A. There is; they do not differ, and never have differed, from one another in their religion, in which alone they are all of one mind and one heart.

Q. How so?

A. Because they believe all the same sacred truths contained in the Apostles' Creed, they are all bound by the same commandments of God and the Church, they have all recourse to the same means of grace, the seven sacraments and prayer, and they unite all in the same divine worship—in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. Can this union in religion ever be broken in the Catholic Church?

A. Never; because the entirety of her faith will, according to Christ's promise, never fail in her Head—the Pope—from whom it will always flow in all its purity upon all her pastors, and through them upon the rest of the faithful; and the pastors, as well as their flocks, are, by the express command of Christ, all bound under pain of mortal sin to teach and to believe as the Pope teaches and believes, and to be perfectly submissive to him.

Q. How is the Roman Catholic Church holy?

A. Because her founder, Jesus Christ, is holy, and she teaches His holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is distinguished by the holiness of so many thousands of her children.

Q. What means the word Catholic?

A. It means "universal."

Q. How is the Roman Church Catholic or universal?

A. Because she exists in all ages, teaches all nations, and maintains all revealed truths, and, therefore, she always went by the name of Catholic, even among her bitterest enemies. "Your faith is spoken of in the whole world." Romans i. 8.

Q. How is the Roman Catholic Church apostolic?

A. Because she has come down directly from the Apostles through the uninterrupted succession of her bishops; and because she received from the Apostles of Christ, who alone could give them, her doctrine, her orders, and her mission.

Q. Is any non-Catholic religious society one?

A. No.

Q. Why can no non-Catholic religious society be one?

A. Because to be one a religious society composed of various members must obey one infallible head only, submit absolutely to be governed by that common head, and obey the infallible teachings of that head. No non-Catholic religious society has or pretends to have such a head and such an infallible teacher.

Q. Give another reason why none of the Protestant sects can be one?

A. Every one of their members assumes to himself more power than Christ gave even to Peter and his successors.

Q. How so?

A. The founders of the Protestant sects and their successors after them, invariably taught their followers that every one has the right to interpret Holy Scripture as he pleases, and to believe as he pleases.

Q. What is the consequence of this freedom of interpretation and belief, as it is called?

A. That no two of them believe alike; that, according to them, Christ's doctrine contradicts itself, and that many of them have already become unbelievers.

Q. Is any non-Catholic religious society holy?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because their founders and their doctrine are unholy.

Q. Why are their founders not holy?

A. Because the founders of Protestantism were bad Catholics, who fell away from the faith. "And of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." Acts xx. 28.

Q. Why is their doctrine not holy?

A. Because it makes our divine Lord Jesus Christ a liar; rejects and derides the means of holiness instituted by Him; and instead of leading men to holiness, leads them to unbelief and idolatry, by leaving every one free to believe whatever he chooses.

Q. Why cannot non-Catholic religious societies be called Catholic?

A. Because they sprang up only in later years, and have not ceased to split again into

countless sects, none of which is universally spread, or continually spreading in the manner ordained by Christ.

Q. What are the Calvinists, Arminians, Antinomians, Independents, Kilhamites, Glassites, Haldanites, Bereans, Swedenborgians, New-Jerusalemites, Orthodox Quakers, Hicksites, Shakers, Panters, Seekers, Jumpers, Reformed Methodists, German Methodists, Albright Methodists, Episcopal Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists, Methodists North, Methodists South, Protestant Methodists, Episcopalians, High Church Episcopalians, Low Church Episcopalians, Ritualists, Puseyites, Dutch Reformed, Dutch non-Reformed, Christian, Israelites, Baptists, Particular Baptists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Hardshell Baptists, Softshell Baptists, Forty Gallon Baptists, Sixty Gallon Baptists, African Baptists, Free-will Baptists, Church of God Baptists, Regular Baptists, Anti-Mission Baptists, Six Principle Baptists, River Brethren, Winebremarians, Menonites, Second Adventists, Millerites, Christian Baptists, Universalists, Orthodox Congregationalists, Campbellites, Presbyterians, Old School and New School Presbyterians, Cumberland Presbyterians, United Presbyterians, The Only True Church of Christ, 573 Bowery, N.Y., up stairs, 5th story, Latter-Day Saints, Restorationists, Schwentfelders, Spiritualists, Mormons, Christian Perfectionists, etc., etc., etc.?

A. They are all so many sects that sprang up from Protestantism.

Q. Was any of the non-Catholic religious societies ever universally called Catholic?

A. None of them was or can, by right, be called by that name.

Q. Why not?

A. Because the name Catholic belongs to the true Church only; for they who remained and remain always united with the ancient body of the faithful have retained their ancient name; but they, on the contrary, who have separated from that body, received a new name, as a mark of their new departure.

Q. Why can none of the non-Catholic religious societies be called apostolic?

A. Because none of them sprang up until fifteen hundred years after the times of the Apostles. They cannot, therefore, trace their descent directly to the Apostles who were commissioned by Christ to teach, and of whom they have no lawful successors. Therefore their teachers, not being empowered by the Apostles or their lawful successors, are not sent by Christ, and are not to be believed and obeyed by Christians.

Q. If, then, none but the Roman Catholic Church has the marks of the one Church of Christ, what follows from this?

A. That the Roman Catholic Church *alone* is the true Church of Jesus Christ.

Q. Give a few proofs to show that the Roman Catholic Church alone is the true Church of Jesus Christ.

- A. 1. The antiquity of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. Her establishment by poor fisherman all over the earth.
3. Her invariable duration from that time.
4. The miracles which are wrought in her.
5. The purity and holiness of her doctrines and precepts.
6. The holiness of all those who live according to her laws.
7. The deep science of her doctors.
8. The almost infinite number of her martyrs.
9. The peace of mind and happiness of soul experienced by those who have entered her

bosom.

10. The fact that all Protestants admit that a faithful Catholic will be saved in his religion.

11. The frightful punishments inflicted by God upon all the persecutors of the Catholic Church.

12. The melancholy death of all the authors of heresies.

13. The constant fulfilment of the words of our Lord, that His Church would always be persecuted—all tend to convince every reasonable mind that the Roman Catholic Church alone is the true Church of Jesus Christ.

