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# MINUTE MEN

# CATHOLAGANDA

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# “Minute Men Catholaganda”

is a Catholic Propaganda Pamphlet for Catholic Campaigners and a Correspondence Course successfully used by Fathers Rumble and Carty as a Follow-Up Course for Street and Radio listeners. It is a compendium of Catholicism reduced from book form to vest pocket pamphlet size to enable the spread of the printed word. This Correspondence-Follow-Up Course we recommend for Convert Classes, Study Clubs and Mixed Marriage Cases. This pamphlet of 64 pages is a sequel to “Radio Replies” and contains twice as much matter as is contained in the Catholigetic Series of “QUIZZES TO A STREET PREACHER.”

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## INTRODUCTION TO MINUTE MEN CATHOLAGANDA

Dear Man in the World,

So you do not know just how to go about things! Well, then, I have decided to send you once each month a paper, which I want you to read several times during the weeks which must ensue before the next instalment can come to you. Study each paper hard, learn it as if you had to know it for an examination upon which your whole career in life must depend. As a matter of fact, your whole career in life—in eternal life—will depend upon the things placed before you during this course of instruction.

From the very beginning, too, I want you to keep in mind that everything mentioned in this course is absolutely true and real. It is not a fairy tale. It is not mere romance. God Himself bent down to tell these truths to man, and death will thrust us into their midst in all their reality. It would be dreadful, wouldn't it, if we were to have no inward life, no privacy with God; if death and God were to be to us unwelcome surprises. There is a huge invisible world. We are to be some day part of it. It touches us already. We may fall through into it at any moment. There's no need to be panic-stricken. There is need to be ready. And one of the best means of being ready is to learn and know our Catholic Doctrine.

You, dear Man, above all, I wish to understand and know the gift God is holding out to you, because, by the very circumstances of your life, you cannot but be an apostle. You see, we do not love what we do not know, and I want you so to love your religion that when people mention the subject, they will see at once that you are a Catholic, and also that you are proud of it, as of the greatest possession you have. Meantime, if the principles mentioned during this course enter into your daily life, influencing it and making it holy, God will love you as only He Himself can love, and that's all that really counts.

Imprimatur Die 15a Dec. 1939  
Joannes Gregorius Murray  
Archiepiscopus Sancti Pauli

I.

**THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

My Dear Friend,

You say the first thing that impressed you was that extraordinary institution known as the Catholic Church—the two-thousand-years-old one. Well, we shall begin with what first gripped your attention, and then ask what may be the doctrines of that Church.

**CHRISTIANITY**

“I am a Christian” means, if anything, “I believe in Jesus Christ, and in all that He taught.” Now, Christianity is a revelation. That is, God, in His wonderful goodness, decided to reveal to men information of exceedingly grave importance, which they could never get unless He so revealed it. We may say, “God decided to teach men.” That word is all-important if we would understand the idea of a Christian Church. Christianity is a teaching of men by God. As doctors teach men information for the good of their bodies; as lawyers teach men information for the well-being of their property; so God decided to teach men information for the good—eternal and supreme—of their souls.

**GOD'S METHOD**

God's way of getting those truths to us was to send His Only Son into this world in human form—to teach. Christ was essentially a Teacher. He taught. He did not write. He taught those with whom He came in contact, and always as one having authority. He knew He was the Son of God. He knew He was the Immutable Truth. And He never allowed His teaching to be contradicted. The people might spit on Him—He would not murmur. But when He taught, He knew He was the Truth, and simply said, “I say unto you.” Men had to receive His words as children, or not be Christians.

Christ was the Teacher sent by God to give information to men which they could not get unless they would be taught by Him.

**CHRIST'S METHOD**

Christ brought a teaching for all mankind. He knew He Himself was to live but thirty-three years. But to teach all men—to teach me now—He did not depart from His personal method. To the end of time there will exist a body of men, selected by Him, to teach, in His Name, the Truth He brought, and to teach it with authority. It will be the same truth with the same method.

You remember how our Lord said to the Apostles, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John XV, 16); "going, therefore, teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. XXVIII, 19-20). Before they went, He told them everything. "All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you" (John XV, 15). He even made special arrangements to prevent their forgetting His teaching. "The Holy Ghost will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I have said to you" (John XIV, 26).

### THE CATHOLIC METHOD

The whole position can be summed up in a few words. God revealed His Truth through Christ His Son to the Apostles, who handed it on to their successors, who, under the protection of the Holy Ghost, now teach it to us. It is always according to the same method of a living teacher with power and authority. And because of Christ's perpetual presence, His Church shares His Nature and prerogatives. Cardinal Manning long ago drew the parallel—

**The Church is One** in doctrine and in practice, because **He** is the only Son of God.

**The Church is Imperishable** because **He** has immortal life.

**The Church is Infallible** because **He** is unchangeable Truth.

**The Church is Holy** because **He** is Holiness itself.

**The Church is Catholic**, i. e., universal or supranational, teaching orally and with authority,

**All Truth**—not a part of it.

**To All Nations**—she has gone to all peoples.

**At All Times**—through all the centuries since her foundation.

**In All Places**—she alone is everywhere.

### THE REASON OF IT ALL

**God's Method, Christ's Method, the Catholic Method** is the **Only Method** designed for the instruction and salvation of all men.

For thus only can all men have an equal chance of salvation. A teaching Church is the only method suited to all men. Private interpretation and each one's judging for himself would require time for study, and a highly developed intelligence; and I know, dear Man, that you would be the last to give the brainy a better chance of salvation merely because they are more brainy. And what about humanity before printing was invented? Men simply had to be taught by men who had themselves been taught. A Church teach-

ing in the name of Christ and guaranteed by Him is the only way ignorant and learned alike can know simply, easily, and with certainty the precious truths revealed by God. "Faith cometh by hearing," St. Paul told the Romans (X, 17). The truth was given to those who heard Christ—it is given to those who hear Christ's successors. Christ centered the authority of this teaching Church in St. Peter, who was to settle all difficulties. That authority is still centered in St. Peter's successor to the Bishopric of Rome—today, Pope Pius XII. The faithful can obtain any information as to what Christ taught from any priest, whose business it is to know exactly what the Popes and Bishops of all time have ever taught as Successors of the Apostles.

### THE GIFT OF GOD

To be a Catholic, to be a member of that Society which embraces all those faithful Christians who are united in one Faith, and in the same Sacraments, under the legitimate rule of the Bishops, chief amongst whom is the Holy Father himself, listen, dear Man in the world, listen to what this means. It will make you say those words of the Creed—"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church"—with new joy, every time. Bishop Hedley treats splendidly somewhere of this matter, and his deep thought runs along these lines:

If you are not a Catholic, you will be told to think out these things for yourself. How, when you already work from daylight till dark? And if you could, you can't afford to wait for your religion till your hair is grey. You want it in youth as well as in age. You need it at the first awakening of your passions—as soon as you set foot in this world. What use for you in a faded and wrinkled old age to announce that after deep meditation in philosophy you have at last decided that your soul will live forever? It will be too late; all that time, waiting for proof, you will have lived as it were not going to live forever. The conclusion you have arrived at should have been influencing your whole life. So the Catholic Church drills into her children truths which the independent learn, perhaps, on their deathbeds. Our children may verify their beliefs later, but Christian teaching beautifies their lives from the very beginning. Is it anything to be a Catholic? It is God's best gift!

And now, dear knight-errant of commerce, I wish you to make this notion of the Church your own, so that next month we may begin on what the Church teaches. And before beginning on any of the more abstract doctrines, we shall commence with the first four things you will encounter on attending our public

functions—The Mass, The Confessional, The Rosary, and Benediction. Then, in the rest of our twelve instructions, we shall cover the whole field of Catholic Teaching.

Till we meet again, that God may bless you as you could most wish to be blessed, will be the prayer of

YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## II.

### THE SACRIFICE

Dear Over-busy Friend,

Your remark that "Of course a Church teaching as one having authority can be the only possible representative of Christ," shows clearly how the genuine notion of the Church carries with it its own appeal. As regards my not dealing with the other churches, however, I knew you realized as well as I do that not one of them even claims the authority which you have agreed must be the essential note of the Christian Church.

And now for the explanation of the extraordinary experience you had when you first set foot inside a Catholic church on that famous Sunday morning. You say a strangely disguised man came into the church at a definite hour, took no notice of anybody, in fact, turned his back on those present, read out of a book for about half an hour, and then departed, apparently without having done anything, whilst everyone went home as if it were all over!

Dear mystified friend, you were present at the Sacrifice of the Mass! And now you are more mystified than ever! But it will not be for long. You will admit that Christ did not change the very nature of religion. Now sacrifice is so bound up with the nature of religion that if Christianity be a religion there must be a sacrifice in it somewhere.

You see, man consists of body and soul, that is, he is both material and spiritual; and surely, if worship is due to God at all, it is due to Him from the whole man, not from half of him, and the worship must in some sensible or material way express the spiritual truth. Now what is that spiritual truth? The spiritual truth is that God is supreme Lord and Master, whilst we are wholly dependent upon Him; nay—since sin—we no longer deserve to be left in existence. Yet God lets us live, and we are forbidden to destroy ourselves. Are we then free to take no notice whatever of our true relationship to God? No, for it would be contradictory

to the relationship of Creator and creature were we to be allowed to ignore it altogether. So from the very beginning, under God's own command, man had to take of his possessions and destroy them in sacrifice to show that he was disposed to recognize the sovereignty of God.

### WHEN CHRIST CAME

He came, not to destroy, but to fulfill the law, and, while He was at it, to redeem us. Now this latter requires four things, viz.:

- (a) that someone,
- (b) pleasing to God,
- (c) should offer himself for sin,
- (d) and that the offering should be more pleasing to God than our sin had been displeasing.

Out of sheer goodness and generosity God decided to do it Himself.

- (a) He became man, and "had laid on Him the iniquity of us all."—Is. LIII, 6.
- (b) He was the Son in "Whom the Father was well pleased."—Matt. III, 17.
- (c) He was offered "because He Himself willed it."—Is. LIII, 7.
- (d) And certainly the infinite Love-Offering of a God is more pleasing than the finite crime of a creature is displeasing.

### THE SACRIFICE

The death of Christ on the cross was a Great Sacrifice of a Great Victim to the Justice of God. But as mankind was not only of the time of Christ, that Great Sacrifice had to continue as long as man would be man and have the obligation of practicing a religion. As a matter of fact, this was predicted long before Christ came to establish His Church. "From the rising to the setting of the sun," the prophet had cried, "My name is great among the gentiles. And in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean obligation."—Mal. I, 2. So it was that Christ at the Last Supper, knowing that He would ratify it next day, instituted a true sacrifice, the same as would be offered on Calvary within twenty-four hours, but now unbloody in manner of offering instead of with bloodshed. There was the same Victim. "This is My Body," said Christ, "which is given for you."—Luke XXII, 19. "This is My Blood of the New Testament."—Mark XIV, 24. "Do this for a commemoration of Me."—Luke XXII, 19. There was the same priest—Christ offering Himself. There was the same object—that God should be adored for all that He is in Himself; that He should be thanked

for all that He has been to humanity; that He should be appeased for all that we have been to Him; and that Grace should be won for the graceless rebels.

Sacrifice is necessary to religion. Christ founded a new religion, which was the fulfillment of the old, and also began a new sacrifice of which the old had only been figures. If His religion had to continue, so also would the sacrifice have to continue with it. As a matter of fact, the sacrifice did continue. Long after Christ's death, St. Paul wrote, "As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord."—1 Cor. XI, 26.

### THE MYSTERIOUS MASS

The Mass is simply the sacrifice which Christ offered both at the Last Supper and on Calvary repeated in the Christian Church. Calvary was the redeeming sacrifice; the Last Supper was Calvary anticipated; the Mass is the same sacrifice of Calvary re-offered in our own days to God to meet our present needs. And as at every true sacrifice, the faithful kneel with both priest and Victim present before their very eyes, at the Altar of God. This was the belief of all Christians from the first days of the Church, and St. Paul himself wrote years after Calvary was apparently over and done with: "We have an altar."—Heb. XIII, 10.

### THE PRIEST

Why, you ask, the strange disguise? Of course, you mean the vestments. Well, then, the priest at the Catholic Altar, although another Christ by ordination, is in himself just a frail human being like the faithful around him, and when he stands between heaven and earth pleading with uplifted hands for the people of God, he disguises his poor humanity as far as possible in sacred vestments that the faithful may see but the priest in him. His priestly garments are the historical garb of the priests of the primitive church.

As for his taking no notice of the people, that is because he is devoting all his attention to God. The worship of God does not consist in one man entertaining a handful of others, but in all, both priest and people, offering to God by a united act the homage due to Him. So the priest ascends to the Altar, as the holy mountain of God, and there pleads in the Sacrifice for his assembled people.

### THE CONGREGATION

You said well when you remarked that the people seemed to be not so much listening for what the priest said as watching for what he did. Sacrifice is in reality an action, and Mass is a true Sacrifice. And as in the



sacrifices of the Old Law, God never dictated a prayer, but each made his own—Anna for a child, the publican for mercy, the pharisee his own proud prayer—so God is still worshipped in act, in the Greatest Act the world has ever seen. "In Christ's life there was one moment beyond all others," writes Archbishop Sheehan, "He called it **His Hour**. It was the hour He gave His life for us on the cross. In the Mass we are with Him in that Supreme Moment. We stand with His mother at the foot of the cross, and ask all the blessings of redemption. In the Mass we join with Him in His offering of Himself, and He takes up our poor and feeble acts of worship in His own infinitely strong and perfect acts of worship, and presents them to His Father."

You will agree then, dear Onlooker, that the priest you saw was far from departing without "having done anything." He had done the greatest thing it is given to man to do on this earth.

