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# An Hour With A Sincere Inquirer

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## WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST?

(1) It is historically certain, that Jesus Christ lived on earth, that He claimed to be the Son of God made man, and that He proved this His claim by the *sanctity of His life*, by the *prophecies of the Old Testament* concerning the promised Redeemer, by *miracles*, and, above all, by *His resurrection*.

(2) If Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, then *all* He said must be true, and *all* He promised to do He must have done. Now, among other things, He promised to found *a Church*, and only *one*. Consequently there must now exist a Church founded by Jesus Christ, and since the Catholic Church is the oldest of all societies called churches, it follows that the Catholic Church is that *one* Church founded by Him.

(3) Even if we had not the express words of our Lord, that He would found only *one* Church, reason alone would convince every one that there can exist only *one* Church founded by Jesus Christ, since He could not contradict Himself, as He would, if, opposed as all churches are to one another in doctrine, He had been the founder of more than one church.

(4) Christ not only promised to *found* a Church, He promised also to build this Church as the prudent man in the Gospel had built his house—that is to say, *upon a rock*; not to allow the powers of hell to *prevail* against her; to send to her the Holy Ghost, the *Spirit of Truth*, “to abide with her for ever,” and to remain Himself with her unto the end of time;—all of which means, that He promised to endow His Church with *infallibility in teaching all nations* until time shall be no more.

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(5) Consequently all those who say that the Church founded by Jesus Christ has fallen into error, teaching now a doctrine different from that confided to her by her Divine Founder, deny, at least implicitly, the Divinity of Christ; for, if the Church has fallen into error, then Christ has not kept His promise to build His Church upon a rock, not to allow the gates of hell to prevail against her, to send the Spirit of Truth to her, and to abide Himself with her unto the end of time. But, if Christ has not kept His promise, then He did not keep it either because He was not willing or not able to keep it, which is the same as to say, *He was not God*.

(6) It is certain that our Lord had authorized the Apostles and, consequently, also their successors, the bishops, who form the teaching body of the Church, to *teach all nations*. From this it follows, that every one is strictly bound to listen to the teaching Church and to admit her teaching as true. But if our Lord obliges every one to admit the teaching of the Church *as true*, then it must needs also *be true*; for if not true, then our Lord Himself would lead people into error by strictly obliging them to believe firmly to be *true* what is not *true*. It follows then, necessarily, that our Lord having endowed His Church with *authority to teach*, has also endowed her with *infallibility in teaching*; *i. e.*, in her *authority to teach* is also included her *infallibility in teaching*.

(7) You willingly admit, that every one is strictly bound firmly to believe what our Lord has taught. But in order to firmly believe what our Lord has taught you must be *absolutely* sure that what is proposed to your belief is really the doctrine taught by our Lord. Of this you can be perfectly sure only if you admit a messenger who tells you with infallibility what our Lord has taught and what He requires of you to believe. Without having left such an infallible messenger, our Lord would require of men to do something without giving them the means with which to do it. This fully explains why Cath-

olics who are convinced that the Catholic Church is that *infallible messenger* left her on earth by our Lord, have convictions, whilst non-Catholics, not admitting such an infallible messenger, have only changing *opinions*.

(8) If you ask a Catholic: "Do you firmly believe this or that to be the true meaning of such or such a quotation of holy Scripture?" he will answer that he believes it as firmly as if he heard it from the very lips of our Lord Himself. And if you ask him: "Why do you believe it so firmly?" he will reply: "Because the Church teaches it." When you ask, why he so firmly believes the teaching of the Catholic Church, his answer will be: "I am perfectly convinced that the Catholic Church is the Church founded by Jesus Christ and built by Him upon a rock, so as to be secured against ever teaching and obliging people to believe anything contrary to revealed truth."

(9) Non-Catholics, not admitting an infallible teaching authority, when gathered together in order to decide upon what is really revealed truth and upon what is the true meaning of Holy Scripture, may be compared to surveyors, who are going to measure a piece of land without having first agreed upon a common standard of measurements.

(10) Only a church claiming *infallibility in teaching* can claim also *authority to teach*, and to oblige its hearers to admit its teaching as true. Hence all non-Catholic churches, not claiming *infallibility* in teaching give up at the same time their *claim to authority* to teach, and, consequently, their claim to be the Church founded by Jesus Christ to teach all nations.

(11) The infallibility of the Church in teaching does not depend either upon the learning, or upon the sanctity of her popes and bishops, but rests solely upon the promise of her Divine Founder, who is both willing and able to keep His promise.

(12) This is confirmed by history. For, although the enemies of the Church have been very numerous, and many of them very learned, they have worked in vain to prove, by one single instance, that the Church ever contradicted herself. This proves, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the Church is not a mere *human*, but a *divine institution*, preserved from erring by the almighty power of God Himself. No doubt, assertions of the Church having taught contradictory doctrines have been made and will continue to be made; but all such assertions are either empty sayings, or as many proofs that those who make them are ignorant of the real doctrines and of the history of the Catholic Church.

#### “WHAT’S TRUE IS NOT NEW, AND WHAT’S NEW IS NOT TRUE”

(1) This axiom must be self-evident in its application to facts, whether taught to man by nature or by revelation, if we except the facts of history and current events. The law of gravitation was true long before Newton discovered it; it was true from the date of the birth of the universe of which the earth is a part. Newly discovered stars existed thousands of years, if not millions of years, before they were sighted by our latest telescopes.