Lesson VII.—The Roman Catholic Church Cannot Be Destroyed

Q. What is the world in which we live?

A. It is the temple of God

Q. What forms the carpeted floor of this temple?

A. The earth, with all its thousands of flowers.

Q. What forms the vaulted dome?

A. The blue sky above, with its millions of twinkling stars.

Q. For whom did God create this temple?

A. For man, that man might worship Him therein.

Q. What, then, is the world?

A. It is only the temple of religion, reared by God to His own honor and glory, and to the benefit of His servant, man.

Q. Does God watch over the world—the temple of His religion.

A. He watches over it with unceasing care, so that not even a grain of sand, not one atom of matter, has as yet been lost ever since the first morning of creation.

Q. Is it not of far greater importance for God to watch over the preservation of His religion?

A. It is.

Q. Why?

A. Because the preservation of the true religion, or of the true worship and service of God, is of greater importance than the preservation of the world—the material temple in which He is worshipped.

Q. How do we know this?

A. Because, to create the world God used no effort. He simply said: "Be it done," and it was done. But to create and establish His Church, the Son of God sacrificed wealth, honors, pleasure, and everything that man holds dear. He suffered poverty, contempt, persecution. He labored during His whole life, and at last died on a gibbet, and poured out every drop of

His sacred blood.

Q. If God, then, preserves with such care the universe—the earthly, material temple, which cost Him nothing—will He not preserve with greater care His heavenly temple, His holy Church, which cost Him His blood and life?

A. He will, indeed, because the temple of this world without religion would be a sad mockery, a worthless encumbrance. It would have failed in the object for which God created it.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That before God allows His religion to be destroyed He must, of necessity, first destroy the world, which is the temple of religion; in other words, sooner shall the sun refuse its light, sooner shall the precious Blood of Jesus Christ lose its atoning power; sooner shall God cease to be God, than the Church of Jesus Christ cease to be the true Church.

Q. But let us suppose the Church of Jesus Christ had ceased to exist, who would be able to restore her to life?

A. God alone.

Q. Why?

A. Because to raise a dead person or the Church to life, is a far greater work than to preserve that person or Church in life; it is equal to the work of creation. Even the Apostles themselves could not give life to the Church; they could, with the assistance of God, only preserve that life which Jesus Christ had given her.

Q. How great, then, must be he who could restore that dead Church to life?

A. He must be greater than the Apostles; he must, at least, be equal to Jesus Christ Himself.

Q. But are there not men who tell us that they have raised the dead Church to life and restored her?

A. Yes; very many.

Q. Name some of these wonderful men.

A. Martin Luther, Henry VIII., Calvin.

Q. What did Martin Luther do?

A. He claimed to restore the Church to life; to reestablish and reform her.

Q. How did our Lord Jesus Christ establish His Church?

A. By leading a life of poverty and pain. "He had not where to lay His head." By renouncing all that the world holds dear. By practising through His whole life the three great virtues of poverty, chastity, and entire obedience—obedience even to the death of the Cross.

Q. How did Luther establish his Church?

A. By doing the exact opposite of all this. By breaking his vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Q. Can the church of Luther, then, be the Church of Christ?

A. No; unless the Son of God were to change His nature, which is impossible.

Q. Is not the Catholic Church the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth, which He has acquired with so much toil and labor and suffering?

A. Yes; it is the kingdom which He has purchased with His own blood, and which He has loved more than His own life.

Q. Will any power be able to tear this kingdom from Jesus Christ?

A. It would be blasphemous to think so.

Q. Is not the Catholic Church the sheepfold of which Jesus Christ is the Shepherd?

A. She is.

Q. Will the hellish wolf ever be able to take entire possession of the sheepfold in spite of her Divine Shepherd?

A. Sooner will the heavens and the earth pass away than that this will happen.

Q. Is not the Catholic Church the household of which Jesus Christ is the Master?

A. She is.

Q. Will Satan be able to take possession of this household in spite of its Divine Master?

A. No one can say so without blasphemy.

Q. Is not the Catholic Church the Body of Jesus Christ?

A. The Church, says St. Paul, is the Body of Christ.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That Christ is inseparably united with His Church.

Q. What, then, would it be for one to say that the Church could be destroyed?

A. It would be to say that Christ or God can be overcome, which would be the height of madness and blasphemy.

Q. How long will Christ protect and defend His own Body—the Catholic Church?

A. To the end of the world.

Q. In what words has He given us this assurance?

A. In these words: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20); and, therefore, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against my Church."

Q. Is there any other reason why the Catholic Church cannot be destroyed?

A. Yes; the true life of the Catholic Church is the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, who, according to the promise of Jesus Christ, will abide with His Church for ever.

Q. What is meant by this promise?

A. That the Holy Ghost will enlighten the pastors of the Catholic Church to preserve and deliver her holy doctrine to the end of the world uncorrupted, and encourage them and the faithful to live up to it, and even to lay down their lives for it. St. John xiv. 16, and Gal. iv. 6.

Q. What follows from this?

A. It follows that, although the hands of blind or wicked men may rob the Church, may pluck the crown from the Pontiff's brow, may drive her prelates into exile or death, may destroy and defile her sanctuaries, may persecute her children and massacre them by thousands, yet her faith, planted by the Son of God on earth, will gloriously shine and endure to the end of the world.

Lesson VIII.—What Cannot And What Can Be Reformed In The Church

Q. What follows from the fact that the holy Roman Catholic Church can never be destroyed by any created power?

A. That it would be the sin of heresy for any one to say that a reform of the doctrine or the constitution of the Roman Catholic Church could ever become necessary.

Q. Can anyone change the doctrine of Jesus Christ, or the articles of faith, the commandments, or the sacraments?

A. To think so and to attempt to do so would be as foolish as it would be for one to attempt to reform the visible world and the laws which God has established to preserve and maintain it.

Q. Could some new doctrine, new commandment, or new sacrament be added; or could some of the articles of faith, some of the commandments, or some of the sacraments be left out?

A. By no means.

Q. Why not?

A. Because not even the Apostles themselves had power from Christ to add to, or leave out, any portion of Christ's doctrine.

