

Booklet No. 4

Rumble, Leslie  
Confession quizzes  
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# Confession Quizzes

## TO A STREET PREACHER



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# CONFESSION QUIZZES TO A STREET PREACHER

## 1. What is Confession?

Confession is the telling of sins in the Sacrament of Penance instituted by Jesus Christ by which those who fall into sin after Baptism may be restored to God's grace. The Sacrament of Penance supposes that the recipient is truly repentant of his sins. It involves the admission of one's sins made to a duly approved priest in order to obtain absolution.

## 2. We Protestants believe that God alone can forgive sin.

And that is the Catholic teaching also. But the question concerns the way in which God has chosen to administer that forgiveness. We Catholics add that God can delegate His power if He wishes, just as the supreme authority in the state can delegate a judge to administer justice. Would you deny to God that power?

## 3. Forgiveness through the mediation of a priest is opposed to the doctrine that Christ is the only mediator.

One Mediator redeemed us. The priest does not redeem us; he is but an accredited agent of the one Mediator. The Sacrament of Penance is but one way of applying the mediation of Christ to men even as Baptism is another. And if Baptism is a Sacrament for the destruction of sin which we ourselves did not commit but which we inherit from Adam, another Sacrament is most fitting for the destruction of sins which we do personally commit after our Baptism. Christ certainly thought so, and instituted the Sacrament of Penance. If you believe in one Mediator, so do we; but we listen to that One Mediator and do as He has commanded us.

## 4. Can you prove that God did delegate that power to men?

Yes. Christ was God, and in St. Jn. XX., 21-23, we read these remarkable words: "Peace be to you. As the Father has sent Me I also send you. When He had said this He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Now Christ's mission was to destroy sin, and He gave that same mission to His Apostles. Knowing that their merely human power as men was quite insufficient, He gave them a special communication of the Holy Spirit for this special work. To say that Christ did not confer a true power to for-

give sin is to rob the whole ceremony and the words of Christ of any real meaning. And it was obviously a power to be exercised. Christians applying to the Apostles for forgiveness

**5. How do you interpret the words of Christ as they are contained in the Gospel of St. John, 20:21?**

His meaning is that what He has done they were commissioned to do likewise. The Hebrew salutation, "Peace be to you," means, "I forgive you Myself your failings, your denial of Me, your cowardice in my arrest, the vacillating of your faith, your negligence of My Mother, all is forgiven. 'Peace be to you.' My new commission to you all here is this: 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' What I have done for sinners, you are commanded to do likewise. The commission of My Father to Me is My commission to you and to your successors." But for what purpose did His Father send Him? His Father sent Him garbed in His human nature with power to 'move mountains, with power to teach infallibly, with power to pour out grace, with power to work the supernatural, with power to offer up the Sacrifice spoken of by the prophet Malachias, with power to loose and to bind, forgive and to retain. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." The power exercised by Christ will also be theirs, namely, to teach unerringly, to interpret, to offer sacrifice, to forgive sin, and, therefore, for that duty and office now, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And to remove any doubt as to what He means He adds a solemn action which they never saw Him do before; He breathed His Own Breath—the Breath, the Spirit of the Risen God upon them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit—the Holy Ghost."

**6. What is the benefit of this breathing and receiving the Holy Ghost?**

The purpose and benefit of endowing them with the Holy Ghost is to enable them to act in the power, in the place, and in the name of Jesus Christ, "Whose sins YOU shall forgive, they are forgiven them." Why should there be so many millions of Christians who put aside the plain meaning of these words?

**7. What is the difference of that breathing and conferring the Holy Ghost and the coming down of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost Sunday?**

On Easter night instituting the Sacrament of Penance our Lord did not give what He had already given in Baptism and what was to be given on Pentecost. That which He gave on the night of His Resurrection was not the gift of holiness, or anything for the

Apostles' benefit, but a gift for all mankind and for all times; "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." The coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles on Pentecost brought the perfection of the divine life of grace to each disciple and the special helps for their Apostolic mission. His Father sent Christ on a twofold mission: to glorify the Father and to redeem man. The worship of His Father He provides for before He dies by the continual showing forth of His death in the Holy Mass, and the forgiveness of man He provides for on the day of His rising.

**8. Christ had the power but the Apostles didn't.**

Many Protestant ministers admit that Christ conferred this power on the Apostles Easter Sunday night when He said, according to your Protestant Bible. St. John 20-21. "Then said Jesus to them again 'Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' And when He had said this He breathed on them, and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'" Why tolerate such words in your Protestant Bible if you do not make these words mean exactly what they say. Must we consider as nonsense the words, "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." Mt. 18:18. "As My Father hath sent Me so do I send you," means in plain language—As I came into the world to reconcile sinners to their God, so likewise are you called upon to go out and become the ministers of reconciliation.

**9. Do not the words of Christ, "Whose sins you shall forgive, etc." mean announcing and preaching that sins were forgiven?**

No. The Protestant historian, Sparrow, in his "Rationale" says: "I could name more Fathers, as St. Augustine, St. Cyprian and others, but I spare. These I have named are enough to give testimony of the former generation; men too pious to be thought to speak blasphemy, and too ancient to be accused of Popery. But to put all out of doubt, let's search the Scriptures; look into the twentieth of St. John, ver. 23: 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' Here is plainly a power of remitting sins granted to the priest by our Blessed Savior. Nor can it be understood as remitting SINS BY PREACHING, as some expound it, nor by baptizing as others guess, for both these, preach and baptize, they could do long before;

but this power of remitting they received not till now, that is, after His Resurrection. That they could preach and baptize before is plain." This Protestant historian, therefore, clearly shows that the Apostles received a new commission, a new power which they did not possess until Easter Sunday night. They already had the power to preach but the power to absolve they received only when Christ came back to them from the tomb on Easter Sunday night.

**10. This power was not transmitted to the successors of the Apostles.**

Christ conferred authority upon the Apostles not in their private capacity as individuals, but in their official capacity as **MINISTERS OF RECONCILIATION**, which was to continue till the end of time. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations . . . And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Matt. XXVIII, 19-20. As the Apostles were soon to die, it is necessary that the authority they possessed was to be transmitted to those taking their places. Judas died by suicide and as the Catholic and Protestant New Testament says, Matthias was elected to the chair left vacant through the suicide of Judas. Acts I, 26. Matthias taking the place of the traitor Judas, certainly went out and did what the other eleven were doing. Whence did he receive the authority? Certainly not from Christ for Christ was already ascended into Heaven. Then if he acted with the power and authority of an Apostle he received that delegated power not from Christ but from his fellow Apostles. Did not St. Paul **JUDGE** the Corinthian for sinning with his own stepmother? 1 Cor., V. 3. Where did St. Paul get this power and authority to judge the Corinthian guilty of incest? From Christ? No. For on Easter Sunday night Paul was a persecutor of the Christians. Common sense tells you he received that power and authority to judge and forgive in the Name of Christ from the Apostles, who ordained him to the priesthood. Where is that **MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION** spoken of by St. Paul (2 Cor., 5:18) in Protestantism? It is never to be found in **PREACHING PARDON OR FORGIVENESS** as the Protestant historian Sparrow shows in his "Rationale."

