

A FATHER SCOTT PAMPHLET

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NO POPE CAN BE WRONG IN TEACHING DOCTRINE



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QUIZ

(FOR STUDY CLUBS AND DISCUSSION GROUPS)

1. What was Christ's purpose in founding the Church?
2. What is the Deposit of Faith?
3. How was the Deposit of Faith to be transmitted intact?
4. On what grounds do we accept Revelation?
5. Did Christ guarantee infallible transmission of His doctrine?
6. Why did the Apostles denounce those who denied their doctrine?
7. Was Christ's guarantee given to the Apostles only?
8. Can a fallible Church be the teacher of the Infallible Christ?
9. Which is the only Church that claims infallibility?
10. Christ's guarantee of infallibility was to His Church not to any one person.
11. What is the Papacy, and why is it the foundation of the Church?
12. No human being can be infallible.
13. In what matters is the Pope infallible?
14. What texts of Scripture show that Christ designated an infallible head of the Church?
15. Besides infallibility did Christ confer supreme jurisdiction on the Head of the Church?
16. What texts of Scripture show this supreme jurisdiction?
17. The power of the Papacy originated with the prestige of Christianity after Constantine.
18. What are the conditions for an infallible Papal pronouncement?

NO POPE CAN BE WRONG

When Teaching Doctrine

Martin J. Scott, S.J.

I have been expecting you. In your letter you said that the infallibility of the Pope was the only thing keeping you from becoming a Catholic.

Yes. I fail to see how any human being can be infallible.

I quite understand your difficulty. If, however, you reflect on the nature and purpose of Christ's mission to mankind, you will readily see that some infallible means was necessary in order to perpetuate that mission.

I doubt if you can assign any substantial reason that will explain or justify an infallible human agency.

If you will allow me a few moments to state the nature and purpose of Christ's mission, I am sure you will not find papal infallibility a stumbling-block to your acceptance of Catholicism.

Very well. I am really eager to learn what reason, if any, can justify such a dogma.

The main purpose Christ had in view in founding His Church was to have her teach the truths relating

to God's dealings with mankind, and to administer His aids to salvation. Christ might have given the solution of every problem which has engaged the mind of man from the beginning to the present day. But He did not become man in order to give us worldly knowledge, no matter how desirable, but to point out the way to everlasting welfare, and to supply the means of attaining that blessed end. Hence He confined His teaching to Divine things and to man's relations with God.

Christ did not impart knowledge about health or science or worldly welfare. He did not even advert to the various systems of philosophy and ethics which the learned schools of Greece, Rome and the East taught. He did not correct man's ideas about the shape of the earth or the planetary system. He left no remedies for the diseases which afflicted the human race. He did not give any direction concerning hygiene or commerce. All His efforts were directed to informing man of his duty to God, and instituting the means by which man could fulfil that duty.

Christ Himself informed us why He came among us. "I am come that they may have life." (Saint John, x, 10) He was referring to real life, not this present life which His hearers already possessed, but to a participation in His own Divine life. "To as many as received Him, He gave them the power to become the sons of God." (Saint John, i, 12) It was Christ's mission to lead mankind to a participation in His

own blessedness. "In My Father's house, there are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to Myself; that where I am, there you also may be. . . . I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." (Saint John, xiv, 2-6) The purpose of Christianity is, therefore, to enable man to become a partaker of the Divine nature.

Revelation is God's message informing man what he should believe about God and what he should do to obtain everlasting fellowship with God. This Revelation is called the Deposit of Faith. It embraces God's communication to man both by the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament, and by Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost in the New Testament.

Christ, during the three years of His public ministry, preached the truths of Revelation to the people generally and, moreover, instructed His Apostles more minutely in them. After His Resurrection, He sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles to enlighten their minds and to recall all things whatsoever He had taught them. "But 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." (Saint John, xiv, 26) It was because Christ had assured His Apostles of Divine aid that He could say to them: "It is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost." (Saint Mark, xiii, 11)

The body of revealed doctrine which Christ communicated to His Apostles forms the basic teaching of Christianity. It was this Deposit of Faith which Christ charged the Apostles to preach when He gave them their commission as His missionaries: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Saint Matthew, xxviii, 19-20)

It is clear that this commission to teach the Deposit of Faith was not limited to the Apostles personally, but included their successors to the end of the world; otherwise, Christ's words that He would be with them to the end of the world would be meaningless. Besides, Christ's mission was not merely for those who lived in the lifetime of Himself or His companions, but for all mankind to the end of time. The Apostles were to terminate their labors in a few years, but the Deposit of Faith was given to mankind for all generations unto the last.