Q. How do we know this?

A. Because Jesus Christ said to the Apostles: "Go and teach all nations, teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

Q. In what other words has our Blessed Saviour assured us that His holy doctrine will never suffer any change?

A. In these words: "Amen, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled." Matt. v. 18. "Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass." Matt. xxiv. 35.

Q. What does St. Paul say to assure us that nothing whatsoever can be added to, or left out of the doctrine of Jesus Christ?

A. He says: But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before so now I say again: if any one preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be accursed." Gal. i. 8, 9.

Q. Is there nothing in the Catholic Church that may be reformed?

A. Nothing in the doctrine which was delivered to her from the beginning to teach, but the manners of such of her pastors and children as fail to live up to her teachings, may and ought to be reformed.

Q. May Priests and even Bishops, nay, even a Pope, fail to live up to Christ's holy doctrine?

A. They may, indeed; and certain periods of the lives of some of them have been very disedifying.

Q. How can we easily account for this?

A. Because one can know and teach the true doctrine of Christ without practising it.

Q. What, then, is the answer to those who object to our religion because the lives of certain pastors of the Church have been disedifying?

A. The lives of the scribes and the Pharisees were very disedifying. Nevertheless our blessed Saviour told the multitudes and His disciples that "they have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not: for they say and do not." Matt. xxiii. 2.

Q. Does the Lord make use of apostate Catholics, such as Martin Luther, Calvin, John Knox, Henry VIII., King of England, to reform the manners of the people?

A. The thought is absurd. The lives of those men were evil, and it is only the devil that makes use of them to pervert the people still more. The Lord makes use of His saints, such as a St. Francis of Assisium, a St. Dominick, a St. Ignatius, a St. Alphonsus, to convert the people and reform their evil manners by explaining to them the truths of faith, the commandments, and the necessity of receiving the sacraments with proper dispositions, and by setting them in their own lives the loftiest example of faith, purity, and all Christian virtues.

Q. Is it possible to reform men in any other way?

A. Since the coming of the Redeemer it has never been heard that men were reformed and made virtuous by any other means than those which Jesus Christ left to His Church.

Lesson IX.—The Faith of the Roman Catholic.

Q. What do the words "I believe" mean?

A. They mean that I hold to be true that which another tells me.

Q. What must we know of a person to believe firmly all his words?

A. That he is truthful and knows well the things which he tells us.

Q. Is God truthful?

A. "He is Truth itself." Rom. iii. 4.

Q. Does God know all things well?

A. "He knows all things as they are." 1 John iii. 20.

Q. Why, then, must we firmly believe all that God has made known?

A. Because He can neither deceive nor be deceived. "God is not as a man, that he should lie." Numb. xxiii. 19.

Q. What is to believe God?

A. It is to believe, without doubting, that whatever God has said is infallibly true.

Q. Can we of ourselves have this firm faith?

A. No; it is a particular gift and light of God. "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8.

Q. What does this gift bring about in the soul?

A. It enlightens the understanding, and moves the will of man to believe without doubting *all that God has made known*. "Faith is the evidence of things that appear not." Heb. xi. 1.

Q. To whom did God make known all that we must believe and do?

A. Only to the Roman Catholic Church.

Q. From whom, then, must all men learn that they must believe and do?

A. From the Roman Catholic Church, because she alone was appointed by God to teach the truths of salvation to all nations.

Q. Is to believe what the Roman Catholic Church teaches not the same as to believe God Himself?

A. It is, indeed.

Q. Why?

A. Because Jesus Christ has said to the pastors of the Church: "He who heareth you heareth me, and he who despiseth you despiseth me."

Q. What, then, is the faith of the Roman Catholic?

A. It is a grace and light of the Holy Ghost, which enables him to believe most firmly all that God teaches him by His Church.

Q. Is this faith of the Roman Catholic a divine or human faith?

A. It is divine faith.

Q. Why is it divine?

A. Because, by the light of grace, the Catholic knows for certain that the pastors of the Church are commissioned by God Himself to teach all men, in His name, authoritatively and infallibly, all the sacred and immutable truths of salvation, and, therefore, he feels himself bound in conscience to believe them without hesitation.

Q. Is this divine faith absolutely necessary for salvation?

A. Yes; because it is only by divine faith that we can please God.

Q. Who assures us of this?

A. Jesus Christ Himself.

Q. What are His words?

A. "Go and teach all nations.—He that believeth not shall be condemned." Mark xvi.

Q. What does St. Paul say of those who do not believe God, when He speaks to them through those whom He appointed to teach men?

A. That "it is impossible to please God without faith." Heb. xi.

Q. What, then, is the rule of faith which Jesus Christ gave to all men?

A. To listen to His living voice, speaking through the pastors of His Church, and to believe them.

Q. Can men possibly have divine faith out of the Catholic Church?

A. Out of the Catholic Church there can be none but human faith.

Q. What do you mean by human faith?

A. To believe a man on his own authority.

Q. Do those who are out of the Church, and teach and preach to the people, teach and preach on their own authority?

A. They do; because they are not sent by God, nor have they received any mission from His Church.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That those who believe them do not believe God, but man, and, therefore, their faith is only human, which availeth them nothing unto salvation.

Lesson X.—Qualities of Faith.

Q. When is our faith quite pleasing to God?

A. When it is *strong, lively, entire, and sound.*

Q. When is our faith strong?

A. When we believe without the least doubt, and choose to lose all, even our life, rather than fall away from it.

Q. When is our faith lively?

A. When we practise what our faith teaches.

Q. When is our faith entire?

A. When we believe all the truths which the Catholic Church teaches, as contained in the Holy Scripture or tradition.

Q. When is our faith sound?

A. When we avoid not only open heresy, but also diligently shun, and in our hearts dissent from, those errors which approach it more or less closely, and religiously observe those constitutions and decrees whereby such evil opinions, either directly or indirectly, have been proscribed and prohibited by the Holy See.

Lesson XI.—Holy Scripture and Tradition

Q. What do you mean by Holy Scripture?

A. A collection of books which were written by holy men, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and acknowledged by the Catholic Church to be the written Word of God.