(2) Every believer in the divinity of Christ consistently confesses that He was THE Truth. But there are many self-evident deductions which follow from such belief, to some of which we would call your attention.

Granting that Christ was THE “Truth,” any departure from His doctrine or His code of morals during any century since His time must have been *away* from the truth, and therefore not defensible. “For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John I, 17). “Jesus saith to him: ‘I am the way, and the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me.’” (John xiv, 6) “For this was I born, and for this

came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth My voice." (John xviii, 37) "That (Jesus Christ) was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world" (John i, 9).

Granting that Christ was THE "Truth," there could not possibly have been any reformation of His work, of His teachings, or of His moral standards. A movement in any one of these three directions would contain *error*. It would "change the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. i, 25). "The word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel hath been preached unto you." (I Peter i, 25).

Because Christ was THE "Truth," He taught with authority, and not like the Scribes and Pharisees of either ancient or modern times. Therefore, "anyone who is not with Christ is against Him, and anyone who gathereth not with Him scattereth" (Matt. xii. 3).

If Christ was THE "Truth," then any organization set up as a substitute for the Church, which He founded and commissioned His Apostles to establish, is the work of "a false Christ or false prophet" (Matt. xiv, 24), no matter what loyalty may be suggested by its name. Holy Scripture informs us in many places that false teachers would appear through the centuries (Matt. xxiv, 11), (Mark xiii, 22), (II John iv, 11), (Rev. xix, 20). No organization formed by any of them could be "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of Truth" (I Tim. iii, 15).

If Christ was THE "Truth," and promised to protect His Apostles from error in the propagation of His teaching, then any new substitute for His or the Apostles' teaching is to be anathematized (Gal. i, 8-9), no matter how much more attractive the substitute might appear to be. "For such false apostles are deceitful workmen, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. ii, 13).

If Christ was THE "Truth," then any modern substitute for His clear decisions relating to Marriage, Divorce, Education, is to be condemned, no matter how much greater approval it might receive from the majority. Holy Scripture warns us against codes springing from corrupt minds and hearts: "For there shall be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, *according to their own desires*, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. iv, 3). "Now as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith" (2 Tim. iii, 8). "And no wonder: for Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi, 14).

### INVESTIGATE CATHOLIC CLAIMS

(1) It is not Catholic doctrine which keeps people out of the Catholic Church.

We have in mind those who might otherwise feel disposed to investigate Catholic claims. There is a large body of Americans, of Englishmen, of Germans, of Scandinavians, of Swiss, who, seemingly quite honest with God, give the Catholic Church no hearing because of inherited prejudices. We mention these particular groups because they are the ones who have been most affected by the anti-Catholic activities and propaganda consequent on the so-called Reformation in their respective mother countries, activities and propaganda encouraged by the very States themselves for several centuries.

(2) But to return to the group, which pretends to find some point of Catholic doctrine impossible of acceptance. If the members of this group were truly honest with themselves they would discredit most of the dogmas of physical science. Which doctrine of the Catholic Church would be more difficult to believe than the doctrine behind Radio, if it were not a fact that is ever before us? Surely



no one would say it is more difficult to believe in the Immaculate Conception than in the possibility of a speaker or singer, entertaining the people of the entire world. Daily contact with the Radio prevents anyone from denying this phenomenon or mystery. But if it were taught merely as a theory, as an abstract truth, whose manifestations had never been experienced, would it not be almost impossible of belief?

(3) Is there anything in Catholic teaching more difficult to grasp than life in the insect, in the snail, in the tree or plant, in the grain of wheat, in the egg? Is there anything in Catholic teaching more difficult to conceive than what astronomers teach about the number and magnitude of heavenly bodies and their distance from us, expressible only in unpronounceable figures? How few the skeptics in relation to the scientific teaching that there are more heavenly bodies than there are people in this world! But let anyone try to grasp the immensity of space occupied by these if each were only as large as this world; if there were, in other words, 2,000,000,000 worlds the size of ours, all separated by safe distances from the rest.

Everybody says "Credo" to these and other dogmas of science, even without investigation or hesitation. They accept these facts of the natural order on the same basis that they are expected to accept the facts of the supernatural order, namely, *by faith*.

(4) How can the Protestant who actually believes that the eternal Son of God became man, that He lived on earth thirty-three years amid privations, sufferings, and the greatest poverty, and then allowed Himself to be cruelly murdered for His creatures, consistently hold it impossible to believe that the same loving Savior would go a single step farther? From love unto death there is surely only a step to the Eucharist, which evidences His continued love for each individual and His persevering interest in the salvation of each? Anyone who can believe in the Incarnation of the Son of God can believe any addi-

tional mark of God's love. The Eucharist would not be a more infinite step than the Incarnation.

Protestant Christians readily and unquestionably accept the difficult doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God and of the Redemption of the world through His bloody death on the cross, yet refuse to accept what should be easy to believe after believing the former, viz., the doctrines of the Eucharist, of the Sacrament of Penance, of an infallible Church, etc.—all of which are calculated to keep the redeemed race closer to God, make it direct sharers in the fruits of the Redemption, to imbue it with a sense of security in its faith.

(5) Surely it ought to be more difficult to believe that Almighty God could intend such a state of confusion and uncertainty as exists in the Christian world to-day than to believe that He would have provided for the definite instruction of His followers, as the Catholic Church claims, or for the establishment of unity of religious belief and practice among those who profess to be members of the household of the faith, who regard themselves as His adopted children and address Him "Our Father".