### WHY DO CATHOLICS GO TO MASS?

Well, in the first place, because God said quite urgently long ago, "**Remember** you keep holy the sabbath day." We went from God by disobedience; the return must be by obedience, the very essence of religion. Thus we serve God, not because we feel like it, but because it is just. Nor does it matter how God seems to treat us. We serve Him not for what He **does**, but for what He is. In the second place, we attend Mass because the Church obliges us to keep the day holy in that way, under pain of mortal sin. The Church could scarcely do anything else. If Jesus Christ goes to the length of sharing our life, coming down to be crucified, and giving us His Body and Blood to be re-offered as often as we wish, the least we can do is to go to the length of being present at that August Sacrifice once a week, of being present at that central Act of highest religion on the day which God claimed for Himself, with a very solemn warning, lest we should forget to render Him His due. It all means that if Jesus Christ goes to the trouble of redeeming us, we should at least go to the trouble of letting ourselves be redeemed.

So now, Sir Onlooker, you understand what was going on before your eyes that fateful Sunday morning, when you first wished to examine for yourself the magnet which could draw those early morning crowds. You were present at the Mass, the central Act of Catholic worship, an Act which cannot be done away with if Christianity itself is to remain.

There is food for a year of thought in this short

paper, but one month is all that can be spared to you if we are to cover the whole field of Christian Faith in the time at our disposal. Next month we shall peep into that "fearsome institution" called the **Confessional** . . . till then, know and grow to love the wondrous doctrine of the Mass.

God will bless you through each of the next four weeks in His own generous way if He heeds the petitions of

YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

### III.

## CONFESSION

Dear Philosopher,

Your remarks certainly justify this new title, and in any case, who can observe human nature for very long without becoming one? That's why the Catholic Church is really the greatest philosopher on the face of the earth. She has been observing human nature for the last two thousand years. And here I must call your attention to a strange thing. It is the very need of human nature that accounts for the confessional in every Catholic church. Not that the Church invented it; it was the foresight of her divine Founder that provided her with it. And that, of course, is why

### CONFESSION AND CHRISTIANITY GO TOGETHER

It sounds a bit strong to say that you cannot be a Christian unless you go to confession. But let us be rationalists. I don't mean "mere rationalists," but real rationalists. You agreed with the January statement that to be a Christian can only mean "I believe in Jesus Christ and in all that He taught." Now just listen to this from the lips of Jesus Christ. "'As the Father has sent me,' said Jesus Christ to His apostles, 'I also send you.' And He breathed upon them and said, 'Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.'"—John XX, 21.

This, then, is part of Christianity, and as Christianity is for me just as much as for those who lived in those days, there must be somebody exercising the same powers today. You, dear average man, would be the last to credit that Christ intended His representatives to walk around absolving every possible human being they might come across. Before this power is exercised, the very gravity of the matter demands prudent reflection; and certainly no one could know whether a sin should be forgiven or retained without a knowledge

of the sin and of the dispositions of the applicant. We simply must tell our sins to the one from whom we seek forgiveness. St. James did not hesitate. "Confess, therefore, your sins one to another" (V, 16). He meant, not only to God, but also to your fellow men. Again, obviously, it cannot mean to every Tom, Dick, or Harry we may happen to meet, but to those fellow men to whom our Lord has left the power thus to apply the treasures of the Precious Blood, and who have been duly fitted for the work. It would not be in keeping with the mercy of Christ to impose the great burden of asking us to explain our sins publicly, and confession as practiced in the Catholic Church is the only fitting fulfilment of this Sacrament of Mercy.

### WHO IS OBLIGED TO CONFESS?

Every man who is in a state of serious sin and who wishes to recover God's friendship. It would be a farce were Christ to leave a power like this, knowing that sin would be forgiven whether men made use of confession or not. And as every man on the face of the earth until the day of his death is confronted by the possibility of yielding to temptation, every man is subject to the law of confession. Priests and Bishops, and even the Pope, must confess their sins, private and public, like the simplest Catholic.

### PREPARATION FOR CONFESSIO

Every Catholic is obliged to go to confession once a year. This does not mean that the Church is content with this. This law simply lays down the limits beyond which we cannot keep from our Lord without ignoring His voice and so committing a new mortal sin. As a matter of fact, those Catholics who love their faith and have a deep understanding of it can rest satisfied with no half measures, and monthly confession is the least they can content themselves with, whilst weekly confession and daily Holy Communion is their ideal.

In preparing for confession the first duty is the examination of one's conscience. You, as an expert in business efficiency, will appreciate my description of this as a spiritual stocktaking. Nor are we supposed to make this scrutiny an excruciating torture; but we are expected to give it the attention we usually give to ordinary serious business affairs in life. It is a Sacrament of love and mercy.

Sin is man's crying back, "I will not" to God's "Thou shalt." Sin, then, is any wilful transgression of God's laws. As we have those laws in the ten Commandments, the precepts of the Church, and the tradition

of Christian virtues, we have not far to go in the search for our sins. The contrast between our conduct and these standards will supply us with matter for confession.

### THE ACTUAL CONFESSION

Even after the examination of conscience, it is useless, of course, to go to confession unless one has true sorrow for the sins discovered, and a genuine intention of not committing them again. No absolution can be given if this disposition is absent, and should a priest, through ignorance of the penitent's intention, grant absolution, it would be quite valueless.

Granted true sorrow, we must tell in the confessional all the mortal or serious sins that we have committed since our Baptism, and which we have not yet told in confession. We are not obliged to tell our venial or lighter sins, but if happily we have no serious sins, the confession of venial faults will be sufficient to justify Sacramental absolution.

Of course, it goes without saying that we must confess our sins both as regards their kind and their number, just as they are in the sight of Almighty God. Any insincerity would be a mockery.

Finally, we must have the goodwill to make what reparation the Priest should consider necessary, and to fulfil the penance which he is obliged under pain of sin to impose.

### PRACTICAL NOTES ON CONFESSION

There is a technical definition of confession which always reminds me of the tags doctors attach to the simplest ailments of humanity. And knowing the plain blunt man's satisfaction when someone comes along and says in one word, "It's measles," I have searched for a one-word description of confession. Confession is taking one's soul in both hands and holding it out under the streams of the Precious Blood. That, I believe, conveys the right idea of Sacramental confession.

Of course, we may go to confession to any Priest we like, even purposely choosing a Priest quite unknown to us and who never will know us. It is best to forget the man, and to think of ourselves as kneeling at our Lord's feet and asking forgiveness betimes, and grace for the future. It is also a help to remember that every Priest is bound by a most solemn obligation—the strictest he has—to keep secret all sins told in confession.

As a matter of fact, every Priest has enough of the Precious Blood in his hands to destroy all the sins that ever have been committed or ever will be com-

mitted. He hears the sin, estimates the guilt as judge, explains the law as teacher, prescribes the remedies as doctor, encourages as father, forgives as Priest, and then promptly forgets everything.

### EFFECTS OF CONFESSION

On the last day God will sit in judgment; in the confessional He sits in mercy. What is confessed is forgiven and forgotten for ever. It will never be brought up against us. And not only is sin destroyed. With every confession light is poured into the mind, strength is given to the will, grace is increased, and God's friendship is rendered more intimate. The shame we offer as part of our penance and proof of our sincerity, and after absolution we are free to go to Holy Communion, to the One Who bled for us on the cross, Who has seen our brave act, Who loves us for it, and Who is waiting to come Himself into the heart He thought well worth redeeming at life-cost.

### HOLY COMMUNION

And now I come to your remark, dear Observer, that I mentioned nothing in my explanation of the Mass about the crowds flocking to the altar rails. We have just seen that confession is a preparation for that visit. I know you realize clearly that Christ is truly present, that He meant it when He said, "This is My Body," in fulfilment of His promise, "The Bread I will give is My Flesh."—John VI, 52. This was St. Paul's idea when he wrote, "Whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself," i. e., confess and put himself into a state of grace.—1 Cor. XI, 27-28.

### THE LIVING CHRIST

It follows that the Treasure of the Christian Church is the Eucharist. It is not a thing but a Person. The Baby in the crib, the battered Body on the cross, the little Host in the tabernacle are the same Being. It is no harder, nor is it easier, to believe that our God is present in the one state more than in the others. So that, in the tabernacle there is Someone, Someone in the Host I receive, Someone in my heart by Communion—Someone adorable, Someone infinitely good and generous, infinitely powerful. No wonder our people have a consuming hunger for their God, their Refuge, their Heavenly Physician, their Strength, and their Hope, which carries them to the altar rails by the millions.

### THE CONDITIONS

Three things only are necessary that a Catholic may go to receive that heavenly Food. He must be in state of grace, free from all mortal sin; he must be fasting from midnight, so that It is the first food to pass his lips that day; and he must have a right intention and approach from a religious motive, and not from human respect.

### UNDER ONE KIND

All, except the priest who says Mass, receive the Eucharistic Bread only. The Priest, of course, must always consecrate both bread and wine to secure the sacrificial repetition of the Last Supper, at which only priests were present. But after consecration, Christ is wholly present whether under the appearance of bread or of wine. For Christ has risen to die no more, and wherever He is present He is there, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. As a matter of fact, by receiving under both kinds, the Priest receives no more of Our Lord than the ordinary communicant. The doctrinal reason for giving Communion under one kind is that it safeguards the truth of Christ's complete presence wherever He may be found. The religious reason is that it prevents the possible irreverence of spilling the Precious Blood whilst administering the chalice. The practical reason is that in many places it is impossible to get enough wine save for the bare needs of the Sacrifice.

### THE EFFECTS OF COMMUNION

Every communion increases our sanctifying grace, intensifies our union with Christ, strengthens us against temptation, renders us more fervent, destroys our venial sins, lessens the temporal punishment due to our past faults, is a pledge of our future glory in heaven. Thus, when our Lord has come into our hearts, whilst Substantial Sanctity is still within, whilst He, who will be the Great Love of our whole being, is already beginning to transform us into His own dear Likeness, we return to our place and devote at least a quarter of an hour after receiving Him to the prayer and gratitude of an enthusiastic and almost passionate welcome.

My dear friend, go over and over the truths of this little paper during this month. Tell them to yourself in a hundred different ways. Make them quite your own, and next month we shall examine those extraordinary devotions known as Rosary and Benediction.

God bless and keep you as He knows best through the month to come. Please whisper the same prayer for  
**YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.**

## IV.

## EVENING DEVOTIONS

Dear Enthusiast,

Please do not travel quite so quickly! You say you are a Christian, that it is as clear as daylight that Christianity includes the doctrine of confession, and that therefore the sooner you make your confession the better. That's a fine bit of reasoning; but much as the Church appreciates the ability to reason well, she requires more than that from her prospective children. It will all be clear to you after I have explained to you the mysterious thing called **Faith**. But I must keep to our program and today tell you of the Rosary and Benediction which go to make up our Sunday evening devotions. The Rosary, of course, involves one of the deepest questions in Catholic piety.

## DEVOTION TO MARY

Our Lady—that is the way we Catholics usually speak of her—is Christ's Mother. It stands to reason that honor shown to her must be pleasing to Him, if indeed He is the best and most loyal of sons. Cold neglect of her can scarcely fill Him with delight. In any case it was predicted in Sacred Scripture that **all generations shall call me blessed**. Surely this prophecy must be fulfilled as much as any other, and, as a matter of fact, it has been fulfilled from the very beginning in the Catholic Church. We cannot forget that our Lord's last gift to St. John and to all Christians was accompanied by the words, **Behold thy Mother**. It is enough for us. He meant us to love her as such—and they have always loved Mary most who have loved Christ most. St. Germanus did not hesitate to write in the year 720, "We worship indeed the mother of the true God." Not that Catholics ever have given her, or ever can give her, the supreme adoration which is due to God alone. But we certainly honor her and love her above all other creatures.

## THE POWER OF MARY

In the Book of Genesis we find these words addressed to Satan: **I will put enmity between thee and the woman**. It follows that there can be nothing in common between Satan and Mary. Where Satan is, Mary is not. Where Mary is, Satan is not. Again, in St. John's Gospel, we find our Lord working His first miracle at Mary's request, though He Himself declared that His time had not yet come. It can only mean that

Mary has power to repel our spiritual enemies and to move the Heart of her Child Jesus in our favor. We Catholics cannot believe that this power to protect us and to win grace for us was given to Mary for nothing, and we make great use of it.

### THE ROSARY

Dear very human friend, what will you say if I tell you that the Rosary is the most beautiful of all devotions to Christ Himself? Yet that is the simple truth. Let us examine it closely.

To say a full Rosary we recite the Apostles Creed, then an Our Father, with three Hail Marys, and a Glory be to the Father, etc. After that we say fifteen groups of an Our Father and ten Hail Marys each, during which we reflect upon some mystery of the Gospel narrative or Christian tradition for the length of time it takes us to complete each section. The mysteries are as follows:

#### Joyful.

1. Annunciation. 2. Mary visits Elizabeth. 3. Birth of Jesus. 4. Jesus presented in the temple. 5. He is found after three days' loss.

#### Sorrowful.

6. Our Lord's agony in the garden. 7. He is scourged. 8. He is crowned with thorns. 9. He carries His cross. 10. He is crucified.

#### Glorious.

11. Our Lord rises from the dead. 12. He ascends into heaven. 13. He sends the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. 14. Mary is assumed body and soul into heaven. 15. Mary is enthroned as Queen of Heaven.

You will see from this how clearly the Rosary brings before our minds the chief incidents of the life of Jesus Christ Himself, and nothing, of course, could give Mary His Mother greater pleasure than that. As Father Faber points out to us, the Rosary is a complete abridgment of the Gospel according to the thoughts of each of the fifteen decades.

### THE AUTHORS OF THE ROSARY

Who composed the Rosary? See what good company we are in as we recite it.

The Creed comes from the Apostles.

Our Lord Himself composed the Our Father.

The archangel Gabriel said Hail (Mary) full of grace, the Lord is with thee.



St. Elizabeth added, Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb (Jesus).

Holy Mary Mother of God was defined by the great Council of Ephesus in the year A. D. 431.

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death is the spontaneous cry of the whole Catholic Church.