Q. How is Holy Scripture divided?

A. Into the books of the Old and the New Testament; or, of the Old and the New Law.

Q. What are we told in the books of the Old Testament?

A. In the books of the Old Testament we are told those truths which God made known before the coming of Christ.

Q. What are we told in the books of the New Testament?

A. Some of the truths which God made known through Jesus Christ and His Apostles.

Q. Is it easy for everyone to understand the Holy Scripture?

A. There is nothing more difficult than to understand the true meaning of every passage of the Scripture.

Q. How do we know this?

A. From Holy Scripture itself, which says that "there are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction." 2 Peter iii. 16.

Q. May not everyone explain the Bible in his own private manner?

A. "No prophecy of the Scripture," says St. Peter, "is made by private interpretation." 2 Peter i. 20.

Q. To whom belongs the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures?

A. To the Catholic Church alone.

Q. Why?

A. "Because the Apostles carefully entrusted the Scriptures to their successors; and to whom the Scriptures were entrusted, to them also was committed the interpretation of Scripture." St. Irenaeus.

Q. How does the Church make known the meaning of any passage of Scripture?

A. She makes it known either directly by a solemn definition, or by the universal consent of the Church dispersed throughout the world; and she makes it known indirectly when she tells us that we are to interpret Scripture in such a way that our interpretation shall be in harmony with her teaching upon all other points of Christian doctrine.

Q. Have any great evils followed from the unrestricted private interpretation of the Bible?

A. Yes; numberless heresies and impieties.

Q. What have the chief pastors of the Church done to guard the faithful against corrupted Bibles, and against erroneous interpretations of the Bible?

A. They have decreed—1. That, with regard to reading the Bible in the vernacular, we should have the learning and piety requisite for it. 2. That the translation should be approved by the Holy See, or accompanied with explanations by a Bishop.

Q. Why did you say that in the New Testament we are told some of the truths, and not all the truths which God made known through Jesus Christ and the Apostles?

A. Because all the truths preached by Jesus Christ and the Apostles are not recorded in the Bible.

Q. How do we know this?

A. From the Bible itself, which says: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book." John xx. 30.

Q. Why did the Apostles not write down all that Jesus had taught?

A. Because Jesus Christ had not commanded them to write, but to preach His doctrine. "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark xvi.15.

Q. What is the unwritten doctrine of Jesus Christ and the Apostles called?

A. Tradition.

Q. How did the unwritten doctrine of Jesus Christ come down to us?

A. The Apostles took great care to instruct their disciples thoroughly, and make them capable of so instructing others. Thus their pure doctrine was delivered to the first Bishops and priests of the Roman Catholic Church. By these, it was in like manner handed down to their successors; and so on, unimpaired, to those who, at the present time, teach in the Catholic Church.

Q. How do we know this?

A. We know it from what St. Paul writes in his Second Epistle to the Bishop Timothy (chap. 11.2), and from the early Fathers of the Church.

Q. What does St. Paul write?

A. "And the things which *thou hast heard of me* by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also."

Q. Which of the early Fathers of the Church writes, when speaking of the ninety-first heresy: "All things are not found in the Holy Scripture, for the Apostles have taught us some by tradition, some by writing"?

A. St. Epiphanius.

Q. Who is it that writes: "Of the many truths of faith held by the Church, some have been received from the inspired writings, others from tradition; both sources are equally pure and certain"?

A. St. Basil, in his treatise on the Holy Ghost. Chap. xxvii.

Q. Is that which was taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, but which is not written, less true than that which is written?

A. The one is just as true as the other.

Q. Why?

A. Because the Apostles taught the true doctrine of Jesus Christ not less by their preaching, than by their writings, and the Holy Ghost expressed His will, as well by their tongues as by their pens.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That we must believe the unwritten Word of God as firmly as the written.

Q. Who assures us most emphatically of this?

A. St. Paul, in these words: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast; and *hold the traditions* which you have learned, whether *by word*, or by our Epistle." 2 Thess. 11. 14.

Q. Was this also the belief of the Fathers of the Church?

A. It was; for St. John Chrysostom writes, in his 4th homily on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians: "Therefore it is evident that the Apostles taught many things *without writing*, which we must *believe as firmly* as those which are written."

Q. Name some of those truths of which the Bible does not speak, but which we believe from tradition?

A. We know only from tradition—1. That little children are to be baptized.
2. That we must keep holy the Sunday instead of the Saturday.
3. We know only from tradition those books which are divine, and contain the written word of God.

Q. But was it not possible that those truths which were taught by the Apostles, but

were not written, might easily be corrupted, or forgotten altogether, because not recorded in Holy Scripture?

A. No; because God himself took care that what He had taught should not be forgotten, but be handed down to us uncorrupted.

Q. Was there any written Word of God for two thousand years, from Adam down to Moses?

A. There was not.

Q. How then did all that God spoke to Adam, Noah, etc., come down uncorrupted to Moses, who was the first to write down the Word of God?

A. By tradition; that is, God took care that the Patriarchs, His faithful servants, should hand down by word of mouth His doctrine uncorrupted from generation to generation.

Q. Could not, and did not God do the same from the time of the Apostles down to us?

A. He could, and did, by means of the faithful pastors of His Church.

Q. How did the pastors of His Church hand down to us the unwritten doctrine of the Apostles?

A. Partly by word of mouth and partly by their writings, in which they explain the doctrine of the Apostles, written and unwritten.

Q. What do we understand from this?

A. That, for example, the faith of the Catholic Church in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament would have been at all times precisely what it is, had it pleased God that the passages in Holy Scripture, relating to it, had never been written; and so with all the rest of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Q. Are the doctrines of the Catholic Church then entirely independent of Scripture?

A. They are; because she taught her doctrines, and they were believed by the early Christians before the New Testament was written—centuries, indeed, before the Bible was collected into its present form; and she would have done so, in precisely the same manner, had they never been written.

Q. What, then, do we mean when we say: "I believe the Holy Catholic Church"?

A. We mean that we firmly believe in the fact that Jesus Christ has established a visible church, endless in her duration, and infallible in her doctrine, which we must believe and obey without reserve, if we would obtain eternal salvation; and that this Church is no other than the Roman Catholic Church.

Q. How do people come to lose this faith?

- A. 1. By want of instruction.
2. By neglect of prayer and other religious duties.
3. By worldliness and a wicked life.
4. By reading bad books.
5. By intercourse with scoffers at religion.
6. By mixed marriages.