**11. I believe that the Apostles received the power, but it was for them only.**

Christ commissioned His Church to teach all nations till the end of the world. Matt. XXVIII, 19-20. The Apostles had to hand on all essential powers to their successors. And the conditions of salvation must be the same for us as for the first Christians. If those

subject to the Apostles had to obtain forgiveness from their fellow men, there is no reason why we should be exempt. We share the same privileges as the early Christians and must have the same obligations. Till the Reformation all Christians went to Confession. In the fourth century we find St. Ambrose defending Confession by saying that if a man can forgive sin by baptizing he claims nothing greater when he claims the power to forgive sin through the Sacrament of Penance. That priests possessed such power was Christian doctrine in his time and is still the doctrine of the Catholic Church. The Greek Church, which broke away from the Catholic Church in the ninth century, has retained this Apostolic practice. Protestantism gave up the practice in the sixteenth century because it was uncomfortable and mortifying. But once admit such a principle, and one could abolish every uncomfortable commandment of God.

**12. Is it conceivable that Christ conferred the same power upon man as He had?**

Christ did confer this power and authority upon the Church otherwise He was wasting time and talking NONSENSE Easter Sunday night when He breathed on His Apostles and gave them the power to judge and to forgive or not to forgive sin. If He didn't confer this power then He came to treat sin only for that generation which lived in His own day or whilst one single Apostle who had that power still lived in the world. His mission was to all mankind and not merely to the people of His day, and if people were individually cleansed of their sins by Christ and the Apostles, then the individuals of every succeeding generation must be taken care of in the manner the Apostles took care of them in the days of the Infant Church. Christ conferred upon the Apostles the self-same power of pardoning which He Himself possessed. To prove to the Jews that He exercised this power, He worked a physical miracle to demonstrate the spiritual miracle that went on in the man's soul.

He said to the man sick of the palsy: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Mark II, 5. At this admission the Scribes were scandalized as Protestants today are scandalized when man in the name of God forgives sin and they murmur at Christ, "He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins, but God only?" And that cry of those Protestors is the cry of the non-Catholic world today. "What man can forgive sin?" Christ to put these First Protestors in their places poses a question: "Which is easier, to say to the man sick of the palsy: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of

Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy) I say to thee: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." Mk., 2:9.

13. Is it reasonable that a criminal should be pardoned of his sins?

No matter if the soul is covered with sins of lust, or gluttony, or envy or hatred, or all of them together, Christ still came for the criminal sinner as well as the saint. Is. 1:18: "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be as red as crimson, they shall be white as wool." Christ was so kind and considerate of sinners that the Pharisees complained to the disciples saying: "Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners?" But Jesus hearing it, said: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill. Go then and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the just, but sinners." Mt. 9:11-13. The Mission of Christ is to call the wayward sinners back to Him. To bring this home to them and to all of posterity He told the three parables. The first was the beautiful parable of the Good Shepherd, who leaves the ninety-nine sheep and searches for the one that is lost until he finds it. When he carries home the lost sheep he calls his neighbors together, saying: "Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost." The meaning of the parable He explains in the words, "I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." Lk. 15:7. The second parable is about the woman who has ten coins, loses one, then lights the candle and sweeps the house and searches diligently until she finds it. When she finds it a party is held: "Rejoice with me, because I have found the coin which I had lost." Lk. 15:9. The third parable is the most touching and the most beautiful. Lk. 15:24. It is the world's greatest short story and that story is the story of the Prodigal Son, which is familiar to all. The word painted picture of the Master receiving back his wayward son is the Master of long ago and the Master still of today.

14. No mortal man shall ever come between my soul and my God.

If you are a Christian then you must believe that "A Man," "The Man"—God in Man incarnate—had not only come between you and God—but had made Himself the Way by which the world could come in contact with God. The pages of the New Testament are replete with manifestations of Christ's mercy and com-



passion on sinful humanity. The evangelist, Matthew, sums up all his benefactions when he simply says: "and all that were sick, He healed." Mt. 8:16. While doing this He was even more intent upon the healing of the ills of the soul. The primary purpose of Christ's coming into the world is demonstrated by His very name. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," says the angel, "for He shall save His people from their sins." Mt. 1:21.

**15. Did Christ write the sins of the adulterous woman in the sands?**

What Christ wrote in the sands nobody knows. Tradition and popular exegesis tell us that He wrote in the dust the secret sins of those who stood ready to apply the law of Moses, namely that when a woman was guilty of adultery she was to be stoned until dead. After writing in the sands her accusers one by one went away. Then Jesus said to the woman who alone remained: "Woman, where are they that accused thee?" Who said, "No man, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more." Jn. 8:11.

**16. Give me one instance where any Apostle ever forgave sin.**

St. Paul certainly exercised the power of binding and loosing from sin and the effects of sin. In 2 Cor. II., 10, he justifies his forgiveness of the repentant man by saying: "If I have pardoned anything, I have done it in the person of Christ."

**17. How did Christ forgive sins Himself when He was on earth?**

Christ forgave as priests, today forgive, namely by human lips, pronouncing the words of absolution. He was angry with those, in the case of the paralytic, who said: "God only can forgive sins," and He was pleased with those who glorified God for giving such power of forgiving to men. St. Luke, 7: 36-47, gives the story of a concrete case of absolution. Mary was a great sinner and her public forgiveness would create a stir especially in the house of a wealthy Pharisee with his dining hall filled with guests. In spite of the circumstances of embarrassment Christ certainly did not want to keep the case hidden and He acted as God through His manhood and in forgiving Mary He did not act as a man, or as a prophet of God. Simon himself had not made up his mind whether He was a prophet or not. "This Man," says Simon, "if He were a prophet would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner." He thinks Christ is no prophet at all for having touched this public sinner and certainly it is far from his mind that He

is God. But Christ in His treating of Mary of Magdala, gives Simon proof that He is a prophet—by showing that He knew both Simon's thoughts and Mary's sins. "I know that she has been a sinner, but she has repented truly, and is a sinner no more; she has loved much and sorrowed deeply, therefore her sins are even now forgiven. On you, Simon, are now more sins than on her; you have not sinned so deeply, but you have not repented so truly." There seems no need for Him to pronounce the words of absolution for in v. 47, He has already said her sins were forgiven, yet He turns to her and says with emphasis so as to call the attention of Simon and his guests, "Thy sins are forgiven." Now He has certainly already seen that her sins are forgiven, yet with human lips, unrecognized as the lips of God, He pronounces her absolution. He didn't preach forgiveness to her, but "those that sat at meat with Him" clearly understood Him to have THERE and THEN forgiven her sins; for they grumbled among themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" He was speaking by the spirit of prophecy that He knew that her sins were forgiven. It was too early in His career for them to believe that He was God and so He was content to let them think He was man, and that, as man, He claimed to forgive sins, and Christ makes no attempt to change the opinions of their minds. They understood well what He said and what He did. Christ Himself as man, was pleased to forgive sins. He is preparing men's minds that it is His desire to bring forgiveness through His fellow men, whose human souls and human lips would become the channels of God's grace.