Christ was an infallible teacher. In establishing a Church which was to teach His doctrine, and which He commanded His followers to hear as they would hear Himself, He instituted an infallible teaching body. He would not have commanded the faithful to follow a teacher if that teacher could mislead. We have His own word for it that in trusting to the guidance of His Church, we are under His guidance and leadership: "He that heareth you, heareth Me." (Saint Luke, x, 16)

Faith in Christ means faith in His teaching and promises. It does not mean that we comprehend God or His ways, but that we accept on His word what He has revealed. The Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, are and will be mysteries until we see God face to face. Faith does not mean that we believe Revelation because its truths have been demonstrated to us, as a theorem of geometry is demonstrated, but solely because we have faith in God, Who has revealed these truths and Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. The generality of mankind have faith in a physician, not because they understand how he diagnoses a disease, but because they have confidence in his knowledge and integrity. Christ wants us to believe in Revelation, not because He has demonstrated its verity, but because He has declared it.

Christ seldom explained His doctrine, but only proclaimed it. When the Jews questioned the possibility of the Eucharist, Christ did not dispute with them or explain this mystery, but simply emphasized the fact that unless they accepted it, they were rejecting Him. All through His ministry He spoke authoritatively, as God should speak. He did not propose His doctrine for debate, but imposed it for belief. The Jews themselves said: "Never did man speak like this man." (Saint John, vii, 46)

Since Christ's doctrine was intended for all generations of mankind to the end of the world, it is evident that He took measures to secure its preservation

and transmission. If it was important enough to be revealed to mankind, it was important enough to be revealed intact to succeeding generations. From the nature of the case, it is, therefore, altogether reasonable that some means should have been created for the infallible transmission of the Deposit of Faith. We should, therefore, expect that there should be some institution or society established which would be immune from error in teaching revealed truth. It is only reasonable to presume that Christ the infallible Teacher provided an infallible teaching authority in order to transmit His teaching. What is thus seen to be reasonable, and in conformity with the nature of Revelation, Christ actually effected by instituting a society which He called His Church and which He endowed with immunity from error in teaching the truths He had deposited with her.

In just what way did Christ endow the Church with immunity from error?

In sending His Apostles to teach His doctrine, Christ clothed them with the greatest powers ever conferred on man. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." (Saint John, xx, 21) By these words, Jesus sent the Apostles on the very same mission for which He Himself came from Heaven. That this might be evident, He conferred on them for their sacred undertaking powers never before bestowed on man. Jesus said to them: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things

whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Saint Matthew, xxviii, 18-20)

It was because the Apostles realized that God was with them in their mission, that although they were naturally not equipped for so great an enterprise, they nevertheless took heart and bravely faced opposition and dangers which would have crushed any merely human undertaking. Their mission was to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ. He was an infallible Teacher, and they knew that they would be aided from on high to preach infallibly the Deposit of Faith He had committed to them. They evidenced the fact that God was with them in their teaching by attributing to God the words which they addressed to the faithful: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." (Acts xv, 28)

It was because they knew they were Divinely directed in their teaching that Saint Paul, writing to the Galatians, said: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." (Gal. i, 8) Unless the Apostles were convinced that God was with them in their ministry of teaching, they had never presumed to be so positive and arbitrary in their pronouncements.

Thus Saint Paul says that he speaks, "not in the learned words of human wisdom; but in the doctrine of the Spirit of God"; and he states the reason for his assurance: "For we have the mind of Christ."

(I Cor. ii, 13, 16) What he means by having the mind of Christ, he makes clear when he says: "When you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God." (I Thess. ii, 13)

This explains why the Apostles so vigorously denounced those who rejected any part of their teaching. They condemned as heretics those who put their own interpretation on the Gospel in opposition to that given by Christ's Divinely appointed teachers. The Apostles would never have taken the firm stand which characterized them, unless they were convinced that the doctrine they preached was revealed by God, and that they themselves were Divinely aided in making it known.

All that you have advanced may explain infallibility in the case of the Apostles themselves, but they all passed away in the course of time.

Whatever prerogatives were given the Apostles were bestowed on them in their official capacity as guardians and transmitters of the Deposit of Faith. Personally the Apostles all passed away in the course of years, but the Deposit of Faith was given for all time. The promises given to the Apostles as custodians of Revelation passed on to their legitimate successors, who constitute the teaching body of Christ's Church.