Do not delude yourself into believing that you are kept out of the Catholic Church because of her teaching. If you were, and were consistent, you would be a disbeliever in a hundred other things which you so readily accept on human authority, and without even asking for proof.

### THE BIBLE IN THE CHURCH

(1) Supposing, for argument's sake, but not *granting*, that all that Christ has taught is contained in the Bible, He must have instituted a tribunal to explain it, and to require this explanation to be admitted as the true one, He would have acted as imprudently as a ruler who, after the publication of a code of laws, should have omitted to appoint a tribunal endowed with authority to

explain it and to require this, its explanation, to be accepted. In case of a lawsuit both parties would come before the court with the law-book in hand and interpret it according to their own interest. Our Lord acted as every prudent lawgiver is expected to act. He appointed a tribunal to guard and explain the holy Scriptures, authorizing it at the same time to require of every one to receive its explanation as the true one. This tribunal, as proved by history, is the Catholic Church.

(2) Let me call your attention to the fact, that all non-Catholics who yet admit the canon of holy Scripture, do this on the authority of the Catholic Church, and thus, by this very fact, not only acknowledge that the Catholic Church was authorized to declare which books were inspired and which were not, but also, that in doing this she was preserved from erring—i. e., made infallible.

(3) Non-Catholics who no longer admit the judgment of the Catholic Church regarding the inspiration of holy Scripture, must logically examine, not only those writings which the Catholic Church has collected in the canon, but also those which she has rejected as not being inspired. This non-Catholic examination of sacred writings is like that, for instance, of ancient classics, made by learned but, after all, fallible men, and, consequently, their judgment rests only on human authority, and is, therefore, insufficient for the making of a supernatural act of faith. Catholics have their Bible declared to be inspired by the infallible Church, and, consequently, their faith rests on the authority of God Himself. Thus they are really enabled to make a supernatural act of faith in the teaching of writings, which the infallible Church has declared to be inspired.

(4) The conviction, that the holy Scriptures are inspired writings, is not all that is required. There yet remain doubts regarding the true meaning of their contents. This is confirmed by daily experience. Nothing

is more evident than that those who do not admit the infallible teaching authority of the Church, although they still admit the authenticity and inspiration of the holy Scriptures, are continually quarrelling among themselves about its meaning, and the most learned among them are just the very ones who disagree most. Catholics, on the contrary, having first convinced themselves of their Church being endowed with infallibility in teaching, are *infallibly sure*, not only of *the inspiration* of the holy Scriptures but also their *true meaning*.

(5) That the Bible alone was not intended to be the *sole* rule of faith is sufficiently evident from history, which tells us that the Catholic Church had existed fully three centuries before it had become known which were inspired writings. History tells us also, that the Bible was not the sole rule of faith, even *after* the Third Council of Carthage had declared which writings were inspired and which were not. This is apparent from the fact, that before the art of printing was invented, it was at least morally impossible for the great majority of people to have a Bible for their use. Neither is the Bible intended to be the only rule of faith *at present*. The rule of faith left by our Lord must be a rule that *all* can make use of. Such a rule cannot be the *Bible*, since there will always be a great number of people who either cannot read, or cannot get a copy of the Bible in their own language or cannot understand what they read. This is corroborated by every day's experience. In fact, the boastful watchword of the so-called Reformation, "The Bible, and nothing but the Bible," has *never* been carried out in practice. The *real* difference between Protestants and Catholics consists actually in this, that Protestants accept as interpreters of holy Scripture *unauthorized individuals* or *small bodies of men*, whilst Catholics have as their interpreters of Holy Writ *the infallible Church of God*.

## CHURCH'S INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY

(1) The true Church must necessarily claim *infallibility*, or freedom from error, in teaching. A church not claiming infallibility in teaching cannot claim the right to oblige people to admit its teachings as true. From this it follows that, since other religious organizations do not claim *infallibility* in teaching, confess that they have neither *authority* to teach, nor authority to require their teaching to be admitted as true, they consequently admit they are *not* the Church which our Lord has founded, to teach all nations.

(2) It is evident, both from Holy Scripture and from tradition, that Peter was appointed by our Lord the *head* of the Apostles; that to him our Lord gave a *Primacy* not only of *honor*, but also of *jurisdiction*, and that, consequently, this Primacy of St. Peter and of his successors is an *essential* part of the government of the Church founded by Christ.

(3) The “keys” of the kingdom of heaven—that is to say, the *supreme spiritual power*—Christ gave to Peter *alone*. “I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xvi. 19).

(4) It is also evident from *Holy Scripture* that the *superiority* of authority which our Lord gave to St. Peter was acknowledged and admitted by the other apostles, and *history* tells us that the Bishop of Rome, as successor of St. Peter, was always regarded as *the head of the whole Church* and *as endowed with special powers*. As a last desperate effort to find an excuse for their not submitting to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, Anglicans and others have tried to disprove this historical fact. In this endeavor they have not only failed, but succeeded in opening the eyes of many well-meaning and sincere members of their community to the untenableness of their position.

(5) Our Lord appointed St. Peter as the shepherd of the whole flock,—that is, of the whole Church; consequently every member of the Church is bound in conscience to heed the direction of St. Peter and of his successors in matters relating to faith and morals. But, if we are obliged by our Lord to follow the supreme shepherd of the Church, then we have also at the same time the assurance, that our Lord will never allow us to be led by this supreme shepherd—i. e., by the successor of St. Peter—into pastures of error.

