

**Radio Replies**

**Volume 3**

In Defence of Religion

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**By**

**The Rev. Dr. Rumble, M.S.C.**

**And**

**Rev. Charles Mortimer Carty**

**1364 Questions and Answers on Catholicism and Protestantism**

## PREFACE

ONCE there were lost islands, but most of them have been found; once there were lost causes, but many of them have been retrieved; but there is one lost art that has not been definitely recovered, and without which no civilization can long survive, and that is the art of controversy. The hardest thing to find in the world today is an argument. Because so few are thinking, naturally there are found but few to argue. Prejudice there is in abundance and sentiment too, for these things are born of enthusiasms without the pain of labour. Thinking, on the contrary, is a difficult task; it is the hardest work a man can do—that is perhaps why so few indulge in it. Thought-saving devices have been invented that rival labor-saving devices in their ingenuity. Fine-sounding phrases like "Life is bigger than logic," or "Progress is the spirit of the age," go rattling by us like express trains, carrying the burden of those who are too lazy to think for themselves.

NOT even philosophers argue today; they only explain away. A book full of bad logic, advocating all manner of moral laxity, is not refuted by critics; it is merely called "bold, honest, and fearless." Even those periodicals which pride themselves upon their open-mindedness on all questions are far from practising the lost art of controversy. Their pages contain no controversies, but only presentations of points of view; these never rise to the level of abstract thought in which argument clashes with argument like steel with steel, but rather they content themselves with the personal reflections of one who has lost his faith, writing against the sanctity of marriage, and of another who has kept his faith, writing in favor of it. Both sides are shooting off firecrackers, making all the noise of an intellectual warfare and creating the illusion of conflict, but it is only a sham battle in which there are no casualties; there are plenty of explosions, but never an exploded argument.

THE causes underlying this decline in the art of controversy are twofold: religious and philosophical. Modern religion has enunciated one great and fundamental dogma that is at the basis of all the other dogmas, and that is, that religion must be freed from dogmas. Creeds and confessions of faith are no longer the fashion; religious leaders have agreed not to disagree and those beliefs for which some of our ancestors would have died they have melted into a spineless Humanism. Like other Pilates they have turned their backs on the uniqueness of truth and have opened their arms wide to all the moods and fancies the hour might dictate. The passing of creeds and dogmas means the passing of controversies. Creeds and dogmas are social; prejudices are private. Believers bump into one another at a thousand different angles, but bigots keep out of one another's way, because prejudice is anti-social. I can imagine an old-fashioned Calvinist who holds that the word "damn" has a tremendous dogmatic significance, coming to intellectual blows with an old-fashioned Methodist who holds that it is only a curse word; but I cannot imagine a controversy if both decide to damn damnation, like our Modernists who no longer believe in Hell.

THE second cause, which is philosophical, bases itself on that peculiar American philosophy called "Pragmatism," the aim of which is to prove that all proofs are useless. Hegel, of Germany, rationalized error; James, of America, derationalized truth. As a result, there has sprung up a disturbing indifference to truth, and a tendency to regard the useful as the true, and the impractical as the false. The man who can make up his mind when proofs are presented to him is looked upon as a bigot, and the man who ignores proofs and the search for truth is looked upon as broad-minded and tolerant.

Another evidence of this same disrespect for rational foundations is the general readiness of the modern mind to accept a statement because of the literary way in which it is couched, or because of the popularity of the one who says it, rather than for the reasons behind the statement. In this sense, it is unfortunate that some men who think poorly can write so well. Bergson has written a philosophy grounded on the assumption that the greater comes from the less, but he has so camouflaged that intellectual monstrosity with mellifluous French that he has been credited with being a great and original thinker. To some minds, of course, the startling will always appear to be the profound. It is easier to get the attention of the press when one says, as Ibsen did, that "two and two make five," than to be orthodox and say that two and two make four.

The Catholic Church perhaps more than the other forms of Christianity notices the decline in the art of controversy. Never before, perhaps, in the whole history of Christianity has she been so intellectually

impoverished for want of good, sound intellectual opposition as she is at the present time. Today there are no foe-men worthy of her steel. And if the Church today is not producing great chunks of thought, or what might be called "thinkage," it is because she has not been challenged to do so. The best in everything comes from the throwing down of a gauntlet—even the best in thought.