As further evidence that the infallible Teacher, Christ, instituted an infallible teaching body to suc-

ceed Him, we have the fact that Christ promised and sent the Holy Ghost to enlighten and strengthen and guide the Apostles. "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of Truth. . . . 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 whatever I shall have said to you." (Saint John, xiv, 16, 26)

No Church can be the Church of Christ which does not profess to be an infallible representative of the Infallible Founder of Christianity. Christ did not establish Christianity in order to have it either perish or mislead. He might better never have instituted a religion if it were to mislead mankind, or if it were to fail after He had guaranteed its perpetuity. If we had no direct evidence that His Church must be an infallible teacher of Revelation, we should nevertheless know from her nature and purpose that she must teach infallibly the truths Divinely committed to her. But, as we have seen, we have direct evidence from Scripture that Christ, in instituting His Church, made her the infallible vehicle of transmitting the Deposit of Faith to future generations, unto the end of time. Hence no Church can be His which does not teach infallibly.

No Church in the world even claims to teach infallibly except the Catholic Church. Every other Church admits and proclaims that it may err. They all assert that it is arrogant for any Church to claim

to be immune from error. Yet Christ established an infallible Church. He might as well have established no Church at all if it was not to be certainly a teacher of truth. It could not be a certain teacher of truth if it were liable to error.

All that you have said refers to the Church as an infallible teacher of its religion, but that has nothing to do with papal infallibility.

The Papacy is the foundation on which the Church of Christ rests. In establishing His Church, Christ laid a foundation which was to uphold a structure that was to last unto the end of the world, and to be impervious to the assaults of error. The name of the future chief of the Apostles was Simon. Christ, intending to make Simon the main support of His Church, changed the name of this Apostle from Simon to Peter. (Saint John, i, 42) *Peter*, in the language spoken by Our Divine Lord, means *rock*. Hence Christ Himself designated Simon Peter a rock. Christ, having given him this name, had a purpose in so doing. That purpose was manifested when the Divine Founder of Christianity made Peter the foundation on which He erected His imperishable Church. "And I say to thee: That thou art Peter (a rock); and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Saint Matthew, xvi, 18) This was the promise. By it Christ specified the nature of the foundation of the Church to be erected by Divine hands.

When Christ made Peter the rock foundation of His

imperishable Church, He founded the Papacy. Whatever is true of the Church of Christ as regards inerrancy and perpetuity, is true of its foundation, the Papacy. The two are inseparable. As no building can exist except on a foundation, so the Church of Christ is inconceivable apart from the Papacy. Indeed, all through the centuries, the history of the Church has been, to a great extent, the history of the Papacy. The Papacy has been the touchstone of true fellowship with the Church established by the Son of God.

There are those who assert that, while it is evident that the true Church of Christ must be an infallible teacher of Revelation, it is against all reason that the Pope individually should be infallible. It is affirmed that the Pope is a man, like the rest of mankind, and that he has accordingly a fallible judgment and free will. As long as his will is free and his mind limited, it is impossible for him, it is asserted, not to be liable to error. However, without interfering with free will, the Son of God can so guide and arrange matters that neither His Church nor His Vicar, the Pope, will teach error. What Christ could do, He has actually done, by guaranteeing not only His Church, but also its official head, against error.

Before we give in detail Christ's actual designation of Peter as the infallible head of the Church, thus constituting the Papacy, we shall indicate some reasons which make it imperative that the head of the True Church should be infallible. While Christ was

on earth, He was supreme visible Teacher and Ruler of the society composed of the Apostles. When He organized that society into a Church, which was to perpetuate His teaching and authority after He was gone, it was reasonable to expect that He would appoint over it a visible head.

This was the more necessary since the Church He founded was to be universal and to teach always and everywhere the same doctrine. Unity of doctrine requires a final arbiter whose decision will settle any and all controversies that may affect unity of belief and teaching. In times of persecution or war, it is not feasible to convoke an assemblage which could represent the Universal Church. Unity of belief, which was so much insisted upon by Christ, could hardly be maintained unless there was a tribunal to which at all times and under all circumstances recourse could be had for the settlement of disputes concerning belief or practice.