**18. It seems absurd that God should forgive sins through men.**

To forgive sins through men is what God has always done since He made the world. Your Old and New Testaments will teach you through every page that He has managed men through men. God has guaranteed the giving of the things of the next world through the men of this world. Children will never know God nor the road to Heaven unless they are taught and given proper example by the parents. The things of Heaven are granted to men through men. Good parents save a child for society and Heaven; bad parents lose a child in general for society and Heaven. God makes men through men, preserves men through men, rules men through men, rewards and punishes men through men. He leaves the knowledge of His Revelation to be given to men through men. Hence the things of Heaven have been very much left in the hands of men for men. The fact that you believe in

your minister shows that you acknowledge that God gives the things of Heaven through your fellow man. By the preaching of your minister you admit that God touches the souls of men through men. If this is all true that God teaches, touches the consciences, and calls men to repent through men, then it should not seem absurd that God should use men to forgive men their sins. God gave the Scriptures to men through men and gave Moses the commandments, and if God can lay commandments on men through men, why can He not forgive the violation of those commandments through men also. The Bible was given to us by God through men and the Bible is nothing but the knowledge of God and God's will, threatenings, punishments, mercies, judgments, etc. All this revelation from God is given to man through men. Is it absurd to accept all that truth of God's use of man for man and through man save in the case of forgiveness on the part of God? The Old Testament in particular teaches you that it is God's custom to deal with man through men. . . . It is mighty logical and reasonable and not absurd that God's custom under the New Dispensation was to forgive sins through man delegated and set apart for that office.

**19. After the Sacrament of Baptism is administered there is no need of another sacrament to take away sin.**

If you believe that the minister has the power to remit original sin through the waters of Baptism then how about a man—the priest having power not only to take away original sin but also the sins committed after Baptism? Is it possible that God who through Baptism forgives all sin committed up to the time of Baptism, has not left some other means, just as assuring, just as certain, to let you know that your post-Baptism sins are forgiven? As Mary Magdalene had been given a forgiveness beyond doubt, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," so somewhere, somehow, you must have someone to pronounce those words today with authority and your reason and common sense will permit no other answer.

**20. How can the Pope give the power of forgiving sins to a priest and then get his own sins forgiven by a priest or the man to whom he gave the power to forgive himself?**

The Pope gives the power to forgive sins as Pope, as Head of Bishops, but the Pope in going to another priest in Confession goes as a man and not as Pope. His office of Pope is one thing; and his life as a human being or sinner is another thing. As Pope he is over

and above the priest who absolves him of his private sins and faults in carrying out the duties of his office; as man he is below the priest who exhorts him, admonishes him, etc. All Popes, Cardinals, Bishops and priests at the time of their Confessions are as subject to the law as other souls.

**21. Did not priests invent Confession in order to obtain the money required for absolution?**

No money is ever paid for absolution. If absolution cannot be given, \$10,000 would not obtain it. If it can be given, it cannot be refused, and it would be mortal sin on the part of any priest to suggest payment for it. Moreover, if any man came to me and offered to purchase forgiveness from me I would tell him that he was suggesting a mortally sinful procedure, and send him away with his money and without absolution unless he retracted his ideas and repented of his sin. In that case I would absolve him, without of course touching a penny of his money. Meantime no priest would be so foolish as to invent Confession. Had Christ not imposed it, and priests could prove Confession unnecessary, they would be the first to demand its abolition.

**22. Priests have a great money racket in accepting money for the forgiving of sins.**

Do you think we should have our Confessionals crowded every Saturday afternoon and evening for six or more weary hours if we were running a money racket? Our trouble is getting our people to Confession even though they pay nothing for having their sins cancelled. If Catholics came to Confession and lived up to the counsel given them we would have no Protestantism in the world today. Protestantism was born out of the scandal of bad Catholics. Do you think that priests would spend hours hearing the Confessions of children if they were out for money? Or do you think priests would rush into contagious wards or on to the battlefields if they were out for money? To settle your query definitely, why don't you join the line of people outside the Confessional of any Catholic Church next Saturday and when you enter the Confessional ask the Catholic priest how much you will have to pay to have your sins absolved. A priest must give his time and labor without money; he can never demand it. If people give him money for any service, it is given as a free-will offering because they want the priest to live in the dignity fitting his office but money offered in Confession can never be accepted. The offering ever given to a priest is not payment for Baptism, a funeral service, or for absolution, for no man can value the

grace of God, and say how much it is worth; and no man can sell the grace of God, saying if you pay I shall forgive and if you don't pay I will not forgive. All the money in the world could never buy a single absolution from any Catholic priest. The principle laid down by Peter (Acts VIII, 20) has governed the ministry of the Church. If the priest is alive in the world and on the mission of saving your soul, wouldn't it be absurd that you should allow him to lose his body by starvation?

**23. Was Confession practiced in the first centuries of Christianity?**

The historian Gibbon who wrote "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," in spite of being an infidel and a constant attacker of Christianity, was obliged to write down this for the benefit of those who still spread the lie that Confession was invented by man: "It cannot be denied," says Gibbon, "that Confession was one of the principal doctrines of Christianity for the first four centuries."

**24. Was not auricular Confession introduced by Innocent III as Calvin maintained?**

Auricular means through the ears and comes from the Latin word "auris" meaning ear. Hence auricular means a heard Confession, not a seen Confession. The common charge made against the Church is that Confession was invented by someone but those bringing forth that charge cannot agree as to the person, time or place Confession was invented by man instead of by Christ. If Confession were invented by Innocent III in 1215 then scholars are certainly BLIND to the evidence of the documentary evidence of the INFANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Long before 1215 we have abundant evidence to the contrary. St. Leo the Great (440-461) wrote so specifically about Confession that some Protestants reading his works were quite sure that he was the man who invented Confession. St. Leo writes: "God in His abundant mercy has provided TWO REMEDIES for the sins of men: that they may gain eternal life by the grace of Baptism, and also by the remedy of Penance (Confession), etc." If St. Leo instituted Confession then there would be a general protest on the part of the members of the Church against such an odious obligation but there is no trace of protest in all Christian history against such an invention or institution. St. Augustine (354-430) tells the early Christians "not to listen to those who deny that the Church has the power to forgive all sins."

St. Ambrose (340-397) declares that priests pardon

all sins, not in their own name, but as "ministers and instruments of God."

St. Paclan of Barcelona (390) answered those Protestors, the Novatians who believed that God alone can forgive sins and writes to those early Protestants: "This is true, but that which He does through His priests is also done by His own power. For He said to His Apostles, 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven.' Why should He speak thus, if it was not lawful for men to bind and loose?"

Origen (185-254) plainly speaks at this early date about secret Confession. He writes: "When you have eaten some indigestible food, and your stomach is filled with an excessive quantity of humor, you will suffer until you have gotten rid of it. So in like manner sinners, who hide and retain their sins within their breasts, become sick therefrom almost to death." (Notice the symptoms scrutinized by modern psycho-analysis of the twentieth century pointed out by Origen of the second century.) "Consider carefully," he warns, "whom you choose to hearken to your sins." Harkening means listening, therefore, auricular Confession is testified to by Origen.

In archeology we have the testimony that in 1911 Roman archeologists unearthed a marble slab with the following inscription in Greek upon it: "Here Blessed Peter absolved us, the elect, from the sins confessed."

Professor Ballerini, a non-Catholic, well versed in archeology, says, "It is what Christian tradition knew as 'the Confessionary of St. Peter.'" At any rate, the finding of this remarkable testimony upon this slab is conclusive evidence against those worldly-wise authorities who deny that auricular Confession is of Apostolic times.

## 25. Did Christ actually forgive or preach forgiveness to the paralytic?

Christ in the case of the paralytic really and actually forgave the sins then and there resting upon the soul of the paralytic. The story of the event is essentially this: Whilst He was preaching friends brought into the house by way of the skylight because of the crowd the paralytic lying upon a stretcher or cot. Jesus looking at this man saw not only the sickness of his body but also the sorrow and repentance of his heart-sick soul. And Jesus said to him, "Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee." At these words the Pharisees not believing that any man had the power to forgive sin said within themselves, "He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus understanding their murmuring shot back at them this retort, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is

easier to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' or 'Arise and walk?'" Then turning upon them in anger, spoke out, "but that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sin," He said to the sick man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." Mk. II, 9. In order to give emphasis and testimony to the words **THAT YOU MAY KNOW** He performs a miracle that out of the external sign they may know the proof of what went on internally.