The Gloria is but a faint echo of the continuous refrain ringing through the courts of heaven itself.

### THE INDULGENCES

To encourage us to say the Rosary, the Pope has attached very great indulgences to the use of blessed beads. An indulgence is a remission of that temporal punishment due to sin even after the guilt, that would alienate us from God, has been forgiven. In other words, it shortens the period of purification in Purgatory. (This is just by way of explanation in case someone mentions indulgences to you.) We shall examine the value of our doctrine of indulgences later on. We must give the rest of our time this month to the consideration of the great event in our evening devotions.

### BENEDICTION

We Catholics genuflect slowly and reverently on entering our churches, saying to ourselves quietly, "I adore Thee, O Jesus," because on the Altar is Jesus Christ really present in the Blessed Sacrament. At Benediction the Blessed Sacrament is taken from the tabernacle and placed in a monstrance (from the Latin, *monstrare*, to show), and then enthroned high above the Altar. Amidst lights, which represent the light of Faith and our belief in the unseen truths of God, and flowers, which honor Him as King of all creation, Jesus Christ is placed on high to receive our prayers and worship, and to hold as it were a royal reception. We, His subjects, pay Him the loyal homage of our hearts, sing His praises, and offer our petitions for forgiveness and for grace, praying then more fervently than at other times, because we know that our King of kings and Lord of lords is really and truly there on that throne as surely as He is also seated in glory at the right hand of the Father.

### THE INCENSING

The incensing is full of deep and holy meaning. When the priest swings the thurible towards the throne, bluish clouds of incense ascend, spreading a sweet

odor around. Rising from the burning coals, it signifies our prayer rising to the throne of God from hearts on fire with love of Him, whilst its fragrance typifies the acceptableness of prayer in God's sight. David says in Ps. CXL, Let my prayer be directed like incense in Thy sight. Objections to the use of incense are hard to understand—particularly from Bible Christians. For incense is altogether Biblical and Christian. Catholics didn't invent it, or borrow it from heathen rites, as is sometimes foolishly said. The use of incense was first prescribed by Almighty God Himself. And the Lord said to Moses . . . thou shalt make incense . . . most worthy of sanctification.—Ex. XXX, 35. St. Luke says, The angel appeared to Zachary at the hour of incense. (I, 10), and St. John, in the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelations, that in heaven an angel came and stood before the Altar, having a Golden Censer . . . (VIII, 3). Heaven certainly sounds rather a Catholic place.

### THE BLESSING

After a short exposition, the priest removes the monstrance from the throne, and makes a large sign of the cross with it over the heads of the people. This is not the priest's blessing. It is the blessing of our Lord Himself. Just as He left the glory of Heaven to breathe a benediction on the world from His cross on Calvary—so now He leaves the brilliant Altar throne to breathe a new benediction from His cross on all those assembled in His Presence. And we bow our heads, and are glad indeed, for the Hidden God is in that Eucharist just as He lay concealed under the form of a tiny suffering Infant in Bethlehem. That it may be our Lord's own blessing, the priest covers his very hands with the humeral veil (i. e., the veil with which his shoulders are covered), that he may not so much as touch the monstrance.

### THE DIVINE PRAISES

After the blessing, priest and people recite the Divine Praises as a reparation for the disgraceful use made of God's name and those of Christ and of Our Lady by an unbelieving world. Then the Blessed Sacrament is restored to the tabernacle. Benediction is over.

### MASS AND BENEDICTION

Mass represents Calvary, by which heaven was purchased for us. Benediction is the nearest approach man can make to the "Heaven purchased," on this side of the grave. To kneel in Christ's presence—to love Him and be blessed by Him—that will be heaven

indeed, when the veil is removed. But now we live by faith, and the Benedictions the Church offers us are a foretaste of our eternal inheritance.

Dear knight-errant (I am glad you like the suggestion of honor in that old-world title), we have to part company once more for a month. Be at many Benedictions during that time. If Catholics do not make as much of Benediction as they should, it is because they do not realize the truths they believe.

For the rest, do not be anxious. In His own good time God will pour the Light of Faith into your soul, and all the privileges of Catholics will be yours. Meantime meet the magnificence of God's love with the magnificence of your trust; and believe me to be always  
YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## V.

### FAITH

Dear Would-be Catholic,

You seem to be so eager that I had better explain to you at once the real nature of faith. We have carefully examined the Church, that wondrous Being whose attention is divided between those two whose claims upon her are all absorbing—God and humanity. To God in the name of humanity she offers Sacrifice; to humanity in the name of God she offers the Sacraments. The Church is really a wonderful Mother. She gives us supernatural life by Baptism; she teaches us by her doctrines what health is, or sickness, or death in relation to that life; she removes what disease may be there by Confession; sets us on our feet by Confirmation; nourishes us with that Bread of Angels—the Blessed Eucharist; sees us safely off to God with Extreme Unction; and then, when our bodies have gone back to the dust they came from, and our very names are forgotten, she remembers us and prays for us. But what is it that makes all this a reality to us? Listen to a thing passing strange!

#### THE GIFT OF FAITH

A man has to believe. He believes his clergyman, his newspaper, his favorite books, his friends, even himself. He believes because he had faith in the one whose word he accepts as true. And that faith rests on two foundations: firstly, on the conviction that the person believed, knows; secondly, that that person has told the truth. If you, dear friend, doubted the presence of either of these qualities in your informant, you

would have no faith in him. And the world is full of this natural faith, this taking of the word of another because of his knowledge and integrity. Life, indeed, would be impossible without it. Otherwise we should have to close our very schools. Doctors and lawyers would have to prove every assertion before their clients could accept their decisions.

Now Christian Faith is based on exactly the same principle, and differs from natural faith only insofar as it rises to a much higher level. By Christian Faith I choose to believe certain truths because God, Who knows everything and cannot lie, Who is neither deceived nor a deceiver, has told them to me.

### RIGHT NOTION OF FAITH

It is most important to have a right notion of faith. Many non-Catholics quite misunderstand faith. They think that to "have faith" is to feel pious—which is only **imagination**; or to be deeply moved—which may be only **sentiment**; or to have great confidence in Christ—which springs from **hope**. And with these notions they think they have faith, whilst they refuse to believe many of the truths Christ explicitly taught; and should their emotion or sentiment or confidence leave them, they would feel they have lost the faith, even though they admitted every Christian doctrine. Now some of these non-Catholics have sometimes become Catholics, yet have **never renounced this wrong notion of faith**. They did not regard faith as the mental acceptance of a truth, and as long as they felt they were in the right Church, and continued to enjoy sweet religious experiences, they regarded themselves as being free to pick and choose in the matter of doctrine. If a doctrine appealed to them, they accepted it. If not, they rejected it. And they never adverted to the fact that they were all the time insulting Christ either by denying His knowledge or, admitting His knowledge, by asserting that He must have deliberately lied. The result in many cases has been disastrous. I have in mind even now the case of a man who was received into the Church, and was an enthusiastic Catholic for some five years. His emotions then failed, and he found that he had never once wholeheartedly accepted the doctrines of Christianity. He left the Church thinking he had lost the faith, although in reality he had never had it! Is it any wonder that years after his own conversion Father Faber should write in his book on the Precious Blood: "Converts should never cease to dread the underground action of heretical habits of mind . . . there is a leaven of inherent lawlessness

in every man who has once been a heretic . . . and they should humbly distrust the strength and genuineness of the principle of obedience within them to stop them before they go too far”?

### AN ACT OF THE INTELLECT

Faith is an act of the intellect. I do not believe anything with my feelings. I believe with my mind, because belief is the acceptance of a truth. A Catholic, then, may be quite without emotion, yet he may still believe all the truths Christ has revealed, or, in other words, have the faith. Instead of “feeling good” he may feel decidedly wicked, yet his faith may be unimpaired. He may be in the depths of despair, yet believe as firmly as the most fervent of Christians, or even as the devils who “believe and tremble.” This, of course, is not the ideal state. Faith should issue in joy and love and hope and goodness and deep confidence, but we are merely trying to show that these things are not faith. After this, dear average Man, you will reply that it is a very easy thing to be a Catholic; that once a man is convinced that Christ has spoken, that Christ knows all, and that Christ could not lie, that man is ready to be received into the Church which Christ established and guaranteed. But, alas, it is not as simple as all that. Though reason is convinced, the will may be at fault. I said above that by Christian Faith I choose to believe. The intellect must be moved by the will.

You see, as Cardinal Newman so beautifully put it in his discourses to mixed congregations, the arguments for religion do not compel anyone to believe, any more than arguments for good conduct compel a man to obey. Obedience is the consequence of willing to obey, and faith is the consequence of willing to believe. Here is a difference between other exercises of reason and arguments for religion. It requires no act of faith that two and two make four; we cannot help assenting to it; and hence there is no merit in assenting to it. But there is merit in believing that the Church and all her doctrines are from God, for though there are abundant reasons to justify the belief, yet we can quarrel with the conclusion. We may complain that it is not clearer. We may suspend our assent. We may doubt about it if we will. Therefore, it is that Catholics freely decide to take God’s word as the sole motive for their religious beliefs, and not the light of their own private judgment.

You will reply, “But I do choose to believe. Why do you still delay my reception into the Church?” I

must answer that there is something yet which we wish to make sure of.

### THE SUPERNATURAL

The supernatural is above man's ordinary powers, and not your own reasoning must bring you into the Church. If it were merely that, it could quite well take you out again. It is the grace of God that must bring you. For this supernatural faith is a gift from Him, and no one can be a member of the Catholic Church until after having received this gift of gifts. Jesus Christ Himself said, No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me, draw him, John VI, 44. And St. Paul wrote to the early Christians, "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God."—Eph. II, 8. This gift of faith is a kind of light which gives additional power to your intellect to perceive the absolute certainty of the doctrines put before you by Christ's Church.

You admit that the Catholic Church alone can be the true Church of God. You say you will accept whatever she teaches. But with the gift of faith will come a settled conviction of the value of these truths, they will become so clear to you, that you will marvel and wonder, and ask yourself how you could have been a non-Catholic for so many years. Robert Hugh Benson, describing his own conversion, said that he believed before his conversion practically all that he believed after that happy event. The only difference was that one day "the blind ran up!" Father Faber cried out, "A new light seems to be shed on everything—a light so clear as to surprise me!" A convert whom I know very intimately once said to me, "I do not know how I ever lived without the Catholic faith."

But I can hear you saying to me, "But, Father, I have done all in my power. I can do no more. How shall I obtain this gift of faith, this great grace, from God?"

### PRAYER

I can only answer—by prayer! Ask, and you shall receive, is our Lord's own advice to you. The gifts of God are obtained by asking for them. For the first time during this course I urge you to pray. Hitherto I have been content with explaining things to you. But now you must do your part. We shall continue our explanations, but I want you to study them with more prayer than usual upon your lips. Ask God for light and courage. Both are needed. Ask as if you really wanted what you are praying for. Ask earnestly almost

as the starving man begs for the crust that is to keep his body and soul together. It may be difficult at first, because you have got out of the way of praying. In fact, the saints have said that you can only learn to pray by doing it. Anyway, my advice to you is that you should give as much prayer as reflection to this question of religion during the rest of this course. I would almost say that even should it seem desirable to think out something at times, rather pray about it instead. One thing I promise you. It is this: if you pray perseveringly and earnestly, as I have suggested, and always with humility, you shall certainly win from God that golden gift. I can promise you that in the name of Jesus Christ Himself.

Now, dear Friend, you may have been surprised last month at my lack of eagerness to hear of your reception into the true fold. You must have thought me sadly wanting in zeal. And it must have come as a shock, after all you have heard of the "passion to proselytize" which is always attributed to the Catholic Church. But now, I am sure, you realize that such hesitation as I have shown is in your own interests; that though I am eager for your conversion to the Church, I want it only when God wants it; and that, because I realize His own time to be the best time. Yet I know that before very long He will speak to you. Things will grow clearer. You will not know quite how it has happened, but you will know that you must become a Catholic; that there is a guilt attached to your not being one; and you will feel it urgent, and almost imperative that you should be a child of the True Church of Jesus Christ. When that happens, come, for then God is calling you.

### THE GOAL ATTAINED

Your welcome? I will let Robert Hugh Benson offer you the same welcome that he offered to the Plain Man: "Three hundred years ago we could have offered you great things; the hatred of all who heard your name; the contempt of those who were loudest in their love for England. We could have offered you the Tower as your prison, chains, stinking dungeons, the rack, the whip, the gallows, the hangman's cauldron. Now we have no more than the chips of Christ's cross to tempt you with; a little sneering and lifting of the eyebrows; a little good-humored laughter; a few remarks about 'intellectual servitude'; a little smiling over your mediaevalism; your lack of sturdy British spirit, your superstition and fear of the priest. But where the cross is, there is Christ. And you will have the authoritative **ABSOLVO TE A PECCATIS TUIS**

**IN NOMINE PATRIS ET FILII ET SPIRITUS SANCTI.** You will have certitude for doubt. You will have the tabernacle of God with men.—Emmanuel.

“And for the friends estranged from you, you will have the saints of all ages and lands as blood relations, born of the same Mother of salvation. Instead of leaving the faith of your fathers you are returning to it; and your parents who died twenty years ago, and have been Catholics from the day you closed their eyes, will only thank God for your response to His grace.”

Next month, dear Man amongst men, we shall commence in real earnest the analysis of the truths which the gift of faith will make your most treasured possession. I will pray for you daily till then, for I half suspect what the month will bring in answer to your own prayers. Please let some of those be for

YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## VI. GOD

Dear Wayfarer-still,

I was not in the least perturbed at your last letter. Things are just as they should be, only you must have patience with yourself. The Church, you may be sure, is far more anxious that you should want to be received than she is to receive you. And after your reception you will realize that if she ever was anxious to receive you, it was for what she could give to you, not for what she could get from you.