7. By becoming members of secret societies.
8. By pride and subtle reasoning on the mysteries of our religion.
9. By want of submission to the Church.
10. By godless education.

Lesson XII.—No Salvation Outside of the Roman Catholic Church.

Q. Since the Roman Catholic Church alone is the true Church of Jesus Christ, can any one who dies outside of the Church be saved?

A. He cannot.

Q. Why not?

A. Because one who does not do the will of God cannot be saved.

Q. Is it, then, the will of God that all men should be Catholics?

A. Yes; because it is only in the Roman Catholic Church that they can learn the will of God; that is, the full doctrine of Jesus Christ, which alone can save them.

Q. Did Jesus Christ Himself assure us most solemnly, and in plain words, that no one can be saved out of the Roman Catholic Church?

A. He did, when He said to His Apostles: "Go and teach all nations, and teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. He that believeth not all these things shall be condemned."

Q. Did Jesus Christ assure us in other words of the damnation of those who die out of His Church?

A. He did in these words: "He who will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." Matt. xviii. 17.

Q. Can you give some further proofs to show that no one can be saved out of the Roman Catholic Church?

A. From these words of Jesus Christ: "Other sheep I have who are not of this fold. them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and they shall be one fold and one shepherd." John x. 16

Q. How can you show from these words of our Lord that all who wish to be saved must be Roman Catholics?

A. Because in this passage He plainly declares that all those of His sheep who are not of His fold (that is, of His Church) must, as a *necessary* condition of their salvation, be brought to that fold.

Q. What do the Fathers of the Church say about the salvation of those who die out of the Roman Catholic Church?

A. They all, without exception, pronounce them infallibly lost forever.

Q. What did St. Augustine and the other Bishops of Africa, at the Council of Zirta, A.D. 412, say about them?

A. "Whosoever," they said, "is separated from the Catholic Church, however commendable in his own opinion his life may be, he shall, for the very reason that he is separated from the Union of Christ, not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii. 36.

Q. What does St. Cyprian tell us about the salvation of those who die out of the Roman Catholic Church?

A. He says that, "He who has not the Church for his mother cannot have God for his Father;" and with him the Fathers in general say, that "as all who were not in the ark of Noah perished in the waters of the deluge, so shall all perish who are out of the true Church."

Q. Who are out of the pale of the Roman Catholic Church?

A. All unbaptized persons, unbelievers, apostates, excommunicated persons, and all heretics.

Q. How do we know that unbaptized persons are not saved?

A. Because Jesus Christ has said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5.

Q. How do we know that unbelievers are not saved?

A. Because it is said of them that they do not please God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Q. How do we know that apostates are not saved?

A. Because to fall away from the faith is a great sin, which makes one lose the kingdom of heaven.

Q. How do we know that persons justly excommunicated, who are unwilling to do what is required of them before they are absolved, are not saved?

A. Because the sin of great scandal, for which they were as dead members expelled from the communion of the Church, excludes them from the kingdom of heaven.

Q. What is the meaning of the word heretic?

A. Heretic is a Greek word, and means simply a chooser.

Q. Who, then, is a heretic?

A. A baptized person who chooses among the doctrines proposed to him by the Roman Catholic Church, to accept such doctrines as they please him, and to reject the rest.

Q. How do we know that heretics are not saved?

A. Because St. Paul the Apostle assures us that such a chooser or heretic is condemned. "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid; knowing that he who is such an one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment." Tit. iii. 10, 11.

Q. Are there any other reasons to show that heretics, or Protestants who die out of the Roman Catholic Church, are not saved?

A. There are several. They cannot be saved because

1. They have no divine faith.
2. They make a liar of Jesus Christ, of the holy Ghost, and of the Apostles.
3. They have no faith in Christ.
4. They fell away from the true Church of Christ.
5. They are too proud to submit to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ.
6. They cannot perform any good works whereby they can attain heaven.
7. They do not receive the Body and Blood of Christ.
8. They die in their sins.
9. They ridicule and blaspheme the Mother of God and His Saints.
10. They slander the spouse of Jesus Christ—the Catholic Church.

Q. Why is it that Protestants have no divine faith?

A. Because they do not believe God in those whom He has appointed to teach.

Q. Who is the teacher among Protestants?

A. Every one is his own teacher, his own law-giver and judge in matters of religion.

Q. Was there ever a time when God left men to themselves, to fashion their own religion, to invent their own creed, and their own form of worship?

A. No; from the beginning of the world God established on earth a visible teaching authority, to which it was the bounden duty of every man to submit.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That Protestants, by refusing to submit to that divine teaching authority, cannot have divine faith.

Q. What is the act of faith of a Protestant?

A. O my God, I believe nothing except what my own private judgment tells me to believe; therefore I believe that I can interpret Thy written word—the Holy Scriptures—as I choose. I believe that the Pope is anti-Christ; that any man can be saved, provided he is an honest man; I believe that faith alone is sufficient for salvation; that good works, and works of penance, and the confession of sins are not necessary, etc.

Q. Is this an act of divine faith?

A. It is rather a great blasphemy against God; it is the language of Luther, who, according to his own avowal, learned it from the devil.

Q. But if a Protestant should say—"I have nothing to do with Luther, or Calvin, or Henry VIII., or John Knox; I go by the Bible" what would you answer him?

A. In that case you adopt and go by the principles and spirit of these men, and you change the written Word of God into the word of man.

Q. How so?

A. Because every Protestant interprets Holy Scripture in his own private manner, giving it that meaning which he chooses to give it, and thus, instead of believing the Word of God, he believes rather his own private interpretation of it, which is but the word of man.

Q. Now, what is man without divine faith?

A. Such a man is profane, and devoid of all religion; and for refusing all obedience to his Sovereign Lord, he will never enjoy His presence, or see clearly what he is not willing to believe humbly.

Q. How do Protestants make a liar of Jesus Christ?

A. Jesus Christ says: "Hear the Church." "No;" say Luther and all Protestants, "do not hear the Church, protest against her with all your might!"

Jesus Christ says: "If any one will not hear the Church, look upon him as a heathen and a publican." "No," says Protestantism, "if any one does not hear the Church, look upon him as an apostle, as an ambassador of God."

Jesus Christ says: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against my Church." "No," says Protestantism, "'Tis false; the gates of hell have prevailed against the Church for a thousand years and more."