**26. Some intellectuals deny the fact of sin.**

Yes, we have even professors hinting at or teaching such an absurd denial. No sane man can deny the existence of sin. Chesterton claims the world will get sensible intellectually when intellectuals admit the fact of Original Sin and the fact of Free Will. Wherever you turn, you see sin. Even St. John says: "The man who says he is without sin is a liar." Christ Himself declares that sin will be in the world till the end of time. "It needs must be that scandal cometh, etc." With all mankind, when you are in sin, you are in mental torture. You cannot drive the thought from out your mind, nor smother the melancholy of ruined moral life. You long for someone to tell you definitely that there is a method of knowing pardon and of satisfying that yearning desire which, if not answered, leads to despair. This is the starting point of our modern but very old science of the soul introduced into the world by Christ on Easter night, and remotely imitated by the psychoanalyst of today.

**27. I confess my sins privately to God and that is enough.**

The Jews were doing just exactly what you are doing, yet Christ came to correct and reform Judaism. You have gone back to the practice of those who were telling their sins privately to God before Christ came upon earth to tell people what they must do. God can forgive a person directly and immediately when he privately tells God his sins—but is it not wiser to seek forgiveness through the means which Christ established and not through the means which we establish with our whims and caprices? You have no right to dictate to God the manner in which you would like to have your sins forgiven. That is what the reformers have brought about for the world which after multiplying countless sects no longer even bothers telling God privately its sins. Your telling your sins to God privately in practice means that the whole action of Christ on Easter night was a **GRAND WASTE OF TIME AND A HOLLOW MOCKERY** if people can ordinarily confess to God in secret and receive pardon directly

from Him. It is easier to go to God, but Christ certainly didn't want it that way. Christ could have chosen other ways to reconcile sinners whom He came to save, but He chose the method instituted Easter Sunday and it is not for man to frustrate that method. Christ knew that more than subjective disposition and whims of private emotion were needed for mankind. He desired to give men ASSURANCE that their sins were remitted or retained in a sacrament that assures the sinner. We want assurance, not mere feeling, that our sins are forgiven.

**28. Priests are not divine and have no power to forgive sin or crime.**

You certainly cannot as an ordinary citizen pardon a criminal from the state prison, but if you were a Governor, then in your official capacity as Governor of the State you could certainly pardon. The Apostles in their official capacity as Apostles pardoned sinners. If you as an ordinary citizen say you have as much power to forgive a sin or crime as any other human being then you ought to start action to stop GOVERNORS from pardoning criminals whilst they act as officers of the State. The same distinction of man and office holds for the man as a man and the priest as a priest. A priest in his own OFFICIAL capacity acts as an ambassador of Christ so that in His name and by His authority sins are forgiven. If President Wilson as a private citizen wrote a private letter advocating participation in the World War his signature to that letter would mean nothing to us, but the moment he acted in his official capacity as President of the United States and signed an official document, then the United States at that very signature was thrown into war.

**29. Is it possible to secure forgiveness without confessing to a priest?**

Every soul who is unable to find a priest is forgiven if he makes an act of perfect contrition or sorrow, but such an act supposes at least the intention of going to Confession when the opportunity presents itself. For perfect sorrow supposes the will to do God's will. Lack of knowledge of the law to confess would be a condition of true sorrow in those who do not comply with the actual law. Such people would go to Confession if they realized the obligation. But who can know that he has such perfect contrition? Perfect contrition implies a hatred of the sin to be forgiven, not from any motive, but because it has offended God. It implies intense sorrow for having committed it; the will to make full reparation of the harm done; and the firm purpose to avoid committing it again.



What certainty has one that he possesses such dispositions? Is his sorrow supernatural? Is his conviction of forgiveness merely self-persuasion; a case of the wish being father to the thought? He has no definite and personal revelation that he is forgiven. Catholics who receive sacramental absolution are at least not left in such doubts and anxieties, for even though their sorrow be not as perfect as it should be, the Sacrament itself will supply for certain defects.

**30. But people can simulate sorrow, or deceive the priest by telling him only so much as they wish.**

Catholics know that they cannot deceive God. God uses the priest as His agent or instrument. Even though the penitent have not perfect sorrow, yet he must be genuinely sorry and is obliged to confess all grave sins. If he deceives the priest then, although the priest utters the words of absolution in good faith, the evil disposition frustrates the application of the effects of those words to the soul. A Catholic goes to Confession when he wants his sins forgiven. He knows that if he merely pretends sorrow or deceives the priest in serious matters, not only are none of his sins forgiven, but he goes away with an additional mortal sin of sacrilege. He does not go to Confession for the sheer joy of adding to his sins. If he is not sorry and does not intend to make a genuine Confession, he just stays away and goes on with his sins. Only when sincerely desirous of recovering God's grace does he present himself in the Confessional. He is not so foolish as to go through the farce you suggest.

**31. Then a priest can absolve only on certain conditions?**

Yes. The penitent must tell fully and sincerely all his serious sins; he must be truly sorry for having committed them; determine to try to avoid them for the future; and promise to make reparation for any injury to others whether by defamation of character or by theft of money or goods.

**32. Do not Catholics sin because they know they can get absolution in Confession?**

Does a man break his leg because he knows that a doctor can set it? Catholics regard sin as a very great evil and no Catholic thinks that he is morally free to commit any sin, with or without Confession. If he does commit sin he knows that he can get it forgiven provided he repents and determines to try to serve God for the future. Above all he knows that Confession gives him no permission at all to commit the same sins again, and if he has the intention of

doing so he knows that the absolution is null and void. Might I ask whether Protestants can sin because they know that they can get forgiveness without Confession? Or is there no forgiveness for Protestants?

**33. Confessing is like washing a child and letting it play in the mud again.**

It is not. The Church washes the child and forbids it to play in the mud again. But if it does play in the mud again in spite of the prohibition, of course, she is prepared to wash it again if it be truly sorry—as any true mother would do. If readiness to forgive is to be the cause of further sins, what will you say to God who declares that if a man's sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow provided he repents?

**34. Even though the Church forbids it, I know a Catholic who does confess and sin again.**

He does not sin again because of his Confession; nor does his fall say that he was not truly repentant when he confessed. Christ said something about forgiving seventy times seven. How often would you forgive? And isn't it better to try, fail through weakness, and repent, than to abandon all efforts to return to God's grace?

**35. But if Confession does not stop sin what is the good of it?**

Confession is an immense help in the prevention of further sin. Remember that Christ did not institute this Sacrament precisely to prevent further sin, but to forgive sin once it has been unhappily committed. To prevent sin there are other Sacraments, and other means such as good example, religious instruction, prayer, and the grace of God. But if, in spite of these helps, a man falls through strong temptation, as anyone is likely to do, it is a very great good that his sin can be forgiven.

**36. It is easy to confess to a fellowman and get forgiveness. But it is not so convenient to remain in humble doubt.**

The humiliation of Confession is an inconvenience not found in Protestantism, and from that point of view Protestantism is easier. On the other hand Christ was too merciful to leave us without some definite assurance of forgiveness, and He gave us a very definite Sacrament to alleviate our anxiety.