As for your difficulty, it is true that I believe because the Church tells us. It is true, also, that I believe because I know that God knows, and that He cannot tell an untruth. But you see, God Himself passed on this attribute to the Catholic Church when He said: **All things . . . I have made known to you.**—John XV, 15. And then, **Behold, I am with you all days even to the end of the world.**—Matt. XXVIII, 20. It is the same motive in both cases. From this you will readily perceive the connection between the instruction on the Church and that on the motives of faith, so that we can pass at once to an analysis of Catholic doctrine.

### WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES

The Vatican Council defined that we must believe all that the Church declares to be contained either:

- (a) In the written Christian deposit (Sacred Scripture); or



- (b) in the oral Christian deposit (the traditions of the Church, embodying those oral teachings of Christ and the Apostles which were never committed to writing).

This involves a vast field of doctrine which must be believed, but which need not be known by the faithful. It is believed in a general act of faith, thus: "I believe all that the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches, because she is established by God, and has the promise of His perpetual guidance and protection." I can hear your tired sigh of relief as you read that you are not expected to know the whole of Christian teaching. However, there is a minimum which, under pain of sin, must be familiar to all of us. (That is, if one found he did not know this minimum, he would sin if he did not resolve to do his best to learn it.)

### TO BE KNOWN AS WELL AS BELIEVED

In the first place, we must know the **Apostles Creed**. This is a splendid rule of faith to be recited frequently. It deals with God in His threefold Personality of **Father, Son, and Holy Ghost**, adding what each has done to secure eternal happiness for us. Its doctrine can be set forth as follows:

- (1) I believe in God, i. e., in **one God**, yet of three Persons:
- (2) **Father**—Creator of heaven and earth.
- (3) **Son**—Jesus Christ, **Redeemer** by means of His birth, death and resurrection.
- (4) **Holy Ghost**—Sanctifier by means of the Church, communion of saints, and forgiveness of sins.
- (5) This God being **Judge and Rewarder** by the resurrection of the body, and the Giver of our own life everlasting.

### THE REGULATION OF OUR CONDUCT

In addition to this summary of our beliefs, we are obliged to know certain other things for the regulation of our conduct: (1) The ten commandments; (2) the Seven Sacraments, to be explained later; (3) the Our Father and Hail Mary; (4) and finally, how to make:

- (a) An act of faith—as given above, or in any other recognized form.
- (b) An act of hope, e. g., "O my God, I hope in Thee, because Thou art faithful to Thy promises."
- (c) An act of charity, e. g., "O my God, I love Thee, with my whole heart, because Thou art so good in Thyself and hast been so good to me."

- (d) An act of contrition, e. g., "O my God, I am heartily sorry for ever having offended Thee, because Thou art all good, I detest all my sins, and I firmly purpose, by the help of Thy grace, not to offend Thee again."

Such, dear Inquirer, is the minimum which every Catholic must know explicitly, besides believing implicitly all that the Church teaches. Yet no Catholic should rest content with knowing merely the minimum.

### A REALLY EDUCATED CATHOLIC

It is to help you, whom I hope to see some day as a really educated Catholic, that I intend to go a little more thoroughly into many of the truths mentioned above. It is good to know what the minimum is, but it is well also to understand, as far as we can, the fullness of revealed truth. Revelation was simply God giving us a collection of truths about Himself, Angels and Man, which we could not have acquired unless He had condescended to tell them to us. This month we shall examine the Catholic doctrine concerning God. Then in later papers we shall consider the Angels, the Man in his past, present and future conditions.

### GOD

Long before we come to what God has revealed about Himself, reason itself has already dictated three great truths concerning Him. We have not to think very deeply before we become aware that there is a God, that that God is infinitely perfect, and that there can be only one such God.

There is a God. The universe has obviously been made by somebody, and obviously by somebody who can make something of nothing. No creature can do that. We all need something to begin with when we wish to make anything. So it is that we must deny the existence of the universe, or admit the existence of a Being transcending all material conditions, Whom we call God, and Who is responsible for all that is, or else do violence to our own reason.

God's Nature is not fully known to us. It will be our delight to spend our eternity enjoying God. But reason tells us at least this much about Him: He is a self-existent Spirit, i.e., a Being independent of every other being, with omnipotent power of intellect and power of will. He is infinitely perfect. He gave all the physical and moral perfections in all humanity, in all the world, in all the universe; and, as no one can give what he has not got, God must be in Himself far more perfect than the creatures He makes. While creatures therefore are finite. He is infinite and without limits in His perfec-

tions. From this it follows that He is **Eternal**. He never labored under the imperfection of having to begin, or of having to end. He is not to be thought of as existing for a long time, but simply without time. This sounds a bit bewildering, but, after all, it just has to be like that. A God whom my finite little mind could fully grasp would be no God at all.

His infinite perfection also implies that He is everywhere. He cannot be confined by created space limits. He is within us and without us, above, below and around us. Wherever we set our feet, God is there even if we be going to do evil. And everywhere His Presence is more real than the hardness of the rocks, or the firmness of the earth. To keep from Him by sin is not to escape from His Presence, or His Knowledge, or His Power, but only from His Love. This God, too, must be a Person. Man's greatest gift or perfection is his personality, and as that perfection is from God, He also must be a Person Who can love in a personal way. Finally, if God be infinite He must be **omnipotent**. He can do all things, provided they are not self-contradictory. His very wish has creative force, and there is nothing that can resist Him, save where He Himself decides to hold Himself passive. It quickly follows that there can be only one God. Were there two infinitely powerful beings, we would have to admit that one of them could do all things, yet that the other could prevent his doing them. It sounds rather like the old conundrum of an irresistible force meeting an immovable object, to which the only answer was that either the irresistible force could not be irresistible, or else that the immovable object could not really be immovable.

### THE MOST LOVABLE OF ALL BEINGS

Thus far, dear lover of high thoughts, we have considered what reason as well as revelation can tell us of God. And already it is clear that God must be quite the most lovable of all beings.

I admire strength when I meet with it, but there is no strength as the strength of God; the philosophers of the world are but lisping infants compared to the God Who made both them and the things of what they prattle; the soft beauty of landscape, the glory of a golden sunset, the transparent grace of the fairest human features cannot even lay claim to beauty when I think of Him in Whom are blended the finest qualities of them all, and that in the glowing transcendence of His own infinity. The deepest human love, whether it be the patient and tender love of a mother for the

frailest of her children, or the consuming, devoted and reciprocal love of man and maid, is but the faintest reflection of the magnificent, unselfish, inexhaustible and constant love that is characteristic of our dear God. So transcendently beautiful is He that He was forced to declare, **Man cannot see Me and live.**—Ex. XXXIII, 20. So full of love, that He sent His only begotten Son to fit us for that vision. But the very mention of the Son of God leads me to the greatest of Christian mysteries.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

God has told us something of Himself which we could never have found out by mere reason. He tells us that, although there is but one God, in Him there are three Divine Persons, each of Whom is God. So Christ Himself said, **I and the Father are one.**—John X, 30. No one can pretend to understand this doctrine of the Trinity in all its fullness. That is reserved for heaven; and even there our finite limitations will have to be taken into consideration. But the fact that we cannot understand it has no influence whatever upon our believing it. It is "just a bit above us," a feeling every man has experienced even in the presence of many a lesser fact. I think I can best sum up the position in this way: History tells us that God has said it. Reason tells us, firstly, that God must know, and could not have brought Himself to say anything except the truth; secondly, that the doctrine is not an absurdity or self-contradictory; thirdly, that it would be an absurdity to maintain that there can be nothing beyond the capacity of the finite mind. The absence of contradictions, of course, is clear. If we said, "There are three Divine Persons yet only one Divine Person," it would be absurd. Were we to say, "There are three Divine Natures yet only one Divine Nature," we would again be contradicting ourselves. It is impossible to have three of the same thing equal in every way to one of the same thing. But the Christian teaching, and therefore the teaching of Almighty God, is that there are three Divine Persons in one Divine Nature. Each of the Divine Persons has the Divine Nature, and therefore is God; the Divine Nature is always One, and therefore there is but one God.

Well, dear lover of all that is beautiful, there is the God Who made you, and Who demands that you praise, reverence and serve Him in this life as a preparation for an eternity of happiness with Him in the next. Your difficulty would be not to do so, with your keen realization that, since all beauty comes back to multi-

plicity in unity, God Himself must be Beauty Itself in the glorious relations which flourish between the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Nature.

As you read these things carefully, you will be saying to yourself that a man would surely have to abandon faith in his own intelligence, who would not admit that Catholic Truth is an absolute treasure. And in later years, how often you will find yourself walking along the footpath a "foot above the ground," for the sheer joy of being a Catholic yourself! This much must suffice, then, concerning God as He is in Himself. Next month we shall consider His work in creation. In the meantime, go, by all means, to see the priest you have mentioned. I shall be awaiting anxiously the result of your interview. And I can promise you, even now in advance, that, whatever else may come of your talk with him, you will go from it with the conviction that he, too, must be henceforth counted in a very real way as you already regard myself,

YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## VII.

### ANGELS AND THE WORLD

Dear Heir-presumptive,

So at last you are seriously to prepare for your reception into the Church! I am trying to puzzle out what you must have said to that good priest! Or was it that he heard the ring in your voice and saw the light in your eyes, which not all the reading in between the lines of a letter can convey! Anyway, I send you the kind of congratulations one sends to a friend who has just inherited a very great fortune. To be a Catholic means that God, to quote the words of a convert before you, "has looked through all His treasures and given you the very best." However, I must let the wonderful experience which lies before you prove the truth of this description, and continue the course of instruction which you say is proving of such great interest to you.

#### GOD AS CREATOR

In our last paper we spoke of God as He is in Himself. Now we must turn our thoughts to the creative action of God. Everything that is not God was created by God, or, in other words, formed out of nothing. God simply willed that the angels should come into existence, and by that very fact there were angels; He thought of the universe, and the universe was; He

wished that there might be men, and the human race began. And it is in this order that we shall consider the separate creations of His power.

### THE ANGELS

Every Christian is obliged to believe in the existence of angels. Throughout both Old and New Testaments again and again we read of angels ministering to the Patriarchs, or to Our Lady, or even to Christ Himself. And the Catholic Church teaches that these angels are intelligent spiritual beings of a higher order and dignity than man. No one can reasonably deny the possibility of the existence of these spiritual beings. Were he to do so, he would have to deny the very possibility of the existence of God, Who cannot but be a purely Spiritual Being. Few would venture so far. Yet, granted an infinitely powerful Spirit, there is nothing to prevent Him from creating lesser beings of a purely spiritual nature like Himself. As a matter of fact, there are many reasons apart from revelation why we should expect angels to exist. God does everything perfectly. We see around us purely material things; man himself is a mixture of the material and spiritual; creation, to be perfect, demands the purely spiritual. Again, man is created to praise God. But he knows ever so little, and that little comes through his senses. True, created praise of God suggests that there must be higher beings of an angelic and spiritual nature, who can see the whole scheme of creation and give God a praise and glory proportionate to the marvels they behold. Then, too, there are historical facts of interference with the affairs of men which can only be attributed to the action of evil spirits.

### TRUE SPIRITUALISTS

I can hear you saying, most practical of men, "So then, we are spiritualists!" I reply, "Yes, but not mere spiritualists; we are the real spiritualists." And we know more about these spirits than all the experimenters put together. The infallible Church herself tells us the facts of their history, basing her doctrines on no less an authority than the inspired word of God Himself. The angels, we are told, had to earn heavenly happiness by a test of submission, and many failed. But because they were of a higher nature than man, and knew far better what they were doing, the fallen angels were not given a second trial. On the contrary, Satan, their leader, and all his followers were thrust into Hell and eternal punishment. **God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them to torments,** writes St. Peter.—2nd Epistle, II, 4.

### THE DEVIL

The world laughs at the notion of there being a devil, because the world has ceased to be Christian. Yet what are the facts? From the moment man was created, Satan and his legions have not ceased to try to draw men from God. They tempted Eve; they tempted Christ; they will never cease to tempt. They are always plotting our spiritual ruin, filling our minds with evil thoughts, fixing our attention on temporal things only and turning us from prayer. And Satan reaps his greatest success from those who say, "The devil? Who believes in the devil?" He is the only being in existence who does not want to be known for what he is.

### THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

It goes without saying that the devil, with his purely spiritual intelligence, is far cleverer than we are, and he will deceive us if possible. Then, too, our frail willpower is not nearly strong enough to stand alone against him. That is why God has said, Pray without ceasing. But besides promising help to our prayers, God commissions the good angels, who were powerful enough to expel the bad angels from heaven, to watch over us. It is Catholic doctrine that each man is accompanied through life by an angel guardian who protects him from evil, suggests good thoughts, and offers his prayers and good works to God. He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, David wrote in his 90th Psalm. And our Lord said of the little children, Their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father.—Matt. XVIII, 10.

### OUR DUTIES TO THEM

St. Bernard tells us that there are three obvious duties to our angel guardians. The first is reverence for their presence, refusing to do in their sight what we would not do in the presence of our fellow men. The second is confidence in their assistance. They are powerful, and have already overcome Satan for themselves. They are most devoted to us, and are more than willing to help us in our fight also. Of course, it always remains our fight, but the good angels are ever prepared to assist us and will respond to our least appeal. The third duty is love for them, even as we love all who do us good, even as we shall love all who will be sharers of our joy in heaven.

### THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

I do not think you could find anyone nowadays, dear friend of mine, who would deny the existence of the universe. I mention this because there have been some, in time past, who were prepared to go against their very senses. But there is a very real problem as to how the universe began to be. The only certain information we can get must be from someone who was present when it all happened. Any other details will be but conjecture and speculation. Now the Church of that Living God Who made everything, and Who therefore knows all about it, tells us in His name at least this much: The world has not existed from all eternity, but was made by God Himself out of nothing, in the beginning of time. To doubt that much, therefore, is to doubt God's knowledge or His truthfulness, and so to cease to be a Christian. But revelation does not tell us more than that, definitely, save in the case of mankind. Many people think that to believe in evolution means to renounce Christianity. Belief in evolution as applied to the spiritual world involves the abandonment of the faith; but that is not the fault of the faith. Sane evolution as applied to things material is in no way opposed to Catholic teaching.