General councils of the Church are of rare occurrence, and are only convoked when the head of the Church finds that it is feasible and imperative. In a world-wide society, constituted of all races and conditions of mankind, it is inevitable that controversies should arise from time to time. Unless there was a readily accessible tribunal whose judgment was final and irrevocable, schisms and heresies would rend the unity of faith which Christ had so much at heart, and which He guaranteed should always be preserved. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against

it." (Saint Matthew, xvi, 18) If false doctrines were taught by the Church, the gates of hell, that is, error, would prevail.

Christ's intentions regarding Peter were manifested from the very beginning of His ministry. The first time that Peter, then Simon, met Our Divine Lord, Jesus distinguished him by giving him the name which was indicative of his future dignity in the Church: "And he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter." (Saint John, i, 42)

In every list of the Apostles which the Gospels give, Peter is named first. Saint Mark, in narrating the selection of the Apostles, not only places Peter first, but moreover especially adverts to the fact that Christ had changed his name: "To Simon He gave the name Peter." (Saint Mark, iii, 16) When Christ raised to life the daughter of Jairus (Saint Mark v, 37), and when later He was transfigured (Saint Matthew, xvii, 1), Peter was named as the first of the trio who were present at these Divine manifestations.

It was Peter who ordinarily acted as spokesman for the Apostles whenever they wanted to address a question to the Lord. It was likewise Peter who spoke for the Twelve in answer to the question which Jesus put to them when so many turned away from Him because they found His doctrine hard to believe. "Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also

go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (Saint John, vi, 68, 69) Again, when Jesus asked the disciples whom they considered Him to be, it was Peter who answered for them: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." (Saint Matthew, xvi, 16) No wonder that Chrysostom calls Peter the mouthpiece of the Apostles.

When the tax-collector approached the Apostles in order to receive the tribute from Jesus, it was to Peter that he addressed himself. "And when they were come to Capharnaum, they that received the didrachmas, came to Peter and said to him: Doth not your Master pay the didrachmas?" (Saint Matthew, xvii, 23) Peter having informed the official that his Master paid the tribute, went to Jesus to get it. Jesus said to Peter: "Go to the sea, and cast in a hook: and that fish which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that, and give it to them for me and thee." (Saint Matthew, xvii, 26) In this event, two things stand out. First, Jesus through Peter miraculously provides the tribute; secondly, although the tribute was asked for the Master only, Jesus bids Peter pay it for both Himself and Peter. In view of the office which Peter was to fill later as Vicar of Christ, this event seems prophetic. Here, as later, Jesus cooperates with Peter miraculously, and associates Himself with Peter in a most intimate manner.

It is always Peter whose voice is heard when the Apostles question the Master. When Jesus spoke about forgiveness, it was Peter who asked how often an offender should be forgiven. (Saint Matthew, xviii, 21) After the interview between Christ and the rich young man, it was Peter who, in the name of the Twelve, put the question: "Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee: what therefore shall we have?" (Saint Matthew, xix, 27)

It was particularly in the closing events of Christ's life that Peter stood out conspicuously. He was of the three whom Jesus took with Him into the Garden of Gethsemane. (Saint Matthew, xxvi, 37) It was to Peter that the Lord addressed His remonstrance when He came to His disciples for sympathy and found them overcome with fatigue. "And He cometh to His disciples, and findeth them asleep, and He saith to Peter: What? Could you not watch one hour with Me?" (Saint Matthew, xxvi, 40) It was Peter who drew the sword in defense of his Master. (Saint John, xviii, 10)

Alas, it was Peter, also, who saddened the heart of his Master by denying Him. But when the gentle Jesus looked reproachfully, yet lovingly, at him, Peter shed bitter tears (Saint Luke, xxii, 57-62), the beginning of a life-long sorrow and penance. Peter of himself was weak, with the weakness of human frailty. Nevertheless he was chosen by the Master to be the foundation of His indestructible Church. Saint Paul alludes to this when he says:

“The weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong . . . that no flesh should glory in His sight.” (I Cor. i, 27, 29)

When Christ rose from the dead, His first message was to His repentant disciple. The angel of the Resurrection said to the holy women at the glorified sepulcher: “Go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee.” (Saint Mark, xvi, 7) Not only was the Risen Saviour’s first message addressed to Peter, but it was to the same Apostle that He first showed Himself after His Resurrection. “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.” (Saint Luke, xxiv, 34)

From these and similar instances it is evident that Peter occupied during the life of Our Lord a leadership which was evidently of Christ’s own designation. We should not be surprised, therefore, that When Christ was leaving this world to go to His Eternal Father, He should designate Peter as the chief and head of the society over which He Himself had ruled during His public ministry.