**37. Do not priests use the Confessional to obtain all domestic and state secrets?**

No. Catholics tell their own sins only. The priest will not allow penitents to speak of other people's misdeeds. In any case no priest can make use of

knowledge acquired whilst hearing Confessions. One of the strictest laws of the Church obliges him never to betray what he hears in the Confessional.

**38. Did not the Lateran Council in 1215 first oblige auricular Confession?**

No. It decreed that Catholics must go to Confession at least once a year, merely specifying how often one must go. If the idea of auricular Confession were then introduced for the first time, and Christians were not used to it, there would have been an uproar of protest throughout the whole Church. But all Christians were perfectly familiar with auricular Confession, and no protest arose.

**39. Do priests themselves go to Confession?**

Of course. The obligation falls upon them as upon the laity. Nor can any priest give himself absolution. He must kneel at the feet of some other priest in order to secure forgiveness.

**40. Who hears the Confession of the Pope?**

Any priest to whom the Pope chooses to confess.

**41. Did not St. Augustine warn priests that the hearing of Confession is dangerous to virtue?**

The only reference that remark of danger has to the Sacrament of Confession is to prove that St. Augustine knew quite well of its existence. All he desired to do was to insist upon the virtue required in the priest who undertakes the duty. Even so, a warning against a possible danger does not suggest that priests yield to that danger. One could give a lecture upon the danger of drink without suggesting that the listeners were subject to its influence.

**42. Is it not demoralizing for young girls to be asked by the priest whether they have been guilty of improper behavior?**

Priests have no obligation to examine the conscience of the penitent. The penitent must do that. If a young girl, or anybody for that matter, has been guilty of improper conduct, then such conduct is demoralizing. But the confession of that sin, sorrow for it, and the resolution not to commit it again, is not demoralizing.

**43. When will Catholics realize that priests are sinful beings like themselves?**

All Catholics know that priests are human beings who need Baptism and redemption by Christ just as everyone else. But they also know that they are not acting in their ordinary capacity as human beings, and that the value of absolution does not depend upon the personal worthiness of the priest. Meantime God alone

knows whether men, including priests, are actually and personally in a state of sin.

44. When will they see the folly of confessing to such men?

Only when they completely forget their Christian faith, for Christ Himself appointed this means of forgiveness.

45. We Protestants regard Confession as an intolerable burden.

Why should you worry about a thing which does not affect you? Let Catholics, who do go to Confession, do the worrying. They find it full of compensating consolations. Your only worry should be your ignoring of the words of Christ as recorded in St. John XX., 21-23.

46. The shame of having to tell their sins keeps Catholics away from their church and from Christ.

How do you know? Catholics know that God commanded Confession as a means of recovering His friendship and that for this the price is negligible. They know that shame did not keep them from committing the sin as it should have done, and they will not let false shame keep them from confessing it. They know that they fully deserve the humiliation involved; but it is better to manifest it to one man who is strictly obliged to forgive it and forget it, than to have it manifested on the Last Day, when every man's unforgiven crimes will be made manifest to the bitter humiliation of those who died with unrepented grave sins. They know that if they feel too ashamed to tell it, they have but to ask the priest to help them, and that he will do so in such a way that they can acknowledge what is required without any offense against delicacy. Their sins have offended God, not the priest, and no priest has any reason to feel hurt personally or to exhibit anger. Also, far from despising a penitent, a priest rather admires the humility and sincerity of those who confess their sins with deep sorrow. The difficulties of Confession are imagined by those who have never been to Confession.

47. Can a priest forgive blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which Christ says shall not be forgiven in this world or the next?

There is no sin too great to be forgiven provided one sincerely repents of it. Christ really referred to evil dispositions of soul which are so hardened that one will lack the will to repent. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not blasphemy as commonly understood, but a determined resistance to the very grace of the

Holy Spirit which is meant to save us. Thus the Pharisees who saw the miracles of Christ could not deny them to be miracles; yet rather than yield to the grace being offered them, they said that Christ wrought them with the help of the devil, and not by God. A man who rejects the very means God adopts to convert him is little likely to make good use of other graces offered by God, and our Lord warns us very strongly to beware of sinning against the light, since it seldom ends in repentance. Yet even such a man with the help of special grace could repent of his bad dispositions and thus be converted and forgiven. And unforgivableness, therefore, is on account of a man's bad dispositions, not on account of the nature of the sin. There is no absolutely unforgivable sin such as cannot be forgiven even though a man repents.

**48. Will a Catholic who is convicted of murder go to Heaven if he confesses his sin to a priest?**

If he has confessed his sin sincerely and with genuine sorrow, he will be forgiven and his soul saved.

**49. What of the thief who is not discovered by the police?**

The priest orders him to make restitution, giving back to the owner the money or goods stolen. Only when he promises to do so will he receive absolution for his sin before God. But the penitent is not obliged to give himself up to the police. It is their business to prove the crime and arrest him.

**50. Will the priest tell the police or is it a sacred secret?**

The priest will certainly not tell the police. He can never act upon information submitted to him for the purpose of absolution before God.

**51. Is not such a priest an enemy to the state?**

No. State laws control men in their capacity as citizens of the state. But a priest does not hear confessions in his capacity as a citizen of the state. He is acting, not as a human being, but as an agent of God. You might as well oblige God, since He knows all things, to reveal all crimes to the police. The priest would never have known had he not been doing a duty in the name of God. In any case, he is obliged by both the natural and positive laws of morality in this matter to die rather than reveal such things.

**52. To believe in Jesus is enough.**

The slogans "JESUS SAVES," "PUT ON JESUS," "JESUS REDEEMS," "BELIEVE IN JESUS AND BE CLEANSED" are all beside the whole theology of Christ and the purpose of His revelation to the Apostles

on Easter Sunday night. If "PUT ON JESUS AND BELIEVE IN JESUS" alone counts, then Christ was talking foolishly on the night of His Resurrection, when He said He was giving the Apostles the power to forgive or retain.

53. Well, I think it is a consoling Christian thought to feel saved.

Then St. Paul missed the whole Christian message. St. Paul certainly "Believed in Christ and had Put On Christ" and yet he was not sure of his salvation. Your Protestant Bible shows that St. Paul didn't FEEL SAVED OR KNOW THAT HE WAS SAVED, when he says, Ph. 2, 12: "With fear and trembling, work out your salvation"; 1 Cor. 9, 27, "I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air; but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway."

You must note well that if the authority of the Apostles were restricted to the affirmation "God pardons you," they would then require a special revelation in each case to make the pronouncement valid. The transmitted power of Easter night is a JUDICIAL ONE, for they are not told to forgive or to retain indiscriminately but judicially, according to the dispositions of the sinner. Forgiving is not restricted to any particular kind, but extends to all without exception. Christ could not have placed the institution of the Sacrament of Penance in simpler, clearer or more unmistakable words.

54. Do you think God approves the secrecy of Confession? Why not have public confessions as the Christians of the first centuries had them openly and publicly in the churches?