“One God, one Christ, one Mediator; one Truth, one Church; one episcopate, though many bishops, as there is but one sun with many rays. But the foundation of this oneness Christ has laid in Peter, to whom He has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and consigned his entire flock.”—St. Cyprian; 258 A. D.

(6) Our Lord prayed for *St. Peter*, that “*his* faith fail not.”

To deny St. Peter’s and his successors’ infallibility in teaching the whole Church, is the same as to declare, that the prayer of the Son of God was null and void, which is certainly pronouncing a blasphemy.

(7) History, too, is proof of the infallibility of the successors of St. Peter. Many learned men have spent almost a life-time in order to discover one single instance of a pope having taught a doctrine in contradiction with what was taught by another pope. As yet they have labored in vain. Catholics most willingly admit, that among the successors of St. Peter there have been men who were far from being saints; but this fact is only one more proof that the Papacy, as well as the Church, is a *divine* institution, preserved by the almighty power of God Himself from falling into error. Our Lord has promised not to allow His Vicar on earth to become a teacher of error. This promise our Lord is both willing and able to keep. He *has* kept it and *will* continue to keep it unto the end of

time, and even if the most unworthy men should happen to sit on the throne of Peter.

### STRUGGLING WITH CONSCIENCE

(1) As soon as you shall become convinced that the Catholic Church is that *one* and only Church which our Lord has founded, and which He has endowed with authority to teach all nations and with freedom from error in teaching, you will be also convinced of your strict duty to submit to this Church, and to ask of her to be instructed in all you have to believe and to do in order to save your soul. What is yet wanting to you may be the gift of faith. To be *intellectually convinced* and to *believe* are two things infinitely different from one another. The former belongs to the *natural*, the latter to the *supernatural* order; the one you can obtain by the natural faculties of the intellect, the other only by a supernatural help coming directly from God. Without the light or gift of faith, one, however intellectually convinced, is unable to believe supernatural, revealed truths, just as one who has perfectly healthy eyes is unable to see without light. This fully explains why so many highly talented and highly educated persons do not believe, notwithstanding their being convinced that God gave a revelation to mankind, and confided this His revelation to the custody of the Catholic Church. They *do* not believe because they *cannot* believe, and they cannot believe either because they have never received the gift of faith or they have lost it by their own fault. If talent and learning were sufficient to believe, then highly talented and learned persons would also be better off spiritually than persons less talented and less learned, whilst daily experience proves that poorly talented and poorly instructed, but truly humble persons, believe most firmly. They possess the gift or light of faith in a very great measure. In this light all that God has revealed and what holy Church proposes to their be-

lief, appears to them so clearly and so certainly revealed, that to doubt it in the least becomes for them, as it were, a moral impossibility.

(2) After having become convinced of your duty to submit to the authority of the Catholic Church, still more after having done so with the help of God's special grace, you must not wonder, if you are at once assailed with all kinds of temptations, unknown to you before. The arch-enemy of God and man hates nothing so much as the Church of Jesus Christ. Hence he most willingly grants everything, if by doing so he can keep persons out of the true Church. In the Catholic Church he recognizes the mystical body of Jesus Christ, and that infallible and all-powerful means instituted by Him, to lead men into the possession of heaven, from which he and all the fallen angels are for ever excluded. These temptations and annoyances, therefore, must be for you one more convincing proof that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ. Don't be disturbed by them nor dispute with them. As Pilate said: "What I have written, I have written"; so also say you to the tempter: "What I have resolved to be and to do, I have resolved." Be faithful in your prayers, and in due time God will command the storm of temptations to abate. The clouds of doubts and perplexities will disperse and a great calm will ensue. Whilst the enemy intends to harm and ruin you, God wishes you to have a chance to prove your fidelity and generosity, and thus to take firmer and deeper root in the fertile soil of holy Church. To confirm and encourage you the more against possible temptations and annoyances call to mind and convince yourself of the following truths:

(3) In order to truly please God we must not only *abstain from evil*, but also *do the positive will of God*; but to do the will of God we must learn it; to learn it we must make use of that means which He Himself has instituted to acquaint men with His holy will. This means



is the Church founded by Jesus Christ, which you have become convinced is the Catholic Church. Consequently, every one who in all earnestness wishes to do God's holy will, and thus become pleasing in His sight, must listen to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

(4) The question is not, whether we have all the same God, whom we all intend to serve; but whether we serve Him in the manner He Himself requires; for only when a servant does what his master demands of him, can he expect to please him and to be rewarded by him.

(5) Whatever endearing expressions a child may make use of, and however generously and sincerely it may try to please its parents and make them loved and honored by others, it can *never* truly please them as long as it neglects or refuses to do that *one* thing which they, above all others, require of it. So neither can any one truly please God, however great and generous his endeavors may be, if he neglects or refuses to submit to the authority of holy Church, or neglects to clear up his doubts as to whether the Church he belongs to is, or is not, the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Such a one only deceives himself and allows himself to be deceived by others, and all the good works he may imagine he is performing are scarcely more than mere rubbish in the sight of God.

(6) When appearing before the judgment-seat of our Lord, one may enumerate all the good actions he has performed and call upon the whole world as a witness of the irreproachable and edifying life he has led; but all will avail him nothing, if he did not submit to the authority of the true Church, or, by his own fault, did not come to the full knowledge of it. Our Lord will tell him, that for the good works he has performed and for the morally good and edifying life he has led, he has already received his reward on earth by having been kept free from the attacks of violent temptations, by having had

success in his undertakings, by having enjoyed the esteem and love of his fellow-men, by having been praised and extolled by them even after death; but that he cannot expect a reward in heaven, which is reserved only for His obedient children.