Jesus Christ has declared St. Peter, and every successor to St. Peter—the Pope—to be his Vicar on earth. "No," says Protestantism, "the Pope is Anti-Christ."

Jesus Christ says: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light." Matt. xi. 30. "No," said Luther and Calvin "it is impossible to keep the commandments."

Jesus Christ says: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. xix. 17. "No," said Luther and Calvin, "faith *alone*, without good works, is sufficient to enter into life everlasting."

Jesus Christ says: " Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Luke, iii. 3. "No," said Luther and Calvin, "fasting, and other works of penance are not necessary in satisfaction for sin."

Jesus Christ says: "This is my body." "No," said Calvin, "this is only the figure of Christ's Body, it will become his body as soon as you receive it."

Jesus Christ says: "I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." Matt. xix. 9. "No," say Luther and all Protestants, to a married man, "you may put away your wife, get a divorce, and marry another."

Jesus Christ says to every man: "Thou shalt not steal." "No," said Luther to secular princes, "I give you the right to appropriate to yourselves the property of the Roman Catholic Church."

Q. How do Protestants make a liar of the Holy Ghost?

A. The Holy Ghost says in Holy Scripture: "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccles. ix. 1); "Who can say: My heart is clean, I am pure from sin"? (Prov. xx. 9); and "Work your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philip. 11. 12). "No," said Luther and Calvin, "but whosoever believes in Jesus Christ, is in the state of grace."

Q. How do Protestants make liars of the Apostles?

A. St. Paul says: "If I should have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "No," said Luther and Calvin, "faith *alone* is sufficient to save us."

St. Peter says that in the Epistles of St. Paul there are many things "hard to be understood,

which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as also the other Scriptures, to their own perdition." 2 Eph. iii. 16. "No," said Luther and Calvin, "the Scriptures are very plain, and easy to be understood."

St. James says: "Is any sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord." Ch. v. 14. "No," said Luther and Calvin, "that is a vain and useless ceremony."

Q. Now, do you think God the Father will admit into heaven those who thus make liars of His Son Jesus Christ, of the Holy Ghost, and the Apostles?

A. No; He will let them have their portion with Lucifer in hell, who first rebelled against Christ, and who is the father of liars.

Q. Have Protestants any faith in Christ?

A. They never had.

Q. Why not?

A. Because there never lived such a Christ as they imagine and believe in.

Q. In what kind of Christ do they believe?

A. In such a one of whom they can make a liar, with impunity, whose doctrine they can interpret as they please, and who does not care about what a man believes, provided he be an honest man before the public.

Q. Will such a faith in such a Christ save Protestants?

A. No sensible man will assert such an absurdity.

Q. What will Christ say to them on the day of judgment?

A. I know you not, because you never knew Me.

Q. Can a man be saved who has left the true Church of Christ—the Holy Catholic Church?

A. No; because the Church of Christ is the kingdom of God on earth, and he who leaves that kingdom shuts himself out from the kingdom of Christ in heaven.

Q. Have Protestants left the true Church of Christ?

A. They have, in their founders, who left the Catholic Church either through pride or through the passion of lust and covetousness.

Q. Who were the first Protestants?

- A. 1. Martin Luther, a bad German priest, who left his convent, broke the solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which he had made to God, married a nun, and became the founder of the Lutherans.
2. Henry VIII., a bad Catholic king of England, who murdered his wives, and founded the Episcopalian or Anglican Church.
3. John Calvin, a wicked French Catholic, who was the founder of the Calvinists.
4. John Knox, a bad Scottish priest, who was the founder of the Presbyterians or Puritans.

Q. What great crime did these wicked men commit?

A. They rebelled against the Church of Jesus Christ, and caused a great number of their Catholic countrymen to follow their bad example.

Q. What will be the punishment of those who wilfully rebel against the Holy Catholic Church?

A. Like Lucifer, and the other rebellious angels, they will be cast into the everlasting flames of hell.

Q. Who has assured us of this?

A. Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God.

Q. What are His words?

A. "He who will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." MAtt. xviii. 17.

Q. What does Jesus Christ tell us in these words?

A. He tells us plainly that he who is out of His Church, and does not obey her, is before Him as the heathen and publican.

Q. What follows from this?

A. It follows that, as the heathen is damned, so, also, all those will be damned who die out of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Q. Can a man be saved who is too proud to submit to the Head of the Church of Christ, and despises Jesus Christ in His representative—the Pope?

A. He cannot; because Jesus Christ says: "He who despiseth you (the Apostles and their successors) despiseth me."

Q. Do Protestants despise Jesus Christ in the person of St. Peter and his successors?

A. They do; for Luther taught them that whoever does not oppose the authority of the Pope cannot be saved. 1 Vol. Germ. Edit., f. 353.

Q. Do you think Christ can admit into Heaven him by whom He is despised?

A. This is impossible, and of such a one is true what St. Paul says: "He that resisteth the power that is from God, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation." Rom. xiii. 1,2.

Q. Can any one enter into the Kingdom of Heaven without good works?

A. No.

Q. How do we know this?

A. Because on the last day of judgment Christ will say to the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. For I was hungry and you gave me not to eat, I was thirsty and

you gave me not to drink." Matt. xxv. 41, 42.

Q. Do not Protestants perform such good works?

A. Many of them do.

Q. Will they be saved on account of such good works?

A. By no means; because works, however good in themselves, performed outside of the church established by Jesus Christ, are not accompanied and vivified by divine faith, without which it is impossible to please God, and, therefore, they do not, they cannot merit the everlasting joys of Heaven. As faith without works is dead, so also works without faith are dead and cannot save the doer from damnation.

Q. What does Jesus Christ say of those who do not receive His Body and Blood?

A. Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, you shall not have life in you. John vi. 54.

Q. Do Protestants receive the Body and Blood of our Lord?

A. No, because their ministers are not priests, and consequently have no power from Jesus Christ to say Mass, in which, by the words of consecration, bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That they will not enter into life everlasting, and deservedly so, because they abolished the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. What was the consequence of the abolition of Mass?