For example, one could believe in the "Nebular hypothesis." This theory says that, in the beginning there was a vast nebulous rotating vapor which, under the influence of gravitation and centrifugal force, gradually condensed to the state of separate globes as we now know them—of course taking billions of years to do so. The Nebular Theory does not say whence came the "vast nebulous rotating vapor." A Catholic would have to hold that God created at least that much, out of nothing, in time. God has revealed creation from nothing. Besides this, it is well to remember two things. Apart from the question of origin altogether, the idea of a great nebula evolving into all the phenomena we now perceive is only a rather good guess, and is not by any means proved. In the second place, if it ever can be proved, it will in no way belittle our notion of God. It would be all to His greater glory to have created a nebula which could evolve itself, instead of His having to make each section of the universe separately. How far man is affected we shall see next month. As regards the so-called Scripture difficulties, it is well to bear in mind that Sacred Scripture was never given us as a textbook of science, but as a guide to the securing of our own destiny. It has been well



said, "Sacred Scripture is not meant to tell us how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven."

The Catholic Church teaches us also the purpose of creation. God made it firstly for His own greater glory, for the sheer delight, as it were, of having an external reflection of the splendor and perfection of His divinity. Secondly, He made it for the happiness of His rational creatures, both angels and men.

### PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCE OF CREATION

Since we men are ourselves part of God's creation, a great obligation at once falls upon us in strict justice, and apart from any other consideration. We belong to God in the most absolute fashion. To him we owe our entire being and its preservation at every instant. If God ceased for a moment to will its continued existence, the whole universe and all its contents would fall back into nothingness. Of course, this won't happen. **Because I have loved thee with an everlasting love, He said to humanity at least, therefore have I drawn thee.**—Jer. XXXI, 3. He will keep us as long as He loves us—and that's always. But in view of our total dependence upon God, do we not owe Him the supreme homage of adoration to acknowledge Him as our Creator and Preserver? Must we not thank Him as our greatest Benefactor, and obey Him as our Master? The word "religion" is from the Latin *re-ligare*, which means to bind again—there is no soft sentiment about it, but it is the cut and dried duty man has of binding himself to the God Who created him. To have no religion is a very great sin indeed.

Whilst we are speaking of this subject, you will let me say that sheer gratitude intensifies this claim of strict justice. Do we love those who have done us good? Who love to be with us? Yet who has been good to us if not the God Who gave us existence, and so made possible any other good we may receive! Who, if not a God Who sends His Son! Dear human-hearted being, just see Eternal Love in the crib; His extreme poverty; His life of suffering; His death; and all for you—to have you! And even then, almost as if He couldn't do without you, He left Himself in the Eucharist to be able to come into your heart as often as you will allow Him! At the mere thought of it, one's heart should be as the grapes in the wine-press. "To think I should be so loved!" should be the astonished cry of every soul. It is a wonderful thing to be loved by a human being—but to be loved by God, and like that!

It all means that I must indeed serve God. That is the one good, let others do what they will. I realize, as they do not, Who God is, and how He loves. I for

one will never do what He forbids. I cannot go against the voice of my conscience with such a Lover ever present. The duties of my state in life, I will do for Him as well as I possibly can, often asking myself, **And this is for God? Can I not do it better than that?**

Dear man amongst men, if we but serve the God of peace! If not, it's good-bye to true peace and happiness—they are not for us, either in this life or in the next. But if we do but serve God—well, we shall see what His dear generosity has prepared for us when we treat of the doctrine of heaven.

• YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## VIII.

### MAN

Dear Catholic at Last,

I have read and re-read your long letter describing your actual reception into—what did we call it?—the two-thousand-years-old Church! The joy of it all would fill with jealousy the heart of the Catholic whose own Baptism was at an age when he was too young to appreciate the deep significance of it. My own heart, which I thought proof against such contagion, has been burning with your enthusiasm. For you, every hour will so augment your inward peace that you will long for those you love to enjoy the same privileges with yourself. And years later you will say with Father Maturin, "There has been an ever-deepening sense of security and peace and certainty, with moments of intense realization of the glory and strength of the City of God, whose walls are salvation and whose gates are peace."

Meantime, our little course of instruction must continue—and even when it is over you will realize that we have merely dipped our finger tips into the vast ocean of the treasures of Catholic doctrine.

### MAN

We now come to a being less interesting to us I hope than God, yet certainly more interesting than either the angels or the universe. Let us begin with a brief analysis of man. He consists of body and soul. Man is not his body. He is a person consisting of body and soul. The body is material, the soul spiritual. The soul is made in the image and likeness of God. It is all the difference between a corpse and a living, active, operative human being. A dead body can do nothing but disintegrate, fall to pieces, go back into its original dust. There is something that stops your body from

doing that at present—it is the living principle of being within you—your soul. This soul is that within you which thinks, which loves, makes you all that you are, your true self. It is entirely different in nature and structure from the body and can never cease to exist. We cannot really therefore destroy ourselves. We cannot commit suicide. We can only transfer ourselves from one state of existence into another. Whether it be in God's love or hatred; whether it be in supreme happiness or in direst misery, live on we must by an absolute necessity of our being.

### ORIGIN OF MAN

Dear Neo-Catholic, the Church has no definite teaching on the question of the origin of life in mere vegetables or animals. You are free to hold that they evolved from mere matter or that God directly created them. I am speaking, of course, from the point of view of Catholic doctrine. From the standpoint of reason I don't think you are free. The vast majority of scientists holds that no life can possibly arise from non-living substances, and there they leave the question, not attempting a solution.

As regards man's formation the Church is definite. The reason is that she has for her chief concern his temporal and eternal well-being. The Biblical account is that God formed man's body out of the earth, and then breathed into it the human soul. As regards the formation of man's body out of the earth, it may have been by God's own immediate and personal action, or by a slow process of evolution. A Catholic may hold either view and still be a Catholic.

### THE SOUL OF MAN

In regard to the soul, however, the living spirit, the true image of God in us which enables us to think, to will, and to love in a way quite distinct from all other creatures, we must believe that God directly creates every human soul. For it is part of God's revelation that after He had formed man's body, then He breathed into his face "the breath of life," or, in other words, created the soul.

Catholics must believe also that all human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve. "Before Adam," says Sacred Scripture, "there was not a man to till the earth" (Gen. II. 5). and Eve is "the mother of all the living."—Gen. III, 20.

God gave great gifts to our first parents. He gave them sanctifying grace or a supernatural gift making them sharers of the Divine Nature, so that after a short time here they were to go to heaven to live with God as His most dear children, seeing Him "face to face." They were also to be free from suffering and death and to go to their eternal happiness without having to die. These gifts, however, were conditional.

#### THE FIRST SIN OF MAN

God rightly demanded that Adam should remember his true position as a creature, and therefore asked in exchange for all these gifts one act of submission. And God was quite honest about it. He impressed upon Adam the gravity of the matter. "Of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in whatsoever day thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death."—Gen. II, 17. The command God gave was not very difficult to obey, yet Adam, desirous in his pride to be independent of God and even to be equal to God, disobeyed.

The consequences of this open rebellion against God will scarcely bear description. Man's soul was for the first time unlike God. Instead of purity, there was impurity; instead of justice, there was injustice; instead of truth, falsehood; instead of mercy, cruelty; hatred for love—so that no deformity of the human frame is comparable to the human soul in a state of serious sin.

#### ADAM'S CHILDREN

Every human being born into this world commences life in this state of sinfulness inherited from Adam. And unless God chose to provide a remedy, no one could ever reach heaven. The children of Adam would not necessarily incur all the pains of hell, for only our own actual sins can deserve that. But they would not go to heaven, nor would they ever see or meet God. Strange as it may seem, there are people who deny the existence of original sin. Yet even if there were no revelation to tell us about it we would know that humanity is a fallen race. Man is conscious of wickedness. The human sense of sin comes with the dawn of reason. You, dear man amongst men, know human life from contact with it. You have seen poor little human bodies twisted and deformed with apparently no trace of sin on their part. Does it not leave, to quote the words of Cardinal Newman, "a sense of profound mystery which can find a solution only in some terrible calamity in the very beginning of the human race"?

#### A QUESTION OF JUSTICE

You may often hear people say, "I do not believe in original sin. I do not see why I should suffer for a

sin I never committed." There are three replies to this common assertion. The first is that our not believing in original sin will in no way make it cease to be a fact. The second is that our unbelief has no effect on the sufferings which are obviously a result of original sin. We still have to endure them. And the third is that to suppose that original sin involves any injustice is a very elementary mistake. If a king were to say to one of his subjects, "Do this, and I shall raise you to the peerage, and arrange that all your children will inherit the title also," and the father refused, no one would listen to the children in the years to come, were they to keep harping on the injustice done to them in that they had not been raised to the peerage. Unfortunately for us, our first father failed and we are born children of a spiritual bankrupt. We shall see later that God did not leave us in our state of ruin. True, He did not restore all the gifts that Adam had, and this is a great mercy. With all its miseries, many cannot even now resist making this life their all. However, He gave back the gifts that matter, that is, the ones that last. Meantime, we get the grace to profit by the sufferings of time, and so add to the eternal inheritance He snatched out of the burning fire for us.

### THE NATURE OF SIN

It might be well, dear friend, to pause here and consider the true nature of sin. Sin is a crime. Crime is a breaking of the law, and sin is a breaking of God's law. Sin is any wilful transgression of God's laws. Just go over that definition two or three times; you cannot know it too well. Outside the Catholic Church there is not much idea of what sin is. It is not spoken of. You don't read about it in the newspapers. It is banished from conversation and left out of account. Or people think that sin is what harms others—as drunkenness, because it breaks up homes; or stealing, because it causes trouble to one's fellow beings. But there are hundreds of sins which no one knows anything of save God and the person who commits them, and which do harm only to the soul of the agent. In serious matters this wilful transgression of the known will of God is a mortal disease, depriving us of all we have had restored by Baptism. In lesser things it is venial, not inflicting spiritual death, but weakening the soul in grace and disposing it for mortal spiritual illness.

### ITS MALICE

If God could be destroyed, it would be by sin. As a matter of fact, when God took flesh, sin, the enemy of that Flesh, was its death. It is a malice against the

Father—it blots out His image from our soul; it is malice against the Son—it nails Him to the cross; it is a malice against the Holy Spirit—it drives supernatural love from our hearts. Sin enables us to force the One who loves us to curse us. It is the only power which seems greater than Divine Love, so bent upon saving us. If we persevere in sin, if we do not shake it off in the way God leaves open to us, it will compel God to close His arms so long outstretched to embrace us, and death in that state means hell for all eternity. Men laugh. But if God be Holy, Just and Pure, and man be unholy, unjust and impure, God and that soul cannot be united for all eternity—and there's only one other alternative.

Since the fall, God has done all that could possibly be expected of Him to destroy sin. And here, too, is the difference between the Catholic Church and other churches. She destroys sin. No other church guarantees to eliminate sin but her. It is her business, and the interest of her true priests. The Church realizes that all sin, even venial, is a great evil. No sin is a small thing which is a step towards eternal loss; or which offends a great Majesty; or which can only be cleansed in the Precious Blood of the Incarnate Son of God; or which will detain us even for the fraction of a second from the vision of God after death, in Purgatory, as we shall see in a future paper.

For the obtaining of this grace of a hatred of sin, a daily prayer will be offered by

YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## IX.

### THE GOD-MAN

Dear Apostle,

So already you have a non-Catholic friend "reading with great eagerness" the papers you have received so far on our all-absorbing subject! I have only one little word of advice for you: Do not, as many an ardent convert before you, develop a fever for hustling people into the Church. If you can awaken their interest, it is good. If of their own accord they question you about your new-found faith, it is better. But always remember that faith is a grace, and that grace is the fruit, not of questioning curiosity, but of prayer and all that prayer stands for.

We may say that our last three papers have been concerned with God as He is in Himself, and as Creator of all that is not Himself. We have seen, too, the wreckage man made of his own career. Now we come

to the consideration of God as our Redeemer—a consideration that cannot but move us to the very depths of our being.

### THE INCARNATION

The very center of Catholic teaching is that God the Son, the Second Person of the most Holy Trinity, became man, and that by His life and sufferings and death on the cross He made reparation for man's sins, both original and actual, meriting for us grace and a second opportunity of gaining eternal life. As man, the Son of God took the name of Jesus Christ, Jesus meaning Savior, and Christ the Anointed or Consecrated One. We must believe without any equivocation that in Christ there are two natures, the Godhead and manhood, yet only one Personality, that of the Son of God. I am going to dwell a little on this point, because it is of the utmost importance at the present time. I remember talking with a well-educated Anglican layman on one occasion, who would have scorned the suggestion that he was not a Christian. I said to him, "You believe in Jesus Christ?" "Of course," he replied. "You believe that He was Divine?" "Undoubtedly!" "You believe, then, that He was God, Infinite, Omniscient, and Omnipotent?" "Oh," he replied, "I wouldn't go so far as that!" He did not see that there is only one possible answer to the question, "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?" The finite mind may rebel. The Pharisees themselves could not bring their lips to answer this interrogation. Many non-Catholics, even ministers, will not face the issue. Yet the only possible answer is the Catholic answer—"Jesus Christ is GOD," in capital letters. We must accept this doctrine or throw all Scripture to the winds, and give up all pretense of being Christians. We may be anything else we like—but we will not have the right to call our religion Christian. For how can anyone say, "I believe in Jesus Christ, the Founder of my religion," and then in the next breath admit that He was either a lunatic or a deceiver! I know this sounds dreadfully blasphemous, but we must face facts. If He thought Himself to be God, whereas He was just an ordinary man, He was certainly mad! If He knew quite well that He was not God, yet insisted that He was, He was simply a blasphemer and a liar. If Christ were not God, then it is foolishness itself to continue being a Christian. The Catholic Church knows this quite well. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," is the cry ever on her lips.

### THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST

Dear logician, just run through these few assertions. St. John wrote in the beginning of his gospel, **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us, Jesus Himself did all He could to be accounted God. I and the Father are one, He cried.—John X, 30. For which of my good works do you stone me? He asked the Jews. Not for a good work, replied the Jews, but because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.—John X, 33. But if ever there was a time for Christ to make Himself quite clear, it was when St. Thomas fell at His feet and cried, My Lord and my God.—John XX, 28. If He were not God, He permitted a terrible sacrilege in that moment! That, of course, was simply impossible. See the almost terrified earnestness of St. Peter, the head of Christ's own Church, lest anything like that should happen to him on the occasion of the miracle of the lame man's cure! Men of Israel, he cried, why look upon us, as if by our own strength we had made this man walk . . . it is the God of our fathers who has glorified His Son Jesus . . .—Acts III, 12.**

### THE WORSHIP DUE TO CHRIST

Jesus Christ was born of Mary, the daughter of Joachim and Anne, who, as all Catholics are obliged to believe, ever remained a virgin. No earthly father therefore can lay claim to Jesus as to a natural son. The power of the Most High came upon Our Blessed Lady, the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, and she miraculously became the Mother of God. St. Joseph was then appointed as protector of the Mother and Child, who were to mean so much to humanity. I have gone right back to the birth of Christ, because I want to face a few facts from the very beginning. We have seen that Christ was certainly God. Thus we say in the Creed at Mass, "God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God." We do not hesitate. Now listen to the consequences. To Christ in His Human Flesh, wherever He is to be found, whether as a Babe in Bethlehem, where the kings from the East adored Him, or as a Victim for sin dying on the cross, or as our Guest in the little Eucharistic Host, we owe that supreme adoration which must be given to God and to God alone. Everything in the Human Nature of Christ, since it belongs to the Person of Christ, is also to be adored, for example, His Most Precious Blood or His Sacred Heart. When I meet Almighty God in eternity, I shall not offer Him a different adoration from that which



I now give to Jesus Christ. It may be more intense owing to my more vivid realization of the truth; it will not be different in nature.

### THE ACTUAL REDEMPTION

This, then is the Christ Who came to redeem us. How He did so is well known to you. After a life of singular beauty and devotedness, He allowed Himself to be condemned to death by the very creatures He had come to redeem, and died, nailed to the wooden cross on Calvary, not overpowered by excruciating pain, but drowned and buried in it. The Precious Blood of Jesus Christ shed on that hill in Palestine was the price of our salvation. His veins were drained for the redemption of humanity. And everything good and precious came about through that Precious Blood, so that none of us can attain heaven unless our souls be bathed and purified in those wondrous streams.

How that Sacrifice continues in the Christian Church, constituting the very essence of its worship of Almighty God, we have already seen in our second instruction on the Sacrifice of the Mass. Here we must turn our attention to a very deep but interesting question.

### THE REDEMPTION OF A SOUL

The water supply of New York is locked up in huge dams some fifty miles from the city. The water there is enough to keep all New York and its suburbs supplied. Yet all that storage would be quite useless unless it were brought into contact with the various houses by a very intricate system of water mains. There is a very great similarity between this provision made by man for the continual refreshment of his animal nature, and the provision made by Jesus Christ for the redemption and continual refreshment of the human soul. The Precious Blood of Jesus was the Price of our redemption, but it also meant the creation of a tremendous, an infinite supply of divine grace to be at the disposal of men under certain conditions. Unless those conditions are fulfilled all that vast storage is useless to us. It is there, but does not come into contact with us. What those conditions are we shall see in our next instruction. Today we shall see what may be the nature of this product of the Precious Blood, this life-giving element called grace.

### THE NATURE OF GRACE

When man sinned he ceased to be pleasing to God. He forthwith lacked those qualities which alone could make him attractive in God's eyes. He put himself

outside the pale of God's friendship. He was in disgrace with the One with Whom it was all important to retain friendship. Now, redemption can mean only a buying back for us of the very quality we had foolishly forfeited. Sin had expelled grace from our soul; grace must be made to expel sin. So Jesus Christ came and established inexhaustible stores of divine grace to effect our reconciliation with God. Now, just what is grace? Just as whiteness is a quality in the natural order by which a thing is distinguished from something that is red, so grace is a supernatural "quality" which affects the soul of man. It is a very definite and divine gift of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, which lifts the soul on to a new plane, so that God once more acknowledges us as His sons, and heirs to the riches of heaven. The possession of grace by the soul is absolutely necessary, if the soul is to live the life in heaven. There are two kinds of grace—habitual and actual.

### HABITUAL GRACE

Habitual grace is sometimes called sanctifying grace, because its chief effect is to sanctify the soul or render it holy. It not only hides, but it actually destroys all mortal sin from the soul and makes it definitely and habitually pleasing in God's sight. It gives a supernatural radiance, although we shall have to wait for heaven before we shall realize all the transcendent beauty of a soul in a state of grace. This habitual grace carries with it seven virtues, or powers, by which we are enabled to perform supernatural actions. Three of these are called theological virtues, because they deal immediately with God Himself—**Faith**, by which we believe God; **Hope**, by which we trust in His promises; and **Charity**, by which we love Him. The other four are called the moral virtues, because they affect our morals or conduct—**Prudence**, by which we judge all things in the light of Christian teaching; **Justice**, by which we render to everyone, both God and our fellow man, his exact due; **Fortitude**, by which we are enabled to endure all the trials incidental to a holy life; and **Temperance**, by which we practice self-restraint, and deny ourselves those things which cannot be had without sin. You will see that just as the human soul thinks with its intellect and chooses with its will, so sanctifying grace is, as it were, the soul of our spiritual life, which operates by means of these infused virtues or powers. I would like you to fix these things well in your memory, dear lay-theologian, so that the next paper but one may be perfectly intelligible to you.

### ACTUAL GRACE

By the possession of habitual grace and the virtues, we have the power to perform Christian and supernatural deeds, instead of merely natural ones, which have no eternal value. But this does not mean that we will necessarily do so, any more than to have an intellect is necessarily to be always thinking, or to have a will is to be always choosing. So there is another kind of grace which differs from habitual grace, and consists in an impulse "to act," and this grace is called actual. It is not habitually with us, but it is given us under certain conditions (which will be explained next month), to enable us to preserve habitual grace and actually operate, by means of the virtues, in a way pleasing to God and meritorious for ourselves.

### MERIT

Since by sanctifying grace man has been elevated to a participation in the Divine Nature and has been constituted a true child of God, his very operations become, as it were, divine, and worthy of an equivalent recompense. This reward consists in eternal life with God for all in a state of grace, and an increase of grace and glory for those who are faithful to actual grace by ever advancing in Christian perfection. Merit then may be defined as a property of good works performed in a state of grace, by which we acquire a right to additional eternal happiness. The ability to merit ceases at the moment of death. This follows naturally from the fact that from the moment of death we will no longer be tempted to do wrong, and when one cannot do anything but good, being no longer free in the matter, there is scarcely room for merit if he does it. The practical consequence of this doctrine is that we are very foolish if we lose even a single day of the life that is at present entrusted to us. The graces of today, if lost, are lost for ever. Tomorrow may bring its own opportunities, but it will not restore today's. The good impulses of grace given us today, if unheeded, will never come back. God may send others, but today's will be gone for ever. And it is a sobering thought that for all eternity we shall never have more merit than that with which we die. Purgatory may purify us, but its pains cannot add to our glory in heaven, nor are they in any way meritorious.

### OUR RESTORATION

From all that I have said, you will see how complete has been the success of Christ's reparation of our first

misfortune. He has expelled sin, restored us once more to God's favor, lifted human nature to a far higher level than it could ever possibly have risen to had He not become incarnate, and, if He has not removed all the merely temporal difficulties which followed in the train of original sin, He has done something far better by giving us the means to profit for all eternity by those very miseries which were sent us as a punishment. Surely the presence of a temporal trial, which can be productive of eternal merit, is better than freedom from it, and it would really have been less generous of Jesus Christ to remove these occasions of present detachment and future benefit.

Dear friend, I know how eager you are to learn the best means to obtain continual supplies of this precious grace, the fruit of the Passion of Christ. But that I must leave till next month. You will not find four weeks too long to ponder over all we have spoken of today, and the deeper the conviction you have of these things, the more you will appreciate the value of all that I must yet explain. Pray for me as I do for you, and believe me,

YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## X.

### CHANNELS OF GRACE

Dear Ambition-itself!

I address you thus because it is the key to your difficulties. You say that everything is quite as convincing to your intellect as ever it was, but that the "glow" which you thought would remain for ever seems to wear a little, and that you find yourself fulfilling your duties less and less because of the joy of doing so, and more and more simply because it is right and just. This is splendid. Excuse my enthusiasm, which must seem to you quite misplaced. But I know you are ambitious, and God is leading you by the most direct route to the attainment of your highest aspirations. I tremble for the life that is altogether free from trial and weariness. God certainly would not be bent on making very much of such a life. You see, there is a vast difference between Christianity studied and Christianity practiced. To learn cultured thoughts and not self-management is not religion. Religion involves the formation of the **whole man**, of all his powers, of all that his character includes. Constancy implies conflict, and the inconstant man, who abandons all upon the least trial, has no notion of what faith is, or practical religion, or, for that matter, Christian merit. He

has never really learnt the difference between time and eternity. He does not know their relative values, and that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the joy that is to come. He loves being religious till he has to be religious, then he quarrels with it—or simply forgets. So keep on serving God “merely because it is right and just.” Remember your Catholic notions of faith, grace and merit, and make a very practical study of the subject of this month’s paper.

### THE CHANNELS OF GRACE

We spoke last month of the vast stores of grace which are the result of our Lord’s life and death, and we said that there are two kinds of grace—habitual and actual. Today we shall consider the means by which we may obtain supplies of these life-streams. Of course, you realize that habitual grace is the more important of the two kinds, but I am going to commence with the general means of securing supplies of actual grace, which either disposes one for the obtaining of habitual grace, or, supposing one already a happy resident in the state of grace, perfects it. This means is within the reach of all and must be used by all, even by those who have attained the highest Christian perfection.

### PRAYER

Prayer, dear employee of God, is an act of religion by which a rational being begs of his Creator the things necessary or useful for salvation. It is not exactly a “channel” of grace, as we shall see, but it wins from God the direct concession of actual graces for our every need. It is so important a means of grace that we can make Cardinal Manning’s words our own, “Alas for the man who is too busy to pray, for he is too busy to be saved.” Reading the Sacred Scriptures we cannot but be struck by the insistence of the sacred writers on the necessity of prayer. The texts follow one upon another. Ask, and it shall be given. If any man want wisdom let him ask of God. Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. We ought always to pray and not to faint; and so on, almost indefinitely. An analogy that appeals very much to me is this: Grace is the atmosphere of our soul. It surrounds us. It is a necessary condition of our spiritual life. Prayer is simply breathing that divine atmosphere. The least prayer, and our soul is flooded with actual grace, enabling us to resist temptation or to perform good actions. Stop breathing the air that is all about you. Do so for five minutes, and see what happens. You will not make the experiment again. The effect of

ceasing to pray—I do not say for merely five minutes, but rather I mean habitually—is very like that as regards our spiritual life. And I do say that, if through neglect of prayer, you give way to temptation, whether against faith, or holy purity, or any other virtue, the fall will be through your fault, through your fault, through your most grievous fault. Of course, in speaking of prayer, I have in mind not any kind of prayer, but earnest, insistent prayer, in which you mean what you say, as if you really wanted that for which you are asking. Such prayers are always heard, even if a man be actually in sin.

### THE SACRAMENTS

We now come to the consideration of the real “channels” of grace instituted by Jesus Christ Himself. Habitual grace cannot be obtained except through certain of these channels, as we shall soon see. But firstly, let us examine the nature of these channels in general. A sacrament is a visible and tangible channel of the invisible grace which is the fruit of the Precious Blood. It was to be expected that Jesus Christ would establish the Sacraments, once He had determined upon the Incarnation. The whole genius of the Incarnation is the restoration of the invisible by means of the visible. Jesus came as the visible Destroyer of invisible sin. And He established a visible Church for the regeneration of the invisible souls of men. Now this regeneration can take place only by the application of the grace, purchased for us by Jesus Christ, to each individual soul; and in accordance with the precedent already established by Himself, our Lord left to the Church certain visible instruments by which she might continue His own great work. These we call the Sacraments. Father Faber, in his book on the Precious Blood, has a very beautiful description of the Sacraments which I cannot refrain from giving you here. It is based on the definition of the Council of Trent that the Sacraments both contain and confer grace. “The Sacraments,” he writes, “are the machinery of the Precious Blood. They are the effort of the Precious Blood to become omnipresent that it might embrace all souls. It cast itself into Sacraments that it might reach souls by a quicker road, in more diversified roads, with a more infallible operation and with a more abundant success.” And he adds, “They are of inexhaustible grace. No one can tell how much grace lies in a single Sacrament. . . . Who can tell if any creature has ever yet drained any single Sacrament of the whole amount of grace which was contained in it simply by virtue of its being a Sacrament? For the Sacraments are the actions of Christ. He instituted

them as man, and they are the continuation of the thirty-three years on earth. Earth's intercourse with heaven is carried on today, directly or indirectly, through the Sacraments. They are causing or hindering millions of actions daily. Society would hardly credit to what an extent it is held together by them!" After this, I know how anxious you must be to review with me the seven Sacraments which are so important a part of your Catholic Inheritance, if only that you may be able to make the very best use of them.