The instances you refer to simply show that Peter had a certain precedence over the other Apostles, but that does not signify personal or papal infallibility.

One of the very last acts of Christ’s stay on earth was his appointment of Peter to shepherd the flock of which, up to His ascension into Heaven, He Himself was the Pastor. Christ had frequently referred to His faithful followers as His sheep, of which He

was the Good Shepherd. He had declared of Himself: "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. . . . I am the Good Shepherd; and I know Mine and Mine know Me . . . and I lay down My life for My sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." (Saint John, x, 11-16)

Just before ascending into Heaven, Christ committed His sheep to him whom he had previously made the chief of the Apostles. It was at the Risen Saviour's last appearance to His disciples that He addressed Himself to Peter, in the presence of them all: "Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved, because He had said to him the third time: Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep." (Saint John, xix, 15-17)

People and prelates constitute the fold of Christ's faithful. By the designation of Christ Himself, Peter was made the chief pastor over all. Peter was

to do what Christ had done. Peter was to take the place of the Good Shepherd, Who had returned whence He came. He was to be the Vicar of Christ, so commissioned by Christ Himself. As Christ was the Infallible Teacher and Supreme Ruler, so was Peter, His Vicar, to be infallible and supreme. This is what constituted Peter the foundation of the Church.

If I mistake not, Catholics believe not only that the Pope is infallible, but also that he has supreme jurisdiction over the entire Church. What justification is there for that claim?

In order that there should be no doubt of Peter's supreme power as ruler and teacher in the Church, Christ employed a symbol of jurisdiction which was perfectly well known to the Jews, as well as to all peoples. Having declared to Peter that he was to be the foundation of His Church, Christ proceeded immediately to state the significance of the power conferred upon the future chief of the Apostles. "And I will give to thee (Peter) 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 on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Saint Matthew, xvi, 19)

It is to be noted that the words both of the foundation and of the keys were addressed to Peter alone. In founding the Church, Christ had addressed Himself to all the Apostles: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. . . . All power is given to Me

in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations. (Saint John, xx, 21; Saint Matthew, xxviii, 18) In these words, Christ commissioned all the Apostles to preach His kingdom. But it was Peter alone He constituted the foundation of His Church, and to Peter alone He gave the keys of the kingdom.

That the Apostles understood the nature of the jurisdiction which was conferred upon Peter, is evident from the fact that from the very beginning his leadership was acknowledged by them. After the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, which was the inauguration of the apostolic ministry, Peter assumed at once, and as a matter of course, the position of chief of the Apostles. It is Peter who proposes the election of a successor to Judas. (Acts i, 15) Peter preaches the first sermon on the very day of Pentecost. (Acts ii, 14) Peter works the first miracle, healing the lame man at the gate of the Temple. (Acts iii, 1-8) Peter it is who acts as spokesman for the Apostles when they are arrested and accused before the council. (Acts iv, 8; v, 29) Peter receives the first Gentile converts into the Church, and moreover proclaims that the Church is not limited to the children of Israel. (Acts xi, 17)

What Christ was to the Apostles, that Peter was after Jesus had returned to the Father. Unless the Apostles realized that Peter had been designated by Divine appointment as their head, it is impossible to understand their acquiescence in his leadership.

Peter it is who passes judgment on Ananias and Saphira. (Acts v, 1-4) Peter condemns the first heretic, Simon Magus. (Acts viii, 18-20) Peter is prayed for by the whole Church when he is thrown into prison and, as a result, is miraculously delivered. (Acts xii, 5-7) At the Apostolic Council, it was Peter who rose up and gave the final word on a matter involving a point of dogma. (Acts xv, 7-12)

Peter governed the Church until he terminated his career by martyrdom. He was crucified at Rome under Nero, after ruling the Church as Bishop of Rome for twenty-five years. Peter lives on in the person of the Bishop of Rome. As he had ruled the Universal Church, so have his successors done from his day to our own. Even during the lifetime of John, the Beloved Disciple, it was Peter's successor, the Bishop of Rome, who governed the Church of Christ with the same power and jurisdiction as the first Vicar of Christ.