God's approbation of secret auricular Confession is seen in the case of St. John Nepomucene. St. John of Nepomuc, Bohemia, in the fourteenth century became the confessor of the very pious and saintly wife of King Wenceslas, an unhappy lad who had the ill chance to become king and emperor at sixteen years of age. He lived an evil life and was known as a tyrant, sluggard and drunkard. His violence made the empress a saint and her holiness enraged him, and being insanely jealous of the empress he tried to find out from her confessor, Father John of Nepomuc, what she was telling him in Confession. "Not for you nor all the kingdom of Bohemia," answered the saintly priest, "will I reveal that which has been disclosed only to the ambassador of God." Father John was cast into prison, but the prison had not opened St. John's

mouth Perhaps coaxing would. So a magnificent feast was prepared, and St. John was called to the banquet board, but there St. John remained silent to the entreaties of the jealous inquisitive tyrant. Then tortures, rack, burning torches, roasting and still no word but prayer from the lips of St. John. He was again released, but one day the raging Wenceslas looked from his window and saw St. John pass. Madness came upon him and he ordered St. John to be thrown bound into the Moldau River. And lo, a light upon the river and all Prague gathered to see in the water, floating quietly on its bosom, the body of the saint, and round it shone the effulgent glory of God. Three hundred and thirty years after, they opened his tomb; they found the bones perfect but the flesh consumed; but NOT consumed, but fresh as in life, the TONGUE which told no sin of the empress, and which held fast to the august SEAL OF CONFESSION.

55. Can a priest ever reveal what he hears in Confession?

A priest in the Confessional knows his penitent's sins; out of the Confessional he knows nothing about them; knowing, he still knows not. For example, suppose you are my closest friend and we have been college pals and friends ever since college days. But in Confession you tell me that you have committed murder and from the few details and circumstances of the murder case I know immediately through what you say to me in Confession that you are the very murderer of my own mother. You are repentant and I absolve you of the crime. Until you die never by word or sign must I ever intimate to you or anyone of my family or any neighbor that I know that you are the murderer of my mother. I must still receive in friendship the hand stained with my mother's blood. And if I were brought into court and asked to testify I could not even there break the seal of Confession. Even if you are not repentant and if you defend and excuse the murder, and I cannot absolve you for lack of proper disposition, yet I must still remain the same to you, keep the seal of Confession and of your sin must I always know nothing. I must be a friend and confessor to you as before and I must eat with you, walk with you, even though you be my mother's murderer. It is my duty in the priesthood to have always before me the duty of saving your immortal soul.

56. The seal of Confession doesn't seem logical or just for society.

Husbands and wives have secrets which they tell one another without the fear that the other will tell. Physicians, psychoanalysts hear oftentimes hundreds of con-

fessions that are uglier than confessions to a priest. They are confessions not willingly told, but there written for them to read. Will the doctor tell? Will the lawyer betray his client? If doctors and lawyers broke their professional secrets then they would be ejected from their profession. There is hardly a man now in the world who is not keeping the secret of some strange confession. What has the honor of a profession or the honor of a friend to do in binding one to secrecy in comparison to the priest who is obliged not under honor but under the penalty of mortal sin to keep secret everything told in the Confessional. The Catholic Church has had several Judas Iscariots or bad priests who were untrue to their vows and who lost their Faith and left the Church (notice they never leave the Church to join another Church that will make them more holy, more saintly) but in all cases of fallen priests there is no historical evidence of anyone breaking the seal of Confession—not even in the case of Martin Luther, who certainly heard Confessions before he became an ex-monk.

57. I have read in a newspaper report of a ministers' convention that some of them fought for the return of the Catholic idea of Confession.

Yes. We read of such efforts even among Rabbis, and in the Literary Digest of Dec. 17, 1927, p. 2, we are told that the Rev. Dr. Harry E. Fosdick, pastor of the Riverside Baptist Church of New York, speaking before more than one thousand ministers, strongly urged the restoration of the Confessional to Protestant Churches. "We Protestants," he says, "are losing more than we have any business to lose by not coming in closer contact with the individual. When a Catholic would take his mental troubles to his priest the Protestant would go to a psychoanalyst or like specialist, and the Church would gain nothing in experience. . . . The Confessional, which Protestantism threw out the door, is coming back through the window, in utterly new forms, to be sure, with new methods and with an entirely new intellectual explanation appropriate to the Protestant Churches, but motivated by a real determination to help meet the inward problems of individuals." The conditions that are the basis for this modern new science specialized in by twentieth century psychoanalysts and the psychiatrists of the medical world have been already mentioned in the second century writings of Origen (185-254). He writes: "Sinners, who hide and retain their sins within their breasts, become sick therefrom almost to death." The remedies now sought in a natural way by psychoanalysis or psychiatry were provided in the Sacrament



of Penance in addition to forgiveness of sin which kills the soul and have been used in the Catholic Church ever since. So you see that the elimination of the Confessional has bereft millions of Christ's medicinal cure for depressed and shattered minds.

**58. I have a mortal dread of going to Confession.**

That is because you put the emphasis on the priest in the Confessional instead of on Christ in the Confessional. Confession would become no burden to you if you imagined to yourself that you are kneeling not to a priest but to the Good Shepherd. Picture yourself in Confession as another Magdalen or Peter at the feet of your Divine Friend. The priest is merely the instrument or channel of grace, when you confess to him you are talking to Christ whose ambassador he is. Make Christ's presence real to you, feel Him, see Him, and then, as He already knows all about your sins, why fear to tell Him like a Magdalen or a Peter the nature of your sins. When you tell the priest your sins you are not telling him something new under the sun. He studies all about those sins in the Seminary classroom, in order to give admonition to all, even the doctors and lawyers. The priest is thoroughly acquainted with all the vices and the weaknesses of poor human nature which is always experiencing the same flesh, the same world, and the same devil. Your sins are the sins of millions who have knelt in Confession since penitents of the early church confessed their sins to receive the seventy times seven pardons. You fear Confession and the idea of Confession because the Confessional is one place the devil hates. The devil would let you go anywhere but in there. In the Gospels he disliked losing people whom he possessed. It is at the tribunal of the Confessional that he must quit the poor souls he possesses and he will naturally give you a battle cry of fear in order to keep you from entering therein. If he doesn't work on your sense of fear, it will be your sense of shame which he will use as a target of attack.

**59. Why shouldn't confession be voluntary or optional as it is in some Protestant churches?**

The Council of Trent teaches that the Sacrament of Penance is necessary of divine right. Since Jesus Christ established the pardoning power for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sin, every Christian is bound to be pardoned in the WAY he divinely appointed. St. Augustine answers your question in these words: "Do penance, as it is done in the Church, in order that the Church may pray for you. Let no one say to himself: 'I do penance secretly before God; God knows it, and He will forgive me, because I am doing penance

in my heart.' Has it, therefore, been said without reason: 'Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in Heaven'? Have the keys been given to the Church of God in vain? Are we to frustrate the Gospel and the words of Christ?"

60. Do not the words in John XX, 23, mean the declaration that sins are forgiven, or the power to preach the Gospel?

I have explained the meaning of John XX, 23 in Question 9. Such an interpretation cannot be construed out of that text as Protestant scholars declare with us. Both these interpretations of declaration that sins are forgiven or the power to preach the Gospel were expressly condemned in the pronouncement of the Council of Trent against the Reformers. "The absolution of a priest is not a bare ministry only, whether of announcing the Gospel, or of declaring that sins are forgiven, but it is after the manner of a judicial act, whereby sentence is pronounced by the priest as a judge." St. Jerome writes: "The priests have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and, after a fashion, exercise the office of judges before the day of judgment."

61. Are Catholics told in the confessional how to vote on political questions?

Not necessarily. If an anti-Christian law is proposed the priest would probably warn his people publicly from the pulpit. In such a case he should do his best to persuade them to be true to God and vote against any law which God would forbid, repeating the words of Christ, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." If some individual wished for personal advice in the confessional, he could ask it there. But in ordinary matters Catholics are told neither in the confessional nor from the pulpit how to vote. They are told that they are free.