THE Church loves controversy, and loves it for two reasons: because intellectual conflict is informing, and because she is madly in love with rationalism. The great structure of the Catholic Church has been built up through controversy. It was the attacks of the Docetists and the Monophysites in the early centuries of the Church that made her clear on the doctrine concerning the nature of Christ; it was the controversy with the Reformers that clarified her teaching on justification. And if today there are not nearly so many dogmas defined as in the early ages of the Church, it is because there is less controversy—and less thinking. One must think to be a heretic, even though it be wrong thinking.

Even though one did not accept the infallible authority of the Church, he would still have to admit that the Church in the course of centuries has had her finger on the pulse of the world, ever defining those dogmas which needed definition at the moment. In the light of this fact, it would be interesting to inquire if our boasted theory of intellectual progress is true. What was the Christian world thinking about in the early centuries? What doctrines had to be clarified when controversy was keen? In the early centuries, controversy centered on such lofty and delicate problems as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the union of Natures in the person of the Son of God. What was the last doctrine to be defined in 1870? It was the capability of man to use his brain and come to a knowledge of God. Now, if the world is progressing intellectually, should not the existence of God have been defined in the first century, and the nature of the Trinity have been defined in the nineteenth? In the order of mathematics this is like defining the complexities of logarithms in the year 42, and the simplification of the addition table in the year 1942. The fact is that there is now less intellectual opposition to the Church and more prejudice, which, being interpreted, means less thinking, even less bad thinking.

Not only does the Church love controversy because it helps her sharpen her wits; she loves it also for its own sake. The Church is accused of being the enemy of reason; as a matter of fact, she is the only one who believes in it. Using her reason in the Council of the Vatican, she officially went on record in favor of Rationalism, and declared, against the mock humility of the Agnostics and the sentimental faith of the Fideists, that human reason by its own power can know something besides the contents of test tubes and retorts, and that working on mere sensible phenomena it can soar even to the "hid battlements of eternity," there to discover the Timeless beyond time and the Spaceless beyond space which is God, the Alpha and Omega of all things.

THE Church asks her children to think hard and think clean. Then she asks them to do two things with their thoughts: First, she asks them to externalize them in the concrete world of economics, government, commerce, and education, and by this externalization of beautiful, clean thoughts to produce a beautiful and clean civilization.

THE quality of any civilization depends upon the nature of the thoughts its great minds bequeath to it. If the thoughts that are externalized in the press, in the senate chamber, on the public platform, are base, civilization itself will take on their base character with the same readiness with which a chameleon takes on the color of the object upon which it is placed. But if the thoughts that are vocalized and articulated are high and lofty, civilization will be filled, like a crucible, with the gold of the things worth while.

THE Church asks her children not only to externalize their thoughts and thus produce culture, but also to internalize their thoughts and thus produce spirituality. The constant giving would be dissipation unless new energy was supplied from within. In fact, before a thought can be bequeathed to the outside, it must have been born on the inside. But no thought is born without silence and contemplation. It is in the stillness and quiet of one's own intellectual pastures, wherein man meditates on the purpose of life and its goal, that real and true character is developed. A character is made by the kind of thoughts a man thinks when alone, and a civilization is made by the kind of thoughts a man speaks to his neighbor.

ON the other hand, the Church discourages bad thinking, for a bad thought set loose is more dangerous than a wild man. Thinkers live; toilers die in a day. When society finds it is too late to electrocute a thought, it electrocutes the man. There was once a time when Christian society burned the thought in order to save society, and after all, something can be said in favor of this practice. To kill one bad thought may mean the salvation of ten thousand thinkers. The Roman emperors were alive to this fact; they killed the Christians not because they wanted their hearts, but because they wanted their heads, or better, their brains—brains that were thinking out the death of Paganism.

It is to this task of thinking out the death of New Paganism that these chapters of the third volume of Radio Replies by Fathers Rumble and Carty are published.

*Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, Ph.D., D.D., L.L.D.*

## **Foreword**

THIS third volume of questions submitted to us concerning the Catholic Church and her teachings, together with the answers to them, is intended to complete our series of RADIO REPLIES offered to the public in book form. For the sake of reference and comparison this third volume also has been made to correspond as closely as possible with the two volumes previously published so far as the division of its contents is concerned.