### IF CONVINCED YOU MAY NOT HOLD BACK

(1) The saying, that it does not matter what a man believes, provided he does what is right, involves a contradiction. It implies, that a man may believe things to be true and do just what is contrary to what he believes. Besides, "doing what is right" includes also "listening to the Church." Hence, no one, knowing the true Church of Christ, and, after all, not submitting to her, can say that he does "all that is right." He transgresses wilfully and continually a most important commandment of God by not submitting and not listening to the Church, and is, in fact, a very great sinner in the eyes of God, whatever he may be in the eyes of men, should he even rival the Pharisees of old in external righteousness.

(2) "Out of the Roman Catholic Church" there is no salvation *for those who know her to be the true Church* founded by Jesus Christ, and, after all, refuse to submit to her; neither for those who doubt whether the church they belong to is the true Church, *but neglect to clear up their doubts*, and thus remain by their own fault ignorant of the true Church founded by Jesus Christ, who has solemnly declared: "He who will not listen to the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Matt. xviii. 17), and, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" (Luke x. 16). Whatever edifying lives such persons may lead, they cannot be saved. They will be lost, not on account of the positive evil they have done, but on account of what they have omitted to do. There is good reason to suspect, that a great deal of

the zeal at present manifested among non-Catholics and their craze for performing works of charity, and in this, if possible, to outdo Catholics, is reducible to an endeavor to *stifle religious doubts*. When such doubts assail them they look at themselves; compare their good and moral lives with the bad and immoral lives led by so many Catholics; heap up before the eyes of their soul all the good and charitable works they have performed and are yet performing. Thus pleasing and admiring themselves they dismiss all annoying doubts as to whether they are members of the true Church, or not; and being satisfied with themselves, they conclude that God too must be satisfied with them. Besides, the enemy of God and man is only too anxious to confirm such persons in their false peace, security and self-delusion, and to succeed herein still better he is most willing to play the part of an angel of light, filling their hearts with false and counterfeit sentiments of devotion and piety, and urging them on to practise those moral virtues towards which they feel naturally inclined. Thus he will succeed in preventing them from inquiring into the doctrines of the Church, and so will keep them out of her pale, and, consequently, out of the way of salvation.

(3) It is unreasonable and unjust to judge the Catholic Church by the bad lives of many unfaithful members. Catholics are *bad* only in as far as they *do not live* as Catholics. The Catholic Church is a good tree and as such can bring forth only good fruit; but as you can find bad fruit on the best tree, so you will find also bad fruit on the good tree of the Catholic Church. But, as bad fruit on a good and healthy tree does not owe its being bad to the good tree, but to some bad influence from without, so the bad conduct of so many Catholics is due, not to the Church but to some bad influence outside the spirit of the Church. He who lives up fully to the teaching and direction of the holy Catholic Church will infallibly become a saint. All saints whose sanctity God

has made known by miracles were children of the Catholic Church without a single exception, and saints are nothing else but the fruit of the good tree of the Catholic Church.

(4) It is also unreasonable and unjust to judge and measure the moral goodness of actions by what they appear to be. The intention of the heart is the only measure for our good, as for our bad deeds. Actions little objectionable in the eyes of men may be highly displeasing in the sight of God, and actions very objectionable in the eyes of men may be little, or not at all objectionable in the sight of God. Slaves of sensual passions, whose very appearance is highly disgusting, are certainly less hateful in the sight of God, than persons intoxicated with pride, however respectable and even praiseworthy may be their external conduct. Who could doubt, that the public sinner in the temple, even before he so humbly asked for God's pardon, was far less displeasing to God than the proud Pharisee, notwithstanding the latter's dazzling exterior righteousness. Hence, those who proudly refuse to become children of the holy Catholic Church, although they know, or at least suspect, that she is the true Church of Christ, are certainly far greater sinners before God, than Catholics who willingly submit to the Church, but are not free from sins of sensuality. Sensuality has at least the excuse of weakness; not so pride, refusing to submit to the authority of the Church. This explains also why, in many cases, God does not deprive slaves of sensuality of the gift of faith, whilst it is often withdrawn as punishment for intellectual pride.

(5) As it is wrong to judge an individual, so it is also wrong and unjust to judge families, societies, and even whole nations by their mere external conduct, which may be pleasing, polite and engaging, but cannot be called truly good unless its motive be the desire to do the holy will of God as made known by His holy Church. It is also

in this intention of conforming our conduct to the will of God, as made known to us by the Church, that true education consists. Hence, a poor servant-girl, knowing well her catechism and anxious to live according to what she has learned from holy Church to be the will of God regarding her, is truly educated, whilst a lady of fashion, although a leader in society, but ignorant or forgetful of what God by the voice of His Church requires of her, whatever her worldly learning and accomplishments may be, is not educated at all, and possesses no resemblance to the pattern of true perfection, which is God Himself.

(6) Remember well, a mere *moral* life alone is not a sufficient claim to a reward in heaven. It must be a moral life rooted in true faith and led in obedience to the teaching of holy Church, the sole and infallible messenger and interpreter of God's holy will.

(7) What our Lord has said remains always true: "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3). However much convinced one may have become *intellectually*, that the Catholic Church is the one Church founded by Jesus Christ, he will not receive the grace to enter it unless he humbles himself, becoming like a child.