### BAPTISM

The first and most important of the Sacraments is Baptism. By this Sacrament received actually, or if that be impossible, by desire, or even by the supreme sacrifice of martyrdom for Christ, the human soul is regenerated, or born again, to the life of grace which should have been ours but for the fall of our first parents. Without this Sacrament no one can possibly attain to the supernatural life of grace, or ever enter heaven to enjoy the vision of God. So Jesus Christ began His public life with the solemn assertion, Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John III, 5), and ended it with the commission to His apostles, Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt XXVIII, 19.) We know that no one is saved except by the graces secured by the shedding of the Precious Blood. Here we are told that no one is saved except by Baptism. It follows therefore that Baptism must be a channel of these graces. So, too, with the other Sacraments. Baptism also, since it alone confers the supernatural life, must be considered as the prelude to all the operations of that life, so that an unbaptized person has no right whatever to the other Sacraments. It is the gateway to a Christian life. Nor is it a thing of the past, over and done with. By it a character has been impressed on our souls, and we can never again be as if we had not been baptized.

There, then, is the remedy for original sin, the means appointed by Christ to undo that first great misery, and apply the fruits of His passion to our souls. It is an extraordinary fact that many so-called Christians in the world today are becoming indifferent to a rite of so serious a nature as Baptism. With so many around us growing careless, we ourselves must make doubly sure of the great truths of our religion; and upon no truth must we have stronger convictions, than upon one which is laid down by our divine Savior as an absolute necessary condition of salvation.

### THE OTHER SACRAMENTS

After Baptism, one is newly-born to the spiritual life. No matter what a man's years, he is but a beginner in the ways of supernatural activity. Christ therefore instituted a second Sacrament, as a kind of complement of Baptism, to make us strong and perfect Christians, attaining to the full spiritual strength to which our spiritual birth should normally lead. This Sacrament is Confirmation. Thus St. Peter and St. John went to the Samaritans, who had been baptized by Philip. "Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost."—Acts VIII, 17.

Yet even after Confirmation (which you must receive as soon as you conveniently can), we are not free from the danger of falling into actual mortal sin. Confirmation does not destroy our liberty. We, personally, can fall from God's friendship as surely as our unhappy first parents. And we know that we cannot be baptized twice. How then regain God's love and our own forfeited spiritual life? Obviously it could only be by some means such as Baptism itself, by another channel of the Precious Blood. If Baptism was necessary for sins that were not our own doing, how much more necessary must a Sacrament be for the destruction of sins which are our own doing. Foreseeing all this, Christ Himself left us a second Sacrament for the restitution of the habitual grace, conferred by Baptism, should we have the misfortune to lose it, called Penance or Confession, a fuller treatment of which I have already given you in the third instruction. In the same month I also spoke to you of Holy Communion, which brings into our hearts the very Author of divine grace, as the Food of our souls.

Holy Orders is the fifth Sacrament, or channel of grace, of which St. Paul spoke when he wrote to Timothy, "I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands."—II, I, 6. By this Sacrament certain men, chosen by God, receive the power to administer all the Sacraments and "to offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins," as we saw in the paper on the Mass.

Matrimony is a great Sacrament to provide Jesus Christ with children to redeem, which conveys to the souls of the contracting parties the grace to fulfil, in a truly Christian way, the duties of their state.

Lastly, we have Extreme Unction, which is clearly described by St. James. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord . . . and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."—V, 14.



There then are the seven channels of divine grace left at the disposal of Christ's privileged disciples. But besides prayer and the Sacraments there is yet another means by which we may obtain actual graces. You will begin to think the Church simply inexhaustible! Nor would you be very far out in coming to such a judgment!

### THE SACRAMENTALS

Do you remember how Christ said to the Church, **Whatsoever you bind on earth is bound in heaven, and whatever you loose is loosed?** The Church naturally takes that seriously, and exercises her commission in very many ways. One of these ways is the institution of Sacramentals. Have you ever noticed how the Catholic Church always seems to be blessing somebody or something in the name of Jesus Christ? Not that it is surprising when we consider that she exists but to continue the life-work of Him who went about doing good! Now Sacramentals are certain visible objects which have been blessed by the Church with the intention that they should be means of grace for the faithful. They are called Sacramentals because of their resemblance to the Sacraments. Yet they differ from these in so far as they have not been instituted by Christ, and also because they do not contain and communicate grace in exactly the same way. The graces from Sacramentals depend partly upon the prayers of the Church, and partly upon the good dispositions of the person making use of them. Thus the blessing of the Church upon pious objects raises them to the dignity of Sacramentals, and additional actual graces are received from them in virtue of that blessing. Holy water is an example. You must often have been puzzled to see Catholics taking holy water as they enter the church. Yet it has a deep significance when it is done with proper dispositions. It is an act of faith in the Church to which Christ gave His own powers, and for which He gave His very life; it is an act of faith in the presence of God on our altars, in so far as, by the very act, we acknowledge we are unworthy even to enter the same building as Himself; that it implies an act of true humility is evident; for most of us, too, it is an occasion for an act of contrition as we say whilst making the sign of the cross, "O my Jesus, I am sorry for ever having offended Thee, and I implore Thee to cleanse my soul from every stain of sin." So it is, on different occasions and in various ways, with other Sacramentals.

There then, dear friend, you have the means of coming into contact with the grace of Jesus Christ. You

are already baptized; you have yet to be confirmed; Confession and Communion will be frequently at your disposal; the Sacramentals still more frequently; the power of prayer of course you carry always with you—really the difficulty for a good Catholic is not how to secure grace, but how to escape it! However, with all these means of grace at our disposal you can be sure that God expects not a little from us. He is very ambitious for us—but just in what way I must leave till our next session. With a good-bye in the God-be-with-you sense of the word, I remain

YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## XI.

### FRUIT

Dear Mountaineer,

So you are eagerly looking forward to the spiritual program of all that God expects of you, prepared to scale the very heights of perfection? Your good will of course is most lovable in God's sight, but remember that Rome wasn't built in a day, and what I am going to put on paper may take many years and involve many difficulties in its accomplishment. Virtue studied is not virtue acquired, and it is the acquiring of Christian virtue that must be the outcome of our study of Christian doctrine.

### THE THEOLOGIES

I think I can best trace your path by running through the various theologies with you. The first theology supposes a man a pagan, and is called "Fundamental Theology," because it proves the foundations of the Christian faith. It appeals to both intellect and will by showing the historical truth and the moral beauty of Christianity. Happily, in speaking to you I had no need to cover all that ground, because you were already deeply convinced of the truth of the Christian religion. You were essentially a Christian and knew you could never be anything else. However, I would advise you to make a study later on of this branch of theology. It will strengthen your conviction of the solid rational basis upon which Christianity rests, and add a hundredfold to your influence in a world which has forgotten what it is to be Christian. I am sending you under separate cover a suggested course of study in fundamental theology, or, as it is sometimes called, apologetics.

### DOGMATIC THEOLOGY

The second branch of theology is called dogmatic. Here we come to a close study of all the doctrines, or teachings or dogmas of Christianity. Jesus Christ came to teach. He wrote no books, but established a Church instead to tell us exactly what His doctrine is. During our course we have made a general survey of the whole of Christian teaching, save for a few truths which I am reserving for the next and last instalment. Now it is an act of Christian perfection to know and accept whole-heartedly this collection of truths taught us by the Catholic Church in the name of Jesus Christ. That is why I mention the matter here. You wish to climb the steps leading to holiness—here is one of the first rungs of the ladder. Dogma leads to devotion, but even if it did not, Jesus Christ paid such a heavy price to bring these truths within our reach that we should go to some trouble, make some effort to know as well as possible the doctrines He prized so highly.

### MORAL THEOLOGY

Christianity is not merely a collection of things to be believed. It is essentially a rule of conduct. "Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord'"—these are the words of Jesus Christ Himself—"shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father."—Matt. VII, 21. "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word."—John XIV, 23. It follows from this that every Christian who even makes any pretense of serving God must observe all that God has seriously commanded. Now moral theology sets out for us very clearly everything that it would be sinful for us to do. And as Jesus Christ did not come to destroy the law of God but to fulfil it, this branch of theology commences with the Ten Commandments and shows by what actions man violates them. After that it considers the precepts or legislation of God's Church which may also oblige under pain of serious sin. Since the Church speaks in the name of Jesus Christ, no one can pretend to love Him who does not rigidly observe these laws.

But even the observance of God's commandments and the laws of the Church does not constitute Christian perfection. That much simply means that you are leading a "moral" life. The very title, "Moral Theology" tells you that. It shows you how far you can go without actually breaking your friendship with God. But with such a wealth of grace at your disposal it is ridiculous to suppose that that is all God expects of you. If you assent to the teachings of dogmatic theology and observe the rules of moral theology, you

will save your soul. But where and when did God say that He intended you merely to "save" your soul? He is much more ambitious for you than that. His dearest wish is that you should not only save your soul, but also that you should "sanctify" it; not only that you should avoid sin, but that you should practice virtue; not only that you should obey His strict commands, but that you should also put into practice, as far as possible in accordance with your state in life, His counsel or advice. This leads us to a further department of theology called "Ascetical," which must regulate the life of those who have the good will to correspond with God's higher aspirations in their regard. But before I begin the analysis of this further section, I will but mention a theology between moral and ascetical, so that should you hear the name you will know to what it refers. This theology is called "Pastoral," because it deals with the additional obligations of those who have accepted the invitation of our Lord to labor in His vineyard with Him. But they, too, must attend to the teachings of ascetical theology if they are at all interested in their personal sanctification.

### ASCETICAL THEOLOGY

When we speak of an "ascetic" we are inclined to picture some hollow-eyed, gaunt and wasted figure whose owner has suppressed every natural feeling and instinct, who has rigidly denied himself all the joys, even the simpler ones, of human life, and whose whole ambition seems to have been legitimately to commit suicide. Now it is almost needless to tell you, that this is a caricature which has arisen in history partly from the simplicity of undiscerning Catholics, who have seen the austerities of their saints without paying attention to the interior principles which have led them to a renunciation of all that is not God, and not to austerity merely because it was austerity; and partly from the misrepresentations of adversaries whose only aim has been to make Christianity look absurd. Many a Catholic biographer with great good will and little power of historical criticism has given us as the "life" of a saint simply a catalogue of extraordinary mortifications and astonishing external events. Many an adversary has not failed to seize his opportunity and make Christian spirituality appear as the science of reducing the human frame to a skeleton, or the art of producing a stream of mystifying miracles. How far short this is of the truth we shall see. As a matter of fact, holiness implies the cultivation of all the virtues, and mortification is one of the least of them.

Certain it is that the man who voluntarily starves himself is not therefore a saint, whilst it is equally certain that not every saint went in for rigid fasting. So, too, as regards miracles. Miracles may be a sign of holiness, but holiness by no stretch of the imagination implies the working of miracles.

### TRUE ASCETICISM

The word "ascetic" comes from the Greek, with the sense of one who makes laborious efforts to perfect his physical or even moral well-being. The word was naturally chosen then to describe any Christian who might make a serious effort to acquire spiritual perfection or holiness. Any Christian, therefore, who is not content with a merely moral life, but wishes to go beyond what is of strict obligation and progress in the practice of the Christian virtues can be said to be leading an ascetical life. There is nothing very terrifying about it. It is not even a question of "being extraordinary." Our Lord wished that each and every disciple that would ever come to Him from the day of the Incarnation till the end of time should lead not only a moral life, but an ascetical one also. That is why I am including in this course of instruction, even for a person in the world, some notions of asceticism, elementary though they be.

### THE VIRTUES

You remember, dear friend, how I catalogued for you in the ninth instruction the seven Christian virtues infused together with sanctifying grace. Now these virtues must not only be possessed, they must also be developed. And they must be developed *side by side*. There is no use in getting a passion for mortification, which is a blend of temperance and fortitude, and forgetting all about Christian prudence. No virtue can be contrary to another virtue. Religion is a part of the virtue of justice considered in relation to God. But if an unbalanced religious zeal begins to interfere with the obvious duties of my home life, it ceases to be a virtue and becomes an excess. On the other hand, if the claims of home or of recreation begin to interfere with my obvious religious duties, they, too, are an excess, and I must call on the virtue of temperance of self-restraint to help me to keep them within bounds. It is this constant adjustment of the virtues one to the other and the simultaneous development of them all which constitutes the ascetical life. There is nothing mysterious about it; there is no Catholic who is not called to it; there is no Catholic who

has not all the means necessary at his disposal. Grace is needed, but an inexhaustible supply has been purchased by Jesus Christ, and it can always be drawn upon by prayer, the Sacraments and Sacramentals. Discretion is essential, but God never refuses light when He is asked for it, and if one is still in doubt, there is always one's confessor, who will quickly decide in any apparent conflict where one virtue ends and another begins. All that has to be done then is to intensify each virtue within its own proper sphere of activity, not for the sake of being virtuous—for that would already spell the abandonment of prudence and even perhaps humility—but for the sake of our Lord, Who certainly did not infuse the virtues for nothing, and Who wants to see me develop them to their highest capacity in accordance with His grace, for the love of Him, and to His greater glory in eternity as well as to my own everlasting happiness.

### THE THREE STAGES

The ascetical theologians map out three stages in the spiritual life, according as one is but a beginner in this higher Christian life, or has progressed some distance in it, or is proficient in the practice of every Christian virtue. In the first period, sometimes called the "Purgative" way, a man does his best with the help of grace to purify himself from all habits of sin, whether mortal or venial. This sounds very like a "merely" moral life, but it differs in this, that a very definite fight is undertaken against those tendencies in us which have impelled us to sin in the past; an effort, sincere and constant, is made to sanctify our ordinary actions by purifying our motives—doing them more explicitly for the love of God instead of "just doing them"; and we commence a systematic course of spiritual reading, chiefly of the lives of the saints, to build up a different estimate of the relative value of things and to fill our minds with a thoroughly Christian ambition, so different from that which the world inspires. In this stage a man is still very far off from perfection. God will send many sensible and spiritual consolations to help him on his way. But although he is filled with a burning desire for perfection, he finds himself in the midst of so many imperfections and defects that he soon gets over the idea that he is a saint, should that most foolish of all foolish notions ever cross his mind. Quickly realizing that "correct views, high feelings, and devout aspirations" do not constitute true spirituality, he begins to mortify himself, renouncing his own will where he might even legitimately follow it, cutting down his

merely worldly amusements without in any way depriving himself of necessary recreation, and seizing other little opportunities of putting into practice the first part of our Lord's condition to His would-be followers—"Let him deny himself . . ." But the rest of our Lord's sentence must also be observed: "and come, follow Me." Thus St. Peter said to Jesus, "Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee . . ." and our Lord replied, "Amen, I say to you, that you who have followed Me . . ." not "you who have left all"; for, as St. Jerome points out, the Stoics, the pagan philosophers and many others have left all uselessly, because they did not do it for the love of God and in the spirit of a follower of Christ.

### THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY

In the second period, sometimes called the "Illuminative" way, the soul under the inspiration of God's grace has begun to understand, besides the spirit of true Christian self-restraint, the nature of generosity in God's service, continuing independently of prosperity or adversity to imitate Christ. It profits by the dryness of spirit that now quite often takes the place of former sensible devotion to abandon self-love, and to labor for the pure love of God. Prayer, above all in the form of aspirations or ejaculations, comes more frequently into the scheme of things. The penalty of sin becomes less and less a motive of well-doing, and whilst the soul does not fail to appreciate all that our Lord has prepared for those that love and serve Him, it finds that "the preference of the Heart of Jesus" has grown to be almost its one law of conduct. However, even with all this, the heights of virtue are not yet attained. There is still a good deal of imagination, self-complacency, inconstancy and high desire rather than perfect action to be met with. And the price of proceeding further will not be light, though God's grace is always there if the good will is not wanting.

### THE UNITIVE WAY

In the third period, sometimes called the "Unitive" way, the soul, as it were, practically comes up with God, is united to Him as far as it is possible on this side of heaven. To rid the soul of remaining imperfections, God sends a series of drynesses which deprive the soul of all consolation, yet strangely increase the desire of heavenly things. It becomes a question of walking by pure faith and with an invincible will. A deep contrition for past sins becomes an almost abiding disposition, yet never in such a way that one's own misery obscures the Divine Goodness and Mercy. There

is no question here of visions or extraordinary conduct externally. There is simply an extraordinary interior fidelity to God whatever He may seem to do or not to do. It is but the perfect conformity of the human will with the Will of God, not only in the things necessary for salvation, but also in all that is required for sanctification. With a humility and temperance that knows how to waive all claim to what could hold it back from God, with a fortitude that fears no trial, however severe it may be, with a sense of supernatural justice which can refuse God absolutely nothing, and a prudence which is nothing less than a reflection of the Divine Wisdom Itself, the soul stands on the impregnable foundation of a magnificent faith, radiant with hope in its highest development, transfigured by a burning charity or love for both God and man. And there is the Catholic saint, there is the true ascetic, whether he be fat or thin, tall or short, married or single, layman or priest, secular or religious, wise or simple as natural knowledge goes. Into every Catholic child that has ever been held over the baptismal font have been infused all the principles necessary for the attaining of such holiness, though, of course, as I have said, it means the work of a lifetime unless by the very special intervention of God. It is the ideal of dutiful, dry-eyed devotedness.

### MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

Mystical Theology deals with the extraordinary experiences which occur sometimes in the lives of very holy people. I have mapped out above what are known as the ordinary ways of perfection. Our own activity can never go beyond them, and any "experiences" that we strive to attain to by our own efforts will be only the outcome of our own imagination and self-love, and will prove very detrimental to our spiritual life. God has sent certain mystical experiences into the lives of some of the saints; but the saints themselves have had nothing to do with the production of these things, beyond the remote preparation of being holy enough to deserve them. Often they have occurred almost in spite of the will of the saint who has been the subject of the phenomenon. All anxiety for such happenings, however, soon disappears when we learn that these extraordinary favors do not give any additional holiness nor add to one's merit.

Now I have been longer than usual, and I must close. From the very beginning I have kept on asking you to make the truths put before you your own. Yet I ask you to master this month's instruction even more thoroughly than anything you have previously received.



For I have put before you today the things which will make all the practical difference to the whole of your eternity. What "Eternity" is we shall see next month. May God give you the grace and courage to fulfill His highest aspirations for you, and may our Lady lead you along a way she herself has followed. Ask these same graces for

YOUR FRIEND AND FATHER.

## XII.

### THE FINAL REALITIES

My very dear Friend,

I could not refrain from laughing on reading your letter of last week, and my reply is: "Yes, even you can attain to the very heights of asceticism." I admit that it will involve difficulties, but nothing worth while has ever yet been easy to obtain, and holiness, believe me, is very much worth while. This month's instruction will spur you on to a greater earnestness. For today we are to give the answer to the question, "What is it all for?" We are to consider the last great realities in the light of Catholic doctrine.

#### WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH

Death, as we have seen, is a punishment for sin which God saw fit to leave even after restoring us to grace. By putting us into a state of grace, He robs death of its terror, provided we keep in that state. The only thing in death to make us tremble is the thought of having to face God in a state of mortal or serious sin. Then indeed there is cause to tremble. But apart from this, death is but a physical illness which separates us from this world and ushers us into the next. Now, what does actually happen after death? Very few seem to know, the reason being that most people won't listen to what God Himself says about it, preferring to puzzle it out for themselves, chiefly with the imagination rather than with intelligence.

#### TIME CEASES

Now, the Church knows exactly what happens at death. You see, she alone has heard the account from God's own lips, and He alone it is Who can really know for certain just what occurs to each soul from the moment it leaves the body. And the Church passes on the information to us. It saves us a lot of trouble, and frees us from the necessity of bothering with spiritism, materializations, and the planchette. Immediately after death, the soul enters eternity. It has left the body,

which, from the moment of its birth till the moment of its death, linked the soul with time. Henceforth there is duration without end. It may be a duration of happiness without end, or it may be a duration of misery without end; or again, it may be that this duration without end will be first of misery, and then change and continue in happiness. But there can be no question of death or destruction. Were you to count millions and multiply them again and again till your head is confused and your eyes swim and your tongue falters, you are no nearer exhausting eternity than when you began. It is a sobering thought.

### THE SOUL IS JUDGED

Immediately after death each soul is judged. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that, the judgment."—Heb. IX, 27. When the doctor says, "The man is dead," we can say, provided the doctor be correct, "The man is judged." And at that judgment our life will appear just as it has been in reality. There nothing can be added, nothing got rid of. Whether we think of it or not, by the mere fact of living we are running up accounts with God, and a settlement will have to be made. And the result of that judgment can be summed up in three lines:—The soul is in a state of Christian perfection, or in venial sin, or in mortal sin. The result, therefore, will be, if the soul is: **Quite fit, heaven; not quite fit, purgatory; quite unfit, hell.** A very practical thought suggests itself from these considerations. There is no sense in living as if life were never to end, and we never to be judged. Luckily, if we have serious sins, we may free ourselves from them now by confession, if we will. They are good things to be free from. As a matter of fact, there is a way, too, of diminishing, if not altogether destroying, the purification we shall most of us need for our venial sins in purgatory—but of that in a moment. Let us first ask ourselves what the Church teaches us about all three places.

### HELL

There is scarcely need to tell you that many nowadays are trying to persuade themselves that there is no hell. You read the comments made by popular writers in almost every newspaper. They seem to dislike the place intensely. Of course, for that matter, so do I. The only difference is that I cannot persuade myself that my dislike for the place makes it cease to exist. Well, let us have a look at it. I begin with hell, because I prefer to finish these instructions with heaven, the place where, please God, we are going.

Anyway, the notion of hell will help us to be grateful to God if only for what He has enabled us to miss. All who die in mortal sin are cast into hell. Whether we like it or not, that is simply the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who created hell to punish the devil and his angels. If you ask me why I believe in hell, there is my chief reason. The God Who made me and all that exist has told me that it is there—surely a very good reason. And I am fearful of the place—again because our Lord Himself has said, **Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.**—Matt. X, 28. Since both body and soul eventually go there, the sufferings will include both the consciousness of our loss and the pain of sense. The sinner dies rejecting God; throughout eternity, his will remains fixed in its rejection of God. And the soul realizes that, by its own continuing hatred of God, it is excluded from His presence for ever. It sees that it has missed the one thing for which it was created, and the one thing which could have made it happy, the one thing it will never obtain, because it will not turn with love to God. No man in an open boat, driven mad by thirst could want water as the lost soul will feel the radical need for God, only to realize ever more intensely that it is excluded from heaven by its own unchanging wickedness. Lost souls will suffer, too, the pain of sense. To satisfy their senses they abandoned God's commands, and their senses will be tormented in some dreadful way, for the description of which our Lord had to fall back on the image of unquenchable fire.—Mark IX, 42. The gentle Christ made the rich man cry, **Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.**—Luke XVI, 24.

There then is the Catholic doctrine. We saw in the eighth instruction that if a man die just the opposite of all that God is, he cannot but go to some place where is the very antithesis of that wherein God resides, and the place which is the opposite of heaven from every point of view we call hell. In any case, one has only to look upon a crucifix to realize that hell must exist. It would simply be absurd for the Son of God to come down and go through all that suffering if there were no eternal misery to save us from, if it were all going to be the same in the end whether He died or not, if we were all going to get to heaven in the end. The only way to abolish hell, then, is to abolish our own, by avoiding the only thing that can take us there—sin. Now, the Catholic Church has no connection with hell. Her one business on earth is to stop people going there.

If she insists on the doctrine, it is to make her children all the more determined to avoid it and all that leads to it. Not that she wants us to serve God from fear. We should do so from a motive of love. Yet Scripture says: **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.** And if the fear of hell prevents us from committing mortal sin and so saves our soul, it is a fear well worth having. No one goes up to a man who has just saved his life by a fraction of an inch by leaping out of the way of an oncoming express train, and says to him in a tone of withering scorn, "You did that from sheer fear." The man would reply without a blush, and as if to a lunatic, "Of course I did, and I would do so again from the same sheer fear in the same circumstances." The same sheer fear of hell, which is a far worse disaster than being smashed to fragments by an express train, is an "emergency brake" in my own life, and would certainly block me from mortal sin should all other motives fail.

### PURGATORY

I said that the Church has nothing to do with hell. But she has a very intimate connection with both purgatory and heaven. There are three great divisions of the Catholic Church—the Church Triumphant (in heaven), the Church Suffering (in purgatory), and the Church Militant (on earth). The intercommunion between these three sections is asserted in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the communion of saints." The Church Suffering consists of all those souls who are in purgatory. All who die the happy possessors of habitual grace, yet still owing something to Divine Justice because of their venial sins, must undergo a certain purification before being admitted to God's presence. Sacred Scripture says, **Nothing defiled shall enter heaven.**—Apoc. or Rev. XXI, 27. So, too, in the Old Testament: **It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins.**—2 Mach. XII, 46. As it is no use praying for those who are in hell, and there is certainly no need to pray for those who are safely in heaven, it is obvious that there is a place of temporal suffering, or purification, or purgation—purgatory. It will be a great misery. To be so close to God, yet separated from Him, will be dreadful suffering—far worse than anything we can experience in a world where everything conspires to distract us even from our miseries. Still hope will always remain. I think we can best put it this way: By mortal sin a soul renounces God; justice then demands that it be renounced. By venial sin the soul, as it were, "keeps God waiting," only to find that it too

must, in its turn, "be kept waiting" for all that can alone make it perfectly happy. After all, to be purified will never be an easy matter. But it is easier for us to purify ourselves here by frequent Confession and Communion, by many acts of contrition and by the gaining of indulgences, than to wait for purgatory to do it. And this brings me to another famous Catholic doctrine.

### INDULGENCES

Everybody in heaven is a Catholic. Everybody in purgatory is a Catholic. Good Protestants are saved, not because they are Protestants, but because they are good. They become Catholics the moment they die and see the truth. And between Catholics on earth and those in heaven or in purgatory there flourishes a most intimate relation. We ask each other's prayers on earth; we do not believe that our holiest and best lose their power to pray for us merely because they have been transferred to heaven, so we often ask them to continue so doing. And as the Church Triumphant assists the Church Militant, so the Church Militant assists by its prayers the Church Suffering.

But our chief means of helping the souls in purgatory is by gaining indulgences for them, even as we may gain them also for ourselves. An indulgence is not a permission to commit sin. It is not even the forgiveness of a sin, mortal or venial. It is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin. God Himself forgives sin without always remitting the punishment due to it. He said to David by the prophet, *The Lord hath taken away thy sin—thou shalt not die. Nevertheless, the son that is born of thee shall surely die.*—2 Kings XII, 13. So, too, our sins are forgiven if our sorrow for them is as great as their malice demands; but in the measure that our sorrow falls short of what is due, God, in His mercy, allows us to make up by suffering here or in purgatory. To diminish that suffering, the Church from the very earliest times has imposed penances even in this life, and in a spirit of generosity, relying on Christ's promise that whatsoever she might loose on earth would be loosed in heaven, she has remitted those penances for those who would do other good works, and offer prayers for the well-being of the Church Militant. Owing to the doctrine of "Communion of Saints," the faithful are in the habit of securing the indulgences by doing the good works prescribed, and then in a spirit of generosity inspired by that of the Church herself, of handing them over to the souls who are actually undergoing the sufferings due to their sins. An indulgence of "three years" means the remission of

suffering bearing, in the Church's mind, some relation to that which would have been expiated by three years of the canonical penances imposed in the early Church. A plenary indulgence is the remission of all the suffering due to sin. Even if you give all the indulgences you gain during life to the suffering souls, you will not be the loser, as your act of charity makes you very lovable in God's sight, and the Church herself will be all the readier to grant you a plenary indulgence at the moment of your own death, which if you are in very good dispositions, will spell heaven for you without delay.



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