In the year 96, although the Beloved Disciple John was then living, it was to Peter's successor, not to John, that the Church of Corinth appealed for the adjudication of matters under controversy. Only twenty years later, that is, in 116, the Martyr Ignatius, third Bishop of Antioch, writing to the Romans, refers to their Church as presiding over all the Churches. In the same century, Saint Polycarp, disciple of Saint John, went to Rome in order to consult with Pope Anicetus on some matters which were in controversy in his province. (Eusebius, Hist.

Eccl. v, 24) Later, in the same second century, Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, being asked what was the criterion of true doctrine, replied that it was to be found in the teaching of the Church of Rome, "since all Churches must agree with her, because of her greater authority." (Contr. Haer. III, 3)

During the first three centuries after the Apostles, no general councils were held, nor could be held. The Bishop of Rome was the sole anchor of truth. He was the compass by which the faithful everywhere were guided aright amid a sea of controversy. It was during this time particularly that Peter was the foundation on which the Church of Christ rested. There was need of a rock foundation during these troublous times, when the sword from without and heresy from within would have wrecked any Church but that whose foundation was the rock of Divine truth. Truly Christ builded well when He made Peter the support and stay of the Universal Church.

It should be noted that the primacy of jurisdiction and the office of infallible teacher were exercised by the Pope before the reign of Constantine, consequently before any external dignity attached to the Papacy. This is the reply to those who assert that the power of the Papacy originated with the prestige attaching to Rome. It was not only a primacy of honor, but of jurisdiction, that the Pope exercised. It was not an uncertain voice, but an infallible teacher. It was then what it is now, the living repre-

sentative of its Divine Founder. Christ not only said of His Church as a whole: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Saint Luke, x, 16), but He moreover said of the Pope, in the person of Peter: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." (Saint Luke, xxii, 32)

This prayer of Jesus, that Peter's faith fail not, and that he should confirm his brethren, is warrant for papal infallibility, for the prayer of Jesus cannot fail of its purpose. Besides, the fact that Peter was commissioned to fill the office of Shepherd which Jesus Himself had exercised, and that as Chief Pastor he was to feed the flock, as Jesus had done, with the doctrine of truth, makes it abundantly clear that, as the Vicar of the infallible Christ, he must be infallible. Moreover, as no structure can be more sound than its foundation, and since the infallible Church rests on the Papacy, it necessarily follows that the Pope, who is the personification of the Papacy, must be infallible.

You have certainly made it clear to me that, since the Pope is the visible head and spokesman of the Church of which Christ is the invisible Head, he must be infallible when, as the Vicar of Christ, he declares what is the doctrine of Christ regarding creed and practice. And now, since that matter is cleared up, I am ready to become a member of the Church which has as its foundation the rock of the Papacy.

Christ in establishing His Church endowed her with an infallible voice which should define the truths of Revelation with Divine certainty when occasion should require it. This infallible voice does not proclaim a new Revelation, but only states definitely what has been Divinely revealed. In so defining Revelation, the Pope is not inspired, as were the prophets of old, nor does he announce new doctrines, but simply declares the true sense of the Revelation which has been made once for all. In doing this, he has the guarantee of Jesus Christ that he will be assisted from on high, so that what he defines will be what God intended by the Revelation in question when it was given to mankind.

Not every teaching of the Pope has the guarantee of infallibility, but only those pronouncements which are made in his capacity as teacher of the Universal Church, and what he intends to be accepted by all the faithful as part of the Deposit of Faith. The technical term which is employed for such infallible pronouncements is *ex cathedra*. This is the Latin for proclamations *from the throne*. Unless the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*, his statements are entitled to only such assent as his learning, integrity and lofty position justify. On matters not intimately associated with faith and morals, his views carry the weight of their own worth only.

Before concluding the subject of the Papacy, we shall cite the words of the Vatican Council. "We teach and define it to be a Divinely revealed dog-

ma, that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*—that is, when in the discharge of his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians, he defines in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, a doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the Universal Church—is, through the Divine assistance, promised to him in Blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed His Church to be endowed, in defining doctrines concerning faith and morals: and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not through consent of the Church, irreformable.” (Deuz. 1839)

The history of Christendom attests that from the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem in the first century, to that of the Vatican in the twentieth, the Pope has exercised according to circumstances the primacy of teaching and jurisdiction, and that as teacher, his word was final, and as ruler his power was supreme and universal. From the first to the twentieth century, Peter has been the visible foundation of the Church of Christ. Truly did the Divine Founder say of him: “Thou art Peter (a rock); and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Saint Mark, xvi, 18)

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