62. We Episcopalians have the same Apostles' Creed as you Catholics.

You recite the same Creed, but you do not believe in it in the true Catholic sense. Catholics recite and accept the Apostles' Creed in practice. Episcopalians recite it. All Episcopalians say, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord." Many Episcopalians do not believe that He is truly the Son of God. All Episcopalians say, "Born of the Virgin Mary." Many deny the Virginity of Mary. All Episcopalians say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." But none of them joins it, or if he does, he ceases to be an

Episcopalian. All Episcopalians say, "I believe in the Communion of the Saints," but few dare enter into communication with the Saints. All say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," but the vast majority ignore the Sacrament of Confession. Episcopalians may recite the Creed, but most Episcopalians certainly do not realize what the words imply.

63. If you are a Christian Priest, who told you to drop healing?

No one ever told me to take it up.

64. Christ gave us the religion we need, and we need a religion of healing.

We do not. We need the religion of Christ. The poor, whether by lack of health or wealth, have always existed, and always will exist, according to Christ. He healed some people to prove His mission. But by no means did He heal all whom He knew to be sick. Had He done so, there would not have been a single sick person left in the whole of the world. The same Christ in heaven now knows all the sickness on earth, and by one act of His will He could heal all. He does not do so. No sickness could occur unless God were to permit it. Yet God does permit it. If Christ healed the sick, it was not merely to get rid of the sickness, but to prove His revelation; and that having been proved sufficiently, the real need for miracles ceases.

65. How can you claim the same powers as the Apostles if you cannot heal?

The spiritual powers given to the Apostles were to be permanent, and it is a greater miracle to restore the life of the soul by conferring grace than to heal the body from temporal illness. But the power of miraculous healing was given to various individuals in the early Church merely in order to secure the rapid growth of the Church, serving as a motive of credibility. Once the Church was solidly established the need of such extraordinary manifestations ceased. Men do not become Christians for temporal benefits, but for their eternal welfare. Those first miracles were merely signs, and if you want a sign today, the universal Church still existing in our midst after twenty centuries against such opposition is sign enough.

66. Should not Priests have the power to heal as well as to forgive sin?

No. The chief thing in Christianity is the forgiveness of sin to secure salvation, not the healing of the body to put off a little longer the death which must come

sooner or later. Christ gave the Apostles the power to forgive sin and to heal. The power to forgive sin was essential and necessary, and it has passed to all succeeding Priests of the New Law. The power of healing was not meant to be transmitted. God gave it to some in the early Church after the Apostles, but not to all. St. Paul says, "To one is given the word of knowledge; to another the grace of healing; to another. etc." 1 Cor. XII., 8-10. The Bible proves that the power of forgiving sin was to be handed on to the successors of the Apostles, and nowhere does it hint that this power was not to be given to all such successors. But St. Paul clearly shows that the gift of healing was not given to all. It is a secondary gift, not for the sake of restoring health, but to prove the mission of the Church. In 1 Cor. XIV., 22, St. Paul says that the gift of tongues is "for a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers."

67. Christ said that it is just as easy to say, "Get up and walk" as to forgive sin. Do this and we will believe in your power to forgive sin.

It is just as easy to God to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," as to say, "Arise and walk." But it is not just as easy to a man unless God has given him the power. But I presume that you are a Christian, and believe in Baptism. What does Baptism do? It destroys sin. Prior to Baptism, the soul is without the life of grace and in a state of sin. But if, by the power of Christ a human being can destroy sin by the Sacrament of Baptism, there is no difficulty in admitting that he could do it by another Sacrament such as Confession. And since you do not demand miracles before you will accept the Sacrament of Baptism, it is inconsistent to demand them for that of Confession. The only thing to prove is that Confession is a Sacrament to destroy later sins, as Baptism destroyed previous sins. That I have done.

68. Christ taught His followers to heal, and they in turn taught their followers.

Christ did not teach His followers to heal. He bestowed upon some of them the divine gift of healing. And they in turn did not teach their followers. It is impossible to teach as an art that which is essentially a supernatural gift. Each one intended by God to have it had to receive it directly from God.

69. Do you deny that the early Christians practiced healing?

I deny that it was anything like a universal practice. Some early Christians were specially endowed by God

with the power of healing, in order that the Church might appeal to onlookers in a special way. But the Church has been built, and there is no need to show a stone from the quarry whence it was hewn in order to prove its existence and mission from God.

**70. You keep speaking of miracles. Jesus never claimed that His so-called miracles were really such. He relied on mental healing by natural powers.**

That is really nonsense. Can you imagine the mental exertions of the dead body of Lazarus when invited by Christ to think itself alive again? Before raising Lazarus from the dead He lifted His eyes and said, "Father, I give thee thanks that thou has heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that thou has sent me." Jn. XI., 41-42. Those words prove His appeal to God's power, and not to natural created forces. And it proves His purpose in working miracles, not for the sake of the miracles, but that people might believe in Him. We do not need miracles before our eyes now to make us believe. Historical evidence is enough.

**71. Medicine was in vogue before Christ came. But we Christian Scientists know that Christ ushered in a new dispensation.**

Christ ushered in a new dispensation, but not of medicine. He did not come to establish a medical clinic. He came to call sinners to repentance, that they might secure forgiveness for their past sins, overcome their moral faults, and serve Him in a life of virtue.

**72. You have more faith in a doctor to heal you than you have in God.**

You have no evidence for that assertion. I know that God usually makes use of secondary causes which He Himself has established, and it is my faith that God will continue to grant them efficacy which takes me to a doctor who has studied their properties. But Christian Science is not faith in God at all. It is faith in self and self's own immense power of mental effort.

**73. Jesus never advised anyone to see a doctor or pay attention to health laws.**

Jesus said, "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill." Matt. IX., 12. And the same God whom we Christians worship gave most minute health laws to the Jews, laws which Jesus never declared to be false and useless.

74. The Church became corrupt and lost the power of healing.

You do not know what you are saying. If you believe that Christ is God, you dare not say that a Church declared by Him to be indefectible ever failed; if you do not believe that Christ is God, it is little use your quoting Him at all.

75. But Jesus tells us to heal. You quote only one place from St. Paul suggesting that only a few could heal. Are we to believe Paul or Jesus?

Nowhere did Jesus ever tell us to heal. As for your comparison of St. Paul with Jesus, remember that every word of the New Testament is the inspired word of God. We are to believe both St. Paul and Jesus, and their doctrines never conflict. If they did conflict the New Testament could not be God's word, and you could not use it at all to justify your notions. You must either accept the New Testament as a whole or reject it as a whole.

76. But Jesus said, "These signs will follow them that believe." He even said that His true followers would do greater things than He.

The signs predicted by Christ did follow. But He never said that they would always follow, and that every single believer in Him throughout the ages would be able to do them. As a matter of fact they have not followed at the discretion of every follower of Christ, and if He had intended them to do so, then He has failed, and you are foolish to continue to believe in Him. All priests of the Catholic Church, meantime, do greater things in the spiritual order than Christ wrought in the temporal order; they forgive and destroy sin, raising the spiritually dead to life, a greater work than the raising of those who are bodily dead.

#### WHAT MINISTERS SAY TODAY ABOUT CONFESSION

Dr. Stocking, a Universalist minister of Allegheny, Pa.:

"I am persuaded that if this practice was taught and observed in our Protestant Churches, there would be less immorality among the ministers and church members. There would be fewer instances of ministers alienating the affections of some parishioner's wife, less contention among church members concerning administration and discipline, etc. If all were under solemn obligations to confess their faults, there would be less wickedness in our Protestant Churches. I know

of nothing that would tend to produce a better state of moral purity than the obligation to make confession of individual faults among the ministers and the brethren, unless it be to emphasize the great fact that there is no escape from the consequences of one's sins."