## THINGS WHICH SHOULD DRAW RATHER THAN REPEL

(1) You must not be surprised if you hear of scandals, and even of very great scandals, in the Catholic Church; and this not only among the faithful, but also among the clergy, high and low. Their being members of the true Church does not free Catholics from the attacks of hell, but rather exposes them more to the hatred of Satan and his emissaries. Daily experience confirms the truth, that the more one is attached to the Catholic Church, and the more he endeavors to live up to her spirit and teaching, the more he has to suffer from the attacks

of the wicked. The same is true of Catholic families, societies, parishes, religious congregations, and even of nations. This explains why, especially in Catholic countries, the efforts of hell against the Catholic Church and her children are so furious. The hatred of hell against a person, a family, or a nation is always in proportion to their attachment to the Catholic Church. Hell most willingly grants everything desirable, is even willing to assist in advancing the temporal prosperity of individuals, families, and nations, and, if necessary, even to help to get up a sham piety and to practise sham moral virtues, if by so doing it can cast discredit on the Church of Christ. Catholics are soldiers led out of the barracks into the open battle-field to encounter the enemy. Converts continually profess that their submission to the authority of the Catholic Church was the signal for battle; that, as soon as they had become members of the Catholic Church they were assailed and harassed by temptations of which they had no idea before. Happily, temptations are no evil in themselves; on the contrary, they are so many helps to become more rooted in virtue and to lay up a greater store of never-ending treasures in heaven.

(2) Thieves do not usually attack poor people, but those whom they suppose to carry something valuable with them. This explains why Satan and his emissaries tempt but little or not at all sinners, and those who by their *own* fault are not members of the Catholic Church. He and his fellow-demons know full well that all such persons may possess, including even their moral goodness and their moral virtues, is without any supernatural value in the sight of God.

(3) Being the true Church, and consequently the mystical body of our Lord, the Catholic Church lives continually the life of our Lord. You may draw a parallel between the life of our Lord and that of the Catholic Church. As our Lord was calumniated, falsely accused,

hated, persecuted, and even unjustly and shamefully condemned without a chance being given to Him to defend Himself, so also the Church of our Lord, from the very beginning of her existence was, is, and will always be unto the end of time the only Church calumniated, hated, misrepresented, persecuted, and condemned without a chance being given to her to defend herself. No other so-called Church is hated, except only in as far as it approaches in its teaching the Catholic Church. Neither are the Jews hated and persecuted on account of their religious profession, but on account of their nationality and the odium attached to it.

(4) Do you not find it rather surprising that any priest, who professes to turn his back on the Catholic Church, however unknown he may have been before, is at once by the Protestant public held up as a man of learning, etc., and whatever his antecedents may have been, is praised and lauded? Pulpits are at once offered to him, and the more vehemently he can inveigh against and abuse his mother, the Catholic Church, who has nourished him, and rehearse all the old and stale objections and oft-refuted calumnies, the more he is applauded. Compare with this the dealing of the Catholic Church with regard to those who have submitted to her authority. She is anxious to instruct them more and more in their holy religion, and urges them on to practise it *in humility*.

(5) Non-Catholics experience great self-complacency in spending much time, energy, and money in battling against side-issues—for instance, against intemperance, profanity, cruelty towards children and animals, profanation of the Sunday, etc.—whilst they are little or not at all concerned about what is of chief importance, viz., about clearing up their well-founded doubt whether the religion they profess be the true one or not. Omitting to do this, they continually sin grievously against the love they owe to themselves; for to expose one's self wantonly

to a great danger is already a sin against well-ordered self-love; and to such a danger every one exposes himself who lives on in doubt whether the religion he professes is the true one or not. Thus, whilst admiring themselves on account of the great zeal they display, and the great and good works they imagine they perform, they omit a most important duty and miserably deceive themselves.

(6) Non-Catholics very slowly and rather reluctantly rid themselves of the idea, that the Church is a *mere human* institution, owing her coming into existence and her continuation in existence to human endeavors. This explains why Protestants take so great a personal interest in the forming and upholding of their different churches. Considering their respective church as a mere human institution, Protestants think themselves individually called upon to use all the human means at their disposal to keep it in existence, at the same time tinkering at it in order to make it more and more accord with their individual ideas of what a church should be. Catholics, on the other hand, are convinced that their Church is a *divine* institution, which from the very beginning of her existence has received from her divine Architect and Builder all that is necessary for her unchangeable preservation unto the end of time.

### WHAT SHOULD APPEAR CLEAR TO YOU

(1) If you are sincere in your search after truth, then you will, with the help of God's grace, sooner or later become convinced that the best among other religious organizations are *human institutions*, ever changing. They are upheld and seem even to prosper for a longer or shorter time by human means and the good faith and sincerity of, no doubt, a great number of their adherents. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, is the *only* Church that traces her origin to Christ, and as such contains in herself all that is essential for her to continue to exist



and to fulfil her duties until time shall be no more; that is to say, the Catholic Church alone will unto the end of time teach men with infallible certainty what they have to believe and to do to work out their salvation.

(2) A little attention must convince you, that Protestantism is rapidly falling to pieces. Do not take it ill if, for illustration's sake, I compare it to an old garment which, while being mended in one part, tears in another. New means are daily tried to mend Protestantism and to prolong its existence; but all these means, instead of being useful, only hasten the inevitable dissolution. Protestant leaders being aware of this, are continually on the lookout for some reform movement, getting behind which will attract to their churches new interest.