### **An Inexhaustible Subject**

Our three volumes of RADIO REPLIES do not claim to have exhausted all possible problems where religion is involved. Far from it. According to their various fields of study men could go on almost forever proposing difficulties suggested by their readings in history, philosophy, theology, science, ethics, psychology, or comparative religion. Indeed the Catholic Church, for nearly two thousand years, has been listening to the difficulties proposed by all types of men through all the ages. And to every individual who comes to her today with the request that she first solve his own little collection of viewpoints which seem to militate against the truth of Catholicism she can say, "Tell me all you have against the Catholic religion, and when you have done. I will tell you ten thousand further difficulties you have neither heard of nor could think of for yourself." It would be a vast mistake, therefore, to imagine that the Catholic Church is unaware of the difficulties which can arise in any human mind where religion is concerned. I say this because many a man has come to me with a difficulty under the impression that it is insoluble, and that no one before him has ever adverted to it. And he has found it rather disconcerting to learn that it is an old objection; one, perhaps, which has been proposed and demolished a thousand times in each recurring age.

### **Scope of RADIO REPLIES**

Our three volumes, then, do not pretend to exhaust all possible problems in the field of religion. They contain but a classified selection of typical questions and answers chosen from a vast mass of material accumulated during twelve years of radio work and public lectures in which non-Catholics were invited to express their difficulties in the way of accepting Catholicism. And we maintain that these three volumes, or any one of them, will at least solve the particular difficulties listed, establish the truth of the Catholic Church, and provide the principles which will prove valid in the solution of all other possible submissions.

### **The True Approach**

Of course the man who sincerely desires the truth, and is earnestly seeking it, soon learns that if he waits until all possible difficulties which could invade his mind are solved he will never attain to the true religion in this life. Life is too short for that. He would arrive at his deathbed still with a host of difficulties unsolved, having ignored what is certain because of the tangle of his uncertainties. What every man needs to do is to ponder over the certainties, make them his positive conviction, and act according to them, trusting that more and more of his uncertainties will be clarified in due course. A track through a jungle to the mountaintop is not non-existent because the man entangled by difficulties in the jungle is unaware of it. And, when such a man is informed that he will find the track if he but turns in another direction, he does not ignore the advice in favour of triumphing over all the difficulties along the wrong way of approach. That is, if he really does want to get to the mountaintop. The uncertainty as to whether he can get through that way he is content to leave unsolved whilst he makes use of the certain path that has been brought to his notice. So, too, the man too entangled in religious difficulties to see anything else will make no progress until he learns to abstract from them and consider the certain and positive aspects of Catholic truth. There he will find more than enough to justify unwavering confidence in the Catholic Church, and a practical way of life calculated to secure his spiritual welfare both in this world and the next.

## **Use of These Books**

The three volumes of RADIO REPLIES are not primarily intended as reference books. Their full force will be perceived only by reading each of them from cover to cover, for thus only will the logic and consistency of the Catholic position be fully apprehended. Truth is consistent; error almost infinite in its variations. Often enough, indeed, the objections to the Catholic Church, if set side by side, would cancel each other out of existence. But in dealing with everything that can be urged against her the Catholic Church never finds herself compelled to unsay anything. In answering difficulties from the most diverse points of view, even the most contradictory, she never contradicts herself, having to unsay to one opponent what she has maintained in her replies to another. And it is this consistency, the hallmark of truth, which has appealed to the intelligence of thousands of converts who, by further study, prayer, and the grace of God, have completed their journey towards the truth, and have happily sought admission to the Catholic Church. Primarily, therefore, the books are intended for such continuous and consecutive reading that their full import may thus be grasped.

## **As Reference and Study Manuals**

But after such use as above advocated, the books retain their value as works of reference, and this for Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It is for this purpose that each volume has been so thoroughly indexed. As for study-clubs, testimonies to the value of these apologetic works are being constantly received. In many study-circles the questions only are put to the members, and the replies they themselves jot down on paper are then checked with those given in the books. Converts under instruction have told me that they, too, have adopted this method, with great profit to themselves, and an immense clarification of their ideas on the subject of religion.