**The Rev. Dr. Kilpatrick, a Presbyterian minister of Toronto, Canada:**

"The Roman Catholic Church knows full well the value of the personal work of Confession. \* \* \* It is not a mere little wooden box, but the act of two souls—two souls opposed in the presence of the spirit of God. It is a blessed thing to preach the Gospel; but to get alongside of a soul which was defiant and obdurate—this is the thing which means the burden, the passion, the toil of the ministry."

**From the words of Martin Luther, after he broke with Rome:**

"There is no doubt that Confession is necessary, and established by God; but secret and auricular confession, as practiced at this day, in the Church, especially pleases me. It is not merely useful, it is necessary. God forbid that I should wish its abolition! I rejoice that it exists in the Church, because it is the only means to restore peace to troubled consciences."

**The Rev. Charles M. Sheldon of Topeka, Kansas, author of "In His Steps":**

"It is a place where the people can carry their troubles of whatever kind or nature, business, spiritual and religious, family affairs and purely personal matters and receive advice such as any minister should be able to give, advice that no lawyer and few other friends could give."

**In "Clerical Life and Works" by Dr. Liddon, we read:**

"The power of remitting and retaining sins was given by our risen Lord in the upper room with closed doors on the evening of the day of the Resurrection. In this way Jesus provided a remedy for the wounds which sin would leave on the souls of His redeemed."

**The Protestant theologian, Leibnitz, in his Systematic Theology, says:**

"The institution of Sacramental Confession is assuredly worthy of the divine wisdom, and, of all the doctrines of religion, it is the most admirable and the most beautiful. The necessity of confessing sin is sufficient to preserve from it those who still preserve their modesty; and yet, if any fail, Confession consoles and restores them. I look on a grave and prudent confessor as a great instrument of God for the salvation of souls."

From "Out of the Wilderness," published by Our Sunday Visitor, we have the following story from the pen of Augustine Joseph Roth, a convert to Catholicism from the Baptist Ministry.

### AFTER FOUR YEARS

... "After all, we cannot do more. Some smart Jesuit has him hypnotized, but we can be sure that in less than six months he will come back to us. Give him a chance to learn about the Catholic Church from within. Then he'll come back on his knees."

These words were spoken by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons of the Vera Baptist church, of which I was the pastor. . . . Over four years have passed since that time. I have deliberately waited this long to be sure that I had had ample time to "learn about Catholics from within" and to satisfy myself as to the reality of the joy of my faith.

During these four years, I have really studied the Catholic Church. I have traced it from that day at Caesarea Phillippi, when Christ gave unto St. Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, unto the present time. I have drunk to the fill of the grace-giving Sacraments. I have lived with her priests and laity. During these four years I have seen my wife and daughter and my wife's mother received into the same Holy Church, and during this time, the speaker of the above words, together with his entire family were received into the Catholic Church, and no less than fifty members of my former churches have been received into Holy Mother Church. After four years of study and close association with the Catholic Church and her people I can honestly say that I am more firmly rooted in her beauty of holiness than ever before, and each day finds me more anxious to receive her wonderful Sacraments than the day before.

### To What Could He Return?

To those of my former congregation who are awaiting my return "on my knees," I would ask one question before I make a comparison. "To what would you have me return? What, from a spiritual viewpoint, have you to offer me?"

For six years I pleaded with you that your doctrines were unscriptural and contrary to the teachings of Christ. My plea was denied on the grounds that it would cause objections among the members. I searched through the wilderness of Protestant sects, hoping to find peace and harmony and contentment, instead I found discord and strife and dissatisfaction.



Every church among you was a law unto itself, and laws were made as each man saw fit. You had no universal head among you and you were hopelessly divided on all essential fundamental points of Christian doctrine. I searched through the dark abysmal trails of Protestantism, as a "voice crying in the wilderness," but you heard it not or cared not.

Instead of Christ as the founder of your churches, I found men and women whose very lives for the most part, were an outrage to decency. I asked you for authority, and you gave me a mutilated Bible written according to the whim of any man or group of men who thought the Bible needed their interpretation. The result of this is a tragedy far greater than you may imagine. It has been a stumbling block to the earnest seeker after Truth, and it has sent countless souls out into unholy seas of untruth. It has been the cause of more than 150 denominations, not to mention fourteen different kinds of Baptists, twelve different kinds of Methodists, and eleven different kinds of Presbyterians. It was responsible for Mary Baker Eddy, Aimee Semple McPherson Hutton, Brother Ben and a "God in a Rolls Royce," and it will be the cause of countless other pretenders to Divine appointment, and whether you know this or not, whether you laugh at them or not, they have as much right to interpret the Bible as they see fit, as have the Baptists or any other sect.

### Found Harmony Only in Catholic Church

Even in the individual churches I could not find harmony. There was always a division among the members, and some would not come to church because they did not like the style of the preaching, and others would not come if the minister changed his style. As pastor of the First Baptist Church of Manchester, Georgia, there was a division between union and non-union men, if a union man was the first one to arrive at the church for services, I could be sure that my congregation for the day would be composed of one hundred per cent union men, and if the first one to arrive was a non-union man, no union man or member of his family would be in church for that service. The words of Christ, "My peace I leave you" were meaningless to you, there was no peace because there was no Christ. In the seminary I found a faculty hopelessly divided on essential doctrines and a pitifully bewildered student body. These men, the future ministers, who should be learning how to keep peace and harmony, are learning, at first hand, the rudiments of private interpretation. Little wonder, then,

that these men, following in the footsteps of their instructors, will bring meaningless interpretations to their congregations.

I came to you, crying for bread, and you gave me a stone. I sought after peace, I found turmoil. I feared that I should lose what little faith I had left. I prayed, and God in His mercy, heard my prayer, and led me out of the wilderness of denominationalism, into the green pastures of His own love and communion with the saints.

Shall I ever forget the time when I stood before the Blessed Sacrament for the first time? I knew nothing of the Catholic doctrine on the Real Presence of Christ, yet I felt that Presence. There was a calm and peace that I did not feel in my own church. More than a score of men and women were in this church at that time. The quiet calm that pervaded the atmosphere, assured me that they were at peace with God. Here, the words, "My peace I leave you" were not without meaning. I had never before seen the inside of a Catholic church, and I was surprised to see so many people there, for it was neither Sunday nor Wednesday evening. . . . .

In the Catholic Church I found a Bible that was untampered with and with that, tradition, for the Catholic Church has been witness since the day when Christ walked on earth; she was present at the Last Supper, when the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist was instituted; she was present when Christ stood before Pilate; she was present at the Crucifixion and again at the Resurrection; she was with the first Christians in the Catacombs; in their prisons of shame; in the arenas of torture. Through nearly two thousand years she has steered a straight course through the cold and barren peaks of bigotry and prejudice. She has seen nations rise to the peak of power and then fall into decay. Countless thousands have come forth, like the leaves of a forest, to hurl their grain of sand against the solid rock on which her Divine Founder placed her, and like the leaves of a forest they have withered and fallen. She has lived to see those who persecuted her strut their brief moment and then perish, and she will live on and on, the greatest civilizing force the world has ever known, for she has the promise of Christ "And lo, I am with you, all days, even unto the consummation of the world. . . ."

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