(3) Do not allow yourself to be disturbed by the fact, that many very learned persons do not submit to the authority of the Catholic Church. It cannot be difficult for you to become convinced, that very learned non-Catholics are often pitifully ignorant of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Most of their knowledge of the Catholic Church is second-hand knowledge; having themselves scarcely ever or never consulted a book written by a competent Catholic writer. There are many instances of well-meaning and learned non-Catholics who felt quite indignant, when they at last, seemingly by chance, were led to read a Catholic book, and thus became aware that Catholic doctrine is very far from what it had been constantly represented to them.

(4) To make *temporal* success a mark of the true Church is more than childish. Rather the opposite mark should be characteristic of that Church which has for her Founder the greatest lover of poverty who was ever on earth, and who left to His disciples poverty and sufferings as His most precious legacy.

## HOW HAS THE REFORMATION BENEFITED?

(1) Have you ever given impartial study to the character and results of the Reformation, to the character of the "Reformers" and the methods by which the movements they fathered were introduced?

Have you ever asked yourself what special benefit came to God, to religion, or to the people through the sixteenth century religious reform movements?

(2) In the light of history which religion has undergone reformation since the birth of Protestantism? Surely not the Catholic religion. The reformed religions are the ones which have been steadily reformed, whether for better or worse it does not concern us here. Lutheranism, Calvinism, Episcopalianism, have all undergone frequent reforms, and it is not likely that their original authors would stamp with the seal of approval or even recognize any of them to-day. According to the latest Census on Religious Denominations, gathered under the auspices of the United States Government, there are now in the United States alone twenty-two bodies of Lutherans, nine bodies of Presbyterians, four bodies of Episcopalians.

† But this is not half the story. One who strove to reform Episcopalianism has nineteen bodies of Methodists to his credit. Nicholas Storch started the pace for eighteen bodies of Baptists. There are one hundred and fifty other denominations enumerated in this census, which, while not called by the names of any of the five groups mentioned, are off-shoots of one or other of them; and, in the estimation of their members, are reformed improvements over the reformed organizations from which they separated.

Now, think you that *Almighty God is more honored and glorified* by these divisions in the human family than He would be if all were "of one mind and one heart"?

(3) Has *religion benefited* by these divisions, which

have bred confusion in belief, indifference in practice, and enmity and strife in relation to one another?

Is unity of faith, is Christian morality promoted by outward cooperation, such as is observable in local welfare movements, or even in the great Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, in which twenty-nine leading denominations hold membership? Is not the tendency of denominational cooperation rather in the direction of compromise which renders impossible any authoritative teaching of definite truths? Is not the tendency also in the direction of compromise with the standards of morality which, set by the irreligious, are welcomed by American youth?

(4) Religious error and bad morals must be equally offensive to God, Who is both infinitely truthful and infinitely holy. He cannot be less indifferent about our attitude towards His revealed teaching and the agency through which He would have it safeguarded from error, than about our attitude towards His moral laws contained in the Commandments, for whose observance the same agency is held responsible.

(5) But was the Reformation not a blessing to mankind in a material way? Emphatically no. Even if it had been that while it was disastrous in a spiritual way, what Christian could approve of it? But the late World War proved the powerlessness of a divided Protestantism against the hateful and jealous nationalism it had engendered in many countries. Under the internationalism of Catholicism a World War would be almost an impossibility. The religious ties, the mutual Christian friendliness on the part of all the people of Europe, the recognition of a common spiritual authority and of a common arbiter of disputes on the part of all, would have prevented such a cataclysm.

## THE BEST RELIGION IN WHICH TO DIE

(1) Those who reinquish membership in the Catholic Church are usually slaves of sensuality, ignorant of her true teachings or are cut off by forbidden marriages.

(2) You do not wonder when you hear of very learned persons becoming mentally deranged. Neither have you any reason to wonder, if you hear of a person, well instructed in the Catholic religion, having ceased to believe as a Catholic. It is the effect of a spiritual derangement following God's withdrawal of the light of faith. Always remember, that to be a child of the true Church is a *special* gift of God, which no one can *merit*, and which, once received, can be lost again.

(3) It becomes daily more evident, that since the so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century, history has been one uninterrupted conspiracy against truth; it was invented to furnish a plausible pretext for what was done by the so-called reformers and their willing abettors, the temporal princes. Even non-Catholic, but honest historians admit this fact, and quite a number of them—with God's grace, have been brought to the true Church by their study of history.

(4) Experience proves that the more Protestants study the doctrines of Protestantism the more they become immersed in doubts and perplexities. On the contrary, the more Catholics study the doctrines of the Catholic religion the more confirmed they become in their religion and the more attached to their Church.

(5) If the Catholic Church were a *human* institution she would doubtlessly have disappeared long ago from the face of the earth; for there can scarcely be imagined any force that has not been employed against her; but instead of bringing on her ruin, every trial and persecution has proved to be a sure forerunner of one more glorious triumph over her enemies.

(6) You will never hear of a Catholic who, at the approach of death, in order to secure his eternal salvation, has become a Protestant. Innumerable, on the contrary, are the instances of Protestants who, when about to leave this world, have asked to be received into the Catholic Church.

(7) Neither will you ever hear that converts to the Catholic Church, who have faithfully lived up to her teaching, have ever regretted their submission to her authority; but, on the contrary, they for the most part abound in feelings and expressions of gratitude for what they are convinced was the greatest favor bestowed upon them by the goodness of God.