## **A Personal Note**

And now, with this third and last series of RADIO REPLIES, I would like to offer our readers a final personal remark. I was brought up as a Protestant, probably with more inherited prejudices than most non-Catholics of these days. It is some thirty years since, in God's providence, I became a Catholic. Not content with that, I have also become a priest. I cannot therefore be charged with not knowing the Catholic Church thoroughly from within. And all I can say is this: had I found the Catholic Church as evil as I had been led to believe it was, had I found out that I had made a tragic mistake in becoming a Catholic, it is perhaps conceivable that pride might keep me from admitting my error. It would be possible to adopt the attitude of desperate obstinacy which says, "I have made my bed, and will lie upon it." But I am not entirely inhuman. And I would be man enough to advise other prospective converts against making the same fatal mistake. Privately, at least, I would say to inquirers, "I have made wreckage of my own life, and I am going to continue doing so. But there's no need for two of us to do so. You are still outside the Catholic Church, and I advise you to stay outside. If you have any love for your own soul, remain as you are." Yet, did I give such advice, incalculable would be my guilt before God. For the Catholic Church is not evil. She is the one true Church of Christ in this world, the very "pillar and ground of truth." And instead of saving people from it, I am constrained to labour to bring as many people as possible to it, knowing that I am thus bringing the greatest of God's blessings into their lives. Nor is there one of the hundreds of converts I have received into the Catholic Church who has not gratefully acknowledged the fact. What can I wish to the non-Catholic reader, then, except this same great happiness and blessing? It is in this wish that Father Carty joins with me as we offer this third series of RADIO REPLIES to a public that has already shown such appreciation of the previous volumes.

*LESLIE RUMBLE, M.S.C.*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### God

#### Reason proves God's existence

#### **1. Does not scientific opinion tend to be agnostic, and to regard the existence of a Supreme Being as incapable of verification?**

Some scientists who are proficient in certain limited experimental spheres may profess to be agnostics. But when they do so they are not speaking in virtue of any scientific knowledge they possess. They have gone outside the field in which they are proficient into a field in which they are not proficient. Often they have given so much attention to their own little field of inquiry that they have paid no attention to the rational explanation of the universe as a whole. They study the thing caused, but do not reflect upon the ultimate cause of all reality. And knowing little of the subject, they foolishly think nothing is to be known, forgetting their own limitations. Some do this. Not all. And thousands of great scientists have not been agnostic. They have devoted some thought to the subject instead of uttering hasty opinions. Thus Lord Kelvin said that science positively confirms creative power. Marconi recently spoke as follows: "It is a mistake to think that science and faith cannot exist together. There is too much atheism today. There are too many people just drifting along without any aim or ideal or belief. Faith in the Supreme Being whose rule we must obey can alone give us the courage and strength to face the great mystery of life." One cannot go through an endless stream of quotations. No one, of course, believes that the existence of the Supreme Being is capable of verification by methods proper to experimental science. But His existence is capable of verification by reason; and science does not tend to the denial of this in properly instructed and well-balanced minds.

#### **2. People argue from the order prevailing in the universe to the existence of an intelligent God.**

They do; and rightly so.

#### **3. How do we know that it is not in the nature of things themselves to act in an orderly way, according to a plan?**

We know that it is not in the nature of created things of themselves to act in an orderly way according to a plan, for if they are working towards the fulfillment of a plan, there is a constant adaption of means to an end, which supposes an intelligence which has both formulated the plan, and perceived the fitting relationship between given means and the given end to be attained. Now blind matter is not endowed with intelligence. Nor can mere chance produce order. Scatter indiscriminately over the ground thousands of letters written on slips of paper, they will never by mere chance fall together in such a way as to make, say, an oration of Cicero. Now the only intelligent beings in the world are men. But prior to the advent of men to this world, order prevailed. It can be accounted for only by an extra-mundane Intelligence. As surely as it needs intelligence to understand the order prevailing in the universe, it needed intelligence to produce it. Employing all the resources of his intelligence, a genius may devote the whole of his life to a study of the orderly arrangement of crystals. Will he ascribe the whole of the universe to an intelligence so much less than his own that he calls it a blind force? The moment one speaks of the laws of the universe, he speaks of a legislator. And all legislation supposes intelligence, even though human legislation indicates often enough how badly employed human intelligence can be. If it be in the very nature of certain things to tend in an orderly way towards the realization of a plan, that tendency was implanted in their nature by the Supreme Intelligence responsible for the plan; and that Supreme Intelligence is God.