A. By abolishing the Mass, they robbed God the Father of the infinite honor which Jesus Christ renders Him therein, and themselves of all the blessings which Jesus Christ bestows upon those who assist at this holy sacrifice with faith and devotion. "Wherefore the sin of the young men (the sons of Heli) was exceeding great before the Lord, because they withdrew men from the sacrifice of the Lord." 1 Kings ii. 17.

Q. Do you believe that God the Father will admit into heaven these robbers of His infinite honor?

A. By no means; because if those are damned who steal temporal goods of their neighbor, how much more will those be damned who deprive God of His infinite honor and their fellow-men of the infinite spiritual blessings of the Mass.

Q. Can a man be saved who dies in the state of mortal sin?

A. He cannot; because God cannot unite Himself to a soul in heaven who, by mortal sin, is His enemy.

Q. Do Protestants commit other mortal sins besides those above mentioned?

A. Very many besides.

Q. How do you prove this?

A. If it is a mortal sin for a Roman Catholic wilfully to doubt only one article of his faith, it is

also, most assuredly, a mortal sin for Protestants wilfully to deny not only one truth, but almost all the truths revealed by Jesus Christ.

Q. Do they die in the sins of apostasy, blasphemy, slander, etc.?

A. They do, because all die in mortal sin who, having grievously offended Almighty God, are not willing to confess their sins.

Q. How do we know this?

A. Because Jesus Christ assures us that those sins which are not forgiven by His apostles and their successors, by means of confession, will not be forgiven. "Whose sins you retain they are retained." John xx. 22, 23.

Q. Are Protestants willing to confess their sins to a Catholic Bishop or priest, who alone has power from Christ to forgive sins? "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."

A. No, for they generally have an utter aversion to confession, and therefore their sins will not be forgiven throughout all eternity.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That they die in their sins and are damned.

Q. If any one loves God, will he also love the Mother of God and the Saints?

A. He will, undoubtedly.

Q. Do Protestants love the Mother of God and the Saints?

A. They do not, or they would not ridicule and blaspheme the Mother of God and the Saints.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That Protestants will never be admitted into the company of the Saints in heaven, whom they have ridiculed and blasphemed on earth.

Q. Would a great king of this world punish most severely one who slanders the Queen?

A. He would.

Q. Is the Catholic Church the Spouse of Jesus Christ, the King of heaven and earth?

A. She is, and St. Paul assures us that "Jesus Christ loves His church, that He died for her in order that He might have a glorious church, having neither spot nor wrinkle, but holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25-27.

Q. Have Protestants ever ceased to slander her?

A. Never.

Q. How do they slander the Spouse of Jesus Christ?

A. The Protestant Episcopalian book of homilies, for instance, says: "Laity and clergy,

learned and unlearned, all ages and degrees of men, women, and children of entire Christendom had been drowned in abominable idolatry."

Q. Is idolatry a grievous sin?

A. It is one of the most grievous sins that can be committed.

Q. Could Protestants ever prove that the Catholic Church, the Spouse of Christ, became guilty of this sin?

A. Never; on the contrary, all know that the Catholic Church has abolished idolatry and has always held it in abomination.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That Protestants commit the great sin of slander against the Spouse of Christ.

Q. Can they commit this great sin without accusing Jesus Christ at the same time of having abandoned that glorious Spouse, whom He loves so ardently?

A. They cannot.

Q. What follows from this?

A. That the vengeance of Jesus Christ shall sooner or later overtake Protestants for committing the sins of horrid blasphemy and slander.

Q. But is it not a very uncharitable doctrine to say that none can be saved out of the Church?

A. On the contrary, it is a very great act of charity to assert this doctrine most emphatically.

Q. Why?

A. Because Jesus Christ Himself and His apostles have taught it in very plain language.

Q. Is it not great charity to warn one's neighbor when he is in danger of falling into a deep abyss?

A. It is indeed.

Q. Are not all those who are out of the Church in very great danger of falling into the abyss of hell?

A. They are.

Q. Is it not, then, great charity to warn them of this danger?

A. It would be as great a cruelty not to warn them.

Q. Are all those who are out of the Church equally guilty and damnable before God?

A. No; some are more guilty than others.

Q. Who are least guilty and damnable?

A. Those who, without any fault of theirs, do not know Jesus Christ or His doctrine at all.

Q. Who are most guilty and damnable?

A. Those who know the Catholic Church to be the only true Church, but do not embrace her faith, as also those who could know her if they would candidly search, but who, through indifference and other culpable motives, neglect to do so.

Q. What are we to think of the salvation of those who are out of the pale of the Church without any fault of theirs, and who never had any opportunity of knowing better?

A. Their inculpable ignorance will not save them; but if they fear God and live up to their conscience, God, in His infinite mercy, will furnish them with the necessary means of salvation, even so as to send, if needed, an angel to instruct them in the Catholic faith, rather than let them perish through inculpable ignorance.

Q. Is it then right for us to say that one who was not received into the Church before his death, is damned?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because we cannot know for certain what takes place between God and the soul at the awful moment of death.

Q. What do you mean by this?

A. I mean that God, in His infinite mercy, may enlighten, at the hour of death, one who is not yet a Catholic, so that he may see the truth of the Catholic faith, be truly sorry for his sins, and sincerely desire to die a good Catholic.

Q. What do we say of those who receive such an extraordinary grace, and die in this manner?

A. We say of them that they die united, at least, to the soul of the Catholic Church, and are saved.

Q. What, then, awaits all those who are out of the Catholic Church, and die without having received such an extraordinary grace at the hour of death?

A. Eternal damnation.

Q. But are there not many who would lose the affections of their friends, their comfortable homes, their temporal goods, and prospects in business, were they to become Catholics? Would not Jesus Christ excuse them under such circumstances from becoming Catholics?

A. As to the affections of friends, Jesus Christ has solemnly declared that: "He who loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me," Matt. x. 37; and to the loss of temporal gain He has answered: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" Mark viii. 36.

Q. But would it not be enough for such a one to be Catholic in heart only, without professing his religion publicly?

A. No; for Jesus Christ has solemnly declared that, "He who shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed when he shall come in his majesty, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels." Luke ix. 26.