(8) Whilst the Catholic Church ever swells her ranks with the very cream of what can be found among the most learned, most honest, best instructed, most intelligent, and, for their morals, highly estimable persons, Protestantism gathers none such from Catholicism.

(9) Oliver Wendell Holmes was once asked by a clergyman, what effect religious beliefs had on the minds of the dying. His reply was: "So far as I have observed persons nearing the end of life, the Roman Catholics understand the business of dying better than Protestants. I have seen a good many Roman Catholics on their death-bed; and it always appeared to me that they accepted the inevitable with a composure which showed that their belief, whether or not the best to live by, was a better one to die by." Innumerable non-Catholics have had the same experience, and many of them have expressed it in words similar to those of Dr. Wendell Holmes. The logical conclusion to be drawn from it must necessarily be this: "If the Roman Catholic Church is the *best one to die in*, it must be also the *best one to live in*."

(10) There can be no action more unworthy of a man, than to live, troubled in mind with serious doubts, without taking pains to have them cleared up; and still

more to continue to be in his bad faith after having arrived at the knowledge that the Catholic Church is the Church founded by Christ. This is like the conduct of a man who, wishing to arrive in a certain city, enters a railroad car. Soon doubts arise in his mind whether the car is the right one or not. He then is told that the car does not go to the city he wishes to reach; yet instead of leaving it at once to go to the right one, he begins to consider how comfortably he is seated, and how inviting everything is that meets his eye. Admonished to leave, he answers, without bestirring himself: "All right; I don't care whether the car goes to the city or not. I wish to remain in it; I find it too comfortable and too pleasant to leave it."

(11) Do not repeat after others that foolish saying: "God will not ask of men to what church they have belonged, but whether they have led a good, honest, and moral life"; for God would cease to be God if, after having made known a religion, and after having founded a Church, He should be indifferent as to whether men should profess His religion and belong to His Church or not. In the second place, a good, honest life includes the perfect fulfillment of God's holy will; it includes, consequently, the observance of all the commandments of God and the firm belief in whatever Jesus Christ has sent the Apostles to teach; it includes submission to the prelates of the true Church as successors of the Apostles, to whom Jesus has said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (St. Luke x. 16). If a man fulfils all the other commandments of God, but fails in this, he toils and lives in vain. There are many who have, like you, led good and edifying lives; but having come to the knowledge of truth they were fully convinced that all would avail them nothing, unless they submitted to the authority of the Catholic Church and lived according to her doctrine and precepts. This was the reason why they gave up, and continue daily to give up, all

that this world can offer, in order to cling to the mother of all the saints, the holy Catholic Church. The approval of their conscience and the consolation of the Holy Ghost make their sacrifices light and even delightful.

(12) Be not troubled on account of the promise which you have made to live and die in the religion of your childhood. When you made this promise you thought that yours was the true religion; but having become convinced of its falsity, your promise is no longer binding. It would even be sinful to think one's self obliged to keep a promise to do what is displeasing to God.

(13) Now, my dear friend, let me take leave of you by recalling to your mind the words of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" (St. Matt. xvi. 26). What will it profit you to have treasured up all the goods of this world; to have won by your honesty, by your kindness, by your condescension and generosity, the affection and esteem of all who ever approached you, if you have not at the same time fulfilled the great commandment of Jesus Christ, to "hear His Church" and to submit to her authority and direction! Be not like those foolish persons who, in exchange for some little passing earthly honor and comfort are willing to renounce the hope of an eternity of bliss and happiness. Be not like those weak-minded and ungrateful people who prefer to ignore God, their greatest Benefactor, rather than suffer the sneer of a friend or to grieve a family, blinded by ignorance and prejudice! Imitate St. Paul, and say with him: "Lord, what dost Thou wish me to do?" 'despising all earthly and vain things to secure those which will last for ever. But, rely not on yourself alone. The knowledge of the true religion and the embracing it must both be the work of God. Ask of Him without ceasing, especially through the intercession of His Virgin Mother, to enlighten your mind and to strengthen your will, and you will one day increase the happy number of those who will praise God for the un-

speaking grace of having brought them out of darkness  
into the splendor of

“HIS ADMIRABLE LIGHT!”



## PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE INTO TRUTH.

(This prayer was written by the Rev. Mr. Thayer of Boston, a minister of the Congregational Church, when he was in doubt and uncertainty, and in the use of which he was assisted in obtaining that grace which ultimately led him to the gift of faith, and the reception into the one fold of the one Shepherd.)

God of all goodness; Almighty and eternal Father of mercies, and Saviour of Mankind; I implore Thee, by Thy sovereign goodness, to enlighten my mind and to teach my heart, that by means of true faith, hope, and charity I may live and die in the true religion of Jesus Christ. I confidently believe that, as there is but one God, there can be but one faith, one religion, one only path to salvation, and that every other path opposed thereto can lead but to perdition. This path, O my God, I anxiously seek after, that I may follow it and be saved. Therefore I protest before Thy Divine Majesty, and *I swear by all Thy divine attributes, that I will follow the religion which Thou shalt reveal to me as the true one*, and will abandon, at whatever cost, that wherein I shall have discovered errors and falsehoods. I confess that I do not deserve this favor for the greatness of my sins, for which I am truly penitent, seeing they offend a God who is so good, so holy, and so worthy of love; but what I deserve not, I hope to obtain from Thine infinite mercy; and I beseech Thee to grant it unto me through the merits of that precious blood which was shed for us sinners by Thine only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth, God, world without end. Amen.