#### Primitive Monotheism

#### **4. Did not humanity originally begin with polytheism, and gradually evolve towards monotheism?**

No. Humanity began with monotheism, and multitudes degenerated into polytheism. At first sight the most primitive traditions found in the Vedic books seem polytheistic; but a deeper scrutiny shows an individual Deity, and indicates that the plurality of gods is really a plurality of effects or created manifestations. This

ancient tradition was a survival of the primitive convictions of our first parents. But even as the Jews were always prone to fall into polytheism despite the special protection of God, so the Gentile nations degenerated in their religious notions, and the idea of a plurality of gods became quite common among the rank and file of peoples. The great Greek philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, though in general practice conforming to popular notions, discerned, however, by reason that polytheism was absurd, and theoretically maintained that there could be but one Deity. They saw that polytheism was an error, and that error supposes a truth of which it is the corruption. They both allude to ancient traditions confirming their views. Philologically, also, no plural terms existed prior to singular terms precisely because multitude is subsequent to unity; and the notion of a plurality of gods presupposed a notion of the one God.

Mystery of God's inner nature

**5. You do not believe that the universe can be explained in terms of the material only.**

Most certainly I do not. The mere materialist offers explanations which do not even deserve a place in the catalog of errors. They are too puerile. Of visible things materialism gives explanations one would expect from a prattling baby or from a lunatic. Of invisible things and spiritual things it gives no explanation at all. It constructs bodies with smaller bodies, like a child playing with a set of blocks, and it gets quite out of breath by the time it gets to things of the mind. It contradicts itself by speaking of laws of matter, for a law is a decree formulated by reason, and reason is not material. Materialists are inconsequent people who prove God every time they speak in order to deny Him. For at the back of every denial of God there is the idea of God. No man can believe in truth, or appreciate goodness, or seek happiness, without tending towards the Author of these things. Yet each of these ideas leads to God. Materialism is not rational; and its only real appeal lies in the fact that it makes the universe the magnificent plaything of man's pride, and gives him a free field for his passions.

**6. Is it not reasonable to suppose a purely physical cause of which we as yet know nothing?**

I must ask you what you mean by a "purely physical" cause. God is a physical, though not a material Being. If you intend a material cause, I say that the supposition is not reasonable; for the material cannot produce the spiritual. Thought itself is in the spiritual order, and so is the soul which produces thought. You would scorn the idea that a telegraph pole spontaneously began to produce peaches. Yet the proportion between a telegraph pole and peaches is much less than that between matter and spirit.

Again, if we as yet know nothing of the cause of all things, why is it reasonable to suppose that cause to be "purely physical"-whatever you mean by that- yet not reasonable to suppose it to be the Personal God we Christians accept? As a matter of fact, I maintain that a Personal God is the only reasonable explanation.

**7. Because we do not yet know of such a purely physical cause, is that in itself sufficient reason to assert a Divine Cause?**

Apparently, by "purely physical" cause you mean some blind force. Now I admit that because, we do not know of such a purely physical cause we would not be justified in asserting a Divine Cause. But what if, instead of merely "not" knowing of a purely physical cause which could produce this universe, we "know" that no such blind force could do so? And we do know that. The order and obvious design so evident in the universe insist that the Cause be intelligent and personal. And the very supremacy of that Cause supposes Divinity, or a Cause which is itself not an effect, but uncaused, and above all created limitations. Divinity is but a term reserved for an uncreated Being outside and above the created order, and rejoicing in limitless perfections.

**8. Despite all your arguments, I refuse to believe in a God we can't understand.**

That is unreasonable. In any case, you can understand that there is a God, even though you cannot fully understand the nature of God. God must surpass the capacity of the human mind or He would not be God at

all. You must not confuse mystery with absurdity. Tell me that blind matter produced the universe, and I admit the absurdity. But mystery is the very opposite of absurdity. The absurd is false, contradictory, incoherent. But mystery is a truth whose immensity surpasses us. When we speak of God, what we say is true as far as it goes. But human ideas will never go far enough to express God completely. We must express God as best we can, though we shall never fully succeed in expressing God as He is. And I, for one, would not believe in God unless He did surpass my own limited concepts.