Q. But might not such a one safely put off being received into the Church till the hour of death?

A. This would be to abuse the mercy of God.

Q. What might be the punishment for this sin?

A. To lose the light and grace of faith, and die a reprobate.

Q. What else keeps many from becoming Catholics?

A. It is this; they know very well that, if they become Catholics, they must lead honest and sober lives, be pure, and check their sinful passions, and this they are unwilling to do. "Men love darkness rather than light," says Jesus Christ, "because their deeds are evil." There are none so deaf as those that will not hear.

Q. What follows from what has been said on salvation in the Roman Catholic Church alone?

A. That it is very impious for one to think and to say that it matters little what a man believes provided he be an honest man.

Q. What answer can you give to a man who speaks thus?

A. I would ask him whether or not he believed that his honesty and justice was so great as that of the Scribes and Pharisees in the Gospel?

Q. In what did the honesty and justice of the Scribes and Pharisees consist?

A. They were constant in prayer, they paid tithes according to the law, gave great alms, fasted twice a week, and compassed sea and land to make a convert and bring him to the knowledge of the true God.

Q. What did Jesus Christ say of this justice of the Pharisees?

A. He says: "Unless your justice shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v. 20.

Q. Was, then, the righteousness of the Pharisees very defective in the sight of God?

A. Most undoubtedly. Their righteousness was all outward show and ostentation. They did good only to be praised and admired by men; but within, their souls were full of impurity and malice. They were lewd hypocrites, who concealed great vices under the beautiful appearance of love for God, charity to the poor, and severity to themselves. Their devotion consisted in exterior acts, and they despised all who did not live as they did; they were strict in the religious observances of human traditions, but scrupled not to violate the commandments of God.

Q. What are you then to think of those men who say: "It matters little what a man believes, provided he be honest"?

A. That their exterior honesty, like that of the Pharisees, may be sufficient to keep them out

of prison, but not out of hell.

Q. Should a non-Catholic say: "I would like very much to believe the doctrine of the Catholic Church, but I cannot," how would you answer?

A. That, without doubt, it is the will of God, that "all men be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4; but it is, at the same time, the will of God that you should earnestly employ all the proper means to acquire this necessary knowledge; otherwise, you plainly show that you do not sincerely desire to believe.

Q. What are the means you speak of?

A. Sincerity of heart which must prove itself,
1. By a most earnest desire to know the true religion,
2. By a diligent and persistent search for it,
3. By fervent and frequent prayer to God for the gift of faith,
4. And lastly, by a firm resolution to trample underfoot every obstacle that might hinder or retard one from embracing the known truth.

Q. But will one not lose his dear liberty if he believes and does what the Roman Catholic Church teaches?

A. No; on the contrary, he will then only enjoy true liberty, for he only is free whom the truth makes free.

Q. Cannot God do all things that He pleases?

A. He can.

Q. Why?

A. Because He is supreme Liberty itself.

Q. But can God sin?

A. He cannot.

Q. Are not the angels and saints in heaven free?

A. They are perfectly free, because they partake of the liberty of God.

Q. But can the saints sin?

A. They cannot.

Q. Is it, then, a mark of liberty to be under the power of sin, in following your passions, and so going to perdition?

A. This is no power or mark of liberty at all.

Q. What is it, then?

A. It is rather a mark of weakness and misery.

Q. What does the power of sin imply?

A. The possibility of becoming a slave of sin and the devil.

Q. Are those then truly free who are greatly under the power of sin, and thus go to hell?

A. They are rather the miserable slaves of sin and of their passions.

Q. What must necessarily become of them if they remain under this power of sin and of their passions?

A. They will become the slaves of the devil in hell for all eternity.

Q. Who, then, can call himself truly free?

A. He who wills and does what God wishes him to do for his everlasting happiness.

Q. If God, then, as we have seen, wishes that men should be saved only in the holy Roman Catholic Church, does a man lose, or does he enjoy liberty, when he believes and does what the Church teaches?

A. Then, indeed, he enjoys true liberty, and makes a proper use of it.

Q. What do you say of a man whose power of will is very great, and who hardly experiences any difficulty in following the teaching of the Church?

A. Such a man is truly *free*.

Q. Do Catholics, then, who faithfully live up to the teaching of the Church, enjoy greater liberty than Protestants and unbelievers, who believe and do as they please?

A. They do, indeed, because they are the children of the light of truth, that leads them to heaven, whilst those who live out of the Church are the children of the darkness of error, that leads them finally into the abyss of hell.

Q. If no one can be saved except in the Roman Catholic Church, what are all who are out of it bound to do?

A. They are obliged to become members of the Church.

Q. Does not common sense tell this to every non-Catholic?

A. It does.

Q. How so?

A. Because every non-Catholic believes that every practical member of the Catholic Church will be saved.

Q. What follows from this?

A. It clearly follows that when there is question about eternal salvation and eternal damnation, a sensible man will take the surest way to heaven.

Q. Will every one who is a member of the Catholic Church be saved?

A. No; only practical members will be saved; but those who are dead members, that is, bad Catholics, will be condemned to hell.

Q. Who is a practical member of the Catholic Church?

A. He who firmly believes all the truths contained in the Apostles' Creed, keeps the commandments of God and of the Church, and uses the means of grace, that is, the sacraments and prayer.

Q. Where do you learn all this?

A. In the Christian doctrine.

Q. Whose duty is it to teach the Christian doctrine?

A. This is the duty of the pastors of the Catholic Church.

Q. Is it very pleasing to God to instruct men in the Christian doctrine?

A. Yes; it is one of the holiest works, and most pleasing to God.

Q. Whose duty is it to attend to the explanation of the Christian doctrine?

A. This is the duty of all, but especially of those who are more or less ignorant of the Christian religion.

Q. Is God much pleased with those who eagerly listen to the explanation of the Christian doctrine?

A. God is so pleased with them that He often showed His pleasure by miracles.

Q. Is God also much displeased with those who do not care for the Christian doctrine?

A. God is so displeased with them that He often showed His displeasure by frightful punishments.

Q. What should we do when we hear the Christian doctrine explained?

A. We should listen to it with the intention of profiting by it.

Q. What do you call the book which briefly contains the Christian doctrine in the form of questions and answers?

A. The Catechism.

Q. Of what, then, does the Catechism treat?

A. The Catechism treats of what we must believe, of what we must do, and of the means of grace which we must use; that is, of the sacraments and prayer.