**9. Since God is infinite, and the finite human mind cannot conceive the infinite, God must be thoroughly incomprehensible to us.**

God is not thoroughly incomprehensible to us. We can attain to a certain degree of knowledge concerning Him, even though we cannot form an adequate concept of Him. The finite human mind can conceive the fact that there is a Being not finite as are the things that Being has made. It can affirm perfections of God, denying the imperfections associated with limited creatures, and attributing the purified perfections to Him in an altogether higher and nobler order of being. Any perfections affirmed of God must be with the proviso that God transcends created nature and that we intend them as they must be in an order above that of nature. In other words, we intend them as they are in the supernatural order and as known to God Himself. Even as an animal can know that a human being has certain knowledge, without comprehending the precise quality of that knowledge, so human beings can know that God possesses certain perfections without fully comprehending their precise quality as they are in God.

**10. I have heard God spoken of as Elohim, Jehovah, Yahweh, Eternal Father, the Infinite King, Divine Providence, and in many other ways. Is any one of these names capable of defining God completely?**

No one word can define the whole of the significance of God. Our concepts or thoughts are derived from created things; and there can be as many diverse thoughts in our minds as there are varying perfections in created things. The infinite plenitude of God's perfection is too great to be comprehended in any single human concept, and our small intelligence has to speak of God in partial and inadequate concepts. Thus even in the one concept of the Pope we have many implied and different aspects. The same person is Bishop of Rome, Head of the Church, Chief Shepherd, Supreme Teacher, Holy Father, etc. If I allude to him under one of these titles, all the rest is implied. And whether I speak of God as Eternal Father, or King, or Divine Providence, or Jehovah, or under any other accepted term, I successfully call attention to the Being I intend; and all that that Being implies in Himself is included, even though I neither express nor fully grasp it.

Personality of God

**11. You constantly allude to God as if God were a person. Can God be truly a personal Being?**

God is truly personal. We know that the being and vitality of man is conscious and personal, and that by life, consciousness, and personality, man is higher than inanimate things. Therefore God, infinitely higher than man in the scale of perfection, is living, conscious, and personal.

**12. Is the term person capable of being used to define an infinite entity?**

It is capable of being applied to an infinite entity, though its significance from our point of view falls short of the reality as it is in God. For example, a stone is a being and a man is a being. The word "being" is equally true of each, though one who knew only stones would not know of its full implication in man. So, too, man is personal, and God is personal. Person is true of each. But we, who have experimental knowledge only of human persons, do not know its full implication in God. Yet, though there is not absolute identity of concept, there is a true analogy of concept; and in revealing that He is personal, God has conveyed the real truth to us in a way adapted to our lesser capacity.

**13. When you call God "Father" do you not imply that there is sex in God, and that He is masculine?**

No. The word "Father" is used of God, not to imply that He is of the masculine gender, a quality proper to material bodies, but merely to denote our production by God; and this, not as by some blind mechanical force, but by an intelligent and loving Principle of Being. The word "Father" is the nearest human expression suitable for the proportionate truth to be declared. As directly drawn from human beings, of course, the word implies procreation by mutual cooperation between the sexes, and that supposes masculine and feminine. But when applied to God abstraction is made from the mode or process of production, and the sense is restricted to the fact of our production by God, and to the parental dispositions of God towards us. We thus express in our human way a characteristic which is really in God, though not precisely as it is in man. God is truly a Father to us.

Providence of God and the Problem of Evil

**14. If God's providence rules all things, is it not an insult to Him to put lightning conductors on Churches?**

No. It would be an insult and a sin of presumption to expect God to do immediately those things which we ourselves are capable of doing with such powers as He has bestowed upon us. He does not give us our natural intelligence for nothing, but expects us to use it. We are expected always to do all that we are capable of doing, and then we ask God to supply for our incapacity in things beyond our ability.

**15. Face the dilemma. God could either prevent evils or not. If He can but will not, He is not good; if He cannot, He is not all powerful.**

That dilemma is invalid. If a dilemma is to be valid, the disjunction must be complete, exhausting all possibilities. There must be no room for the reply, "Datur tertium"-there is a third possibility. Your dilemma fails, if evil and pain and suffering be useful. What if the evils we see in this world are the necessary condition of a higher good? What if, still more, they be indispensable to the progress of man and the realization of his destiny-if some day they are to be compensated by an eternity of happiness? In any case, for a dilemma to be valid, the inference from each alternative in itself must be certain and indisputable. Neither of your alternatives is even reasonable.

**16. Do you say that even God cannot prevent these evils?**

Absolutely speaking, God could annihilate the whole of creation, and then, of course, there would be no problem of evils in the universe. But granted that God wants this type of world, then pain and suffering are a necessary condition; and it was certainly better to permit them than not to create a universe in which it was possible for them to occur.

As it is, your very terms involve a contradiction. In practice, the assertion that if God cannot remove all pain He is not all powerful means, where physical pain is concerned, that if God cannot have sensitive beings without their being sensitive, He is not all powerful! For, granted the power of sensation, our sensations will be pleasant and unpleasant even with the variations of the weather! Where moral evil is concerned, your assertion means, "If God cannot have free and morally responsible beings who are not really free and morally responsible, He is not all powerful." For granted freedom of will, moral evil is a necessary possibility.

**17. Since you cannot appeal to sin, free will, and a future life in the case of animals, why do they have to suffer pain?**

I would have to be God to give you a completely satisfactory answer to that question. To a certain extent, therefore, the problem must be left amongst the thousand and one mysteries which defy human solution. However, I can suggest certain points which may help to some understanding of the problem.

Firstly, it is better to be a vegetable than a mineral. A vegetable at least has life and growth, and is admittedly a more perfect thing than a stone.

Secondly, it is better to be a dog than a dandelion. The dog is not only living; it has sensitive life, and is able to enjoy many pleasant sensations denied to dandelions. But the price of additional sensitive perfection is pain. If a being is endowed with the power of sensation, it will endure sensations both pleasant and painful. And as even God could not create a sensitive being which would have no sensations, He must have seen that the pleasant ones would compensate for the painful ones. If you concentrate on the capacity for pain, and forget the capacity for pleasure, you might think it better not to have created such beings, and that life is not worth living for them. But no animal feels that. If a cat eats a mouse, the very protests of the mouse show how it likes being alive. You yourself would pity the mouse for being deprived of its life rather than the cat for the misery of being fed and compelled to live longer.

**18. But there are individual cases where the compensations seem entirely inadequate.**

There are, and they necessarily baffle us. But even so, we must beware of reading human attributes into the merely animal world, interpreting the sufferings of animals in terms of our own experiences. It would be a grave error to think that animals suffer in the way we do: for they lack our power of reflex thought. Then, too, we must not endow them with personal moral rights which they do not possess.

**19. That doesn't alter the fact that animals suffer.**

I agree. We cannot do more than appeal to the greater good. And it is a question of the general good as opposed to the individual good. The sum-total of pleasure in the animal world more than compensates for the sum-total of unavoidable pain. There is also the good of man to be considered. There is no violation of reason in the thought that God should permit physical pain, which does not involve moral evil, in order to procure the good of a higher order. Granted that God wished to create just such a universe as this, the unpleasant sensations of sensitive beings are absolutely necessary for the universal good. If all physical pain were eliminated, inferior beings would no longer be the means of existence to superior beings.

Many beautiful fauna would never exist. Also, if animals did not live on animals, they would multiply beyond all proportion, and then earth would be littered with rotting carcasses. The general good presupposes such physical evils in such a world as this.

**20. It seems to me that you folk who believe in God are the most forebearing folk in the world,**

I suppose you feel that if you believed in God you would tell Him what to do. But only one who does not believe in God can think like that. Did you believe in God you would realize that He is not subject to you, but that you are subject to Him. He is not answerable to us for His conduct. We are answerable to Him for ours. Meantime, it is because we believe in God that we have a solution for the troubles of this life which makes them bearable, however serious they may seem. Dissatisfaction is proper to those who do not believe in God. Their rejection of God does not diminish their trials. It merely deprives them of the consolation which good Christians experience in the midst of them.

**21. You should not seek your God's forgiveness; He should seek yours.**

Such a remark illustrates a great truth. As men cease to believe in and esteem God, they begin to believe in and esteem themselves. They lose the sense of sin, and become more and more unconscious of their moral failings. Thus, it is quite common for unbelievers to assert that they do not believe in religion, and at once to catalog their own virtues. Almost instinctively they add. "I don't pray, but I'm as good as those who do. I live a good clean life, owe no man anything, help my fellow men, etc." Conscious of their rectitude they feel that they deserve only the best; and naturally they resent misfortune. They smart under suffering and trial with a sense of injured innocence. And they cry out that, if there be a God, He is greatly to be blamed. Conscious only of their own virtue, they do not dream that they need any forgiveness. But believing their sufferings undeserved, they talk of God begging their pardon.

On the other hand, the more one believes in and esteems God, the less he believes in and esteems himself. Any good that is in him he attributes to God; and he is keenly conscious of his own shortcomings as being his own work. Aware of his sins, he is not astonished that suffering and trial should be his lot. Instead of thinking that he deserves only the best, he knows that he deserves only the worst. He therefore asks God to forgive him his sins: and is grateful to God for treating him so much more gently than justice would demand.

**22. Where you define pain as something negative, millions of tortured creatures give the strongest evidence that it is something decidedly positive.**

The fact that creatures positively experience pain does not alter the fact that evil as such is not a positive entity owing its creation to God.

**23. Do you believe literally in God as Creator of all things, visible and invisible?**

Yes. But remember that things, whether visible or invisible, are things insofar as they have positive being. Now try to follow carefully this treatment of the subject.

Evil, as such, whether physical or moral, is not a positive entity, but is a privation of due perfection. God has created every positive entity, but He does not directly produce those privations of perfection which are called evils.

Take the physical evil of a decayed tooth. God is the cause of all the positive being involved. That part of the tooth which is not yet decayed, but which is still good, owes its existence to God. The existent nerves owe their being to God, and are good nerves. Their perfectly good registrations letting us know that the tooth is out of order are due to God's causality. But the real evil is the absence of healthy tooth and of right order in the nerves. Even the germs which consumed the tooth are quite good germs so far as their being goes. Even the process of consuming the tooth was excellent as a process.

But the evil element is reduced to absence of order and absence of healthy tooth; and absences of perfection are not caused by any positive action of God. God permits them, if you wish, insofar as He does not choose to prevent corrosive processes, or to produce good tooth as fast as it is eaten away.

In all this I do not deny that pain is a positive experience. Owing to the absence of healthy tooth, there is quite a positive vibration of the exposed nerve giving positively painful registrations. But the positive action is a good activity; the evil is merely lack of due order. And whilst God is the Creator of all positive entity, He is not the Creator of a lack of what should be there.

The same principle applies to moral evil. The will, and the action by which I choose are good in themselves. The evil is the lack of moral rectitude-again an absence of something which should normally be there. And God does not cause the absence of what should be present.

Why He permits the nonexistence or the privation of due order in created things is another question. We are dealing with the causality of God. God is not the cause of evil as such.

**24. How can you admit that evil is positively experienced by us, yet deny its very existence?**

I do not admit that we positively experience evil. We positively experience good registrations telling us that perfection is wanting. The registrations are positive, but they tell us of an absence of perfection. Positive entities alone really exist -good thus far-which lack the full measure of goodness which they ought to have. The evil is the privation or limitation of entity, not an entity itself.

**25. Why did not God create a different type of world, and not this one?**

That question is not yours to ask. God would not be God if He had to depend on the future approval of your judgment before He dared to act. If you reply, "Then I don't believe there is a God," you violate reason. And you will find the universe a much greater problem without God than any I have to face. If you say, "God does exist, but He is not good, or not entirely good," you contradict yourself, for once you introduce any limitation of perfection in God, then He is no longer God at all. The only reasonable position is to say, "God is a fact. Suffering is a fact. I do not fully comprehend why God should have permitted suffering, nor how He adjusts compensations which seem to me to be required if justice is to prevail. But that I do not fully comprehend these things does not surprise me, since there are thousands of lesser problems than this which I have failed to solve. Therefore, I can only conclude that, if I do not understand things, I do not understand them. But I am not going to deny what is certain, and maintain that my finite intelligence ought to be able to comprehend everything-a comprehension the possibility of which experience absolutely denies."

**26. These difficulties have caused thousands of men to abandon religion.**

Their own dispositions have caused men to abandon religion. Some men have made this problem the excuse even as other men have advanced other excuses. But any man who would neglect those religious and moral obligations which he can clearly understand merely because he cannot understand mysteries which he cannot be expected to understand is as foolish, and more so, than a man who would rather sit in darkness than switch on the electric light on the score that he doesn't understand just what electricity is!

## CHAPTER TWO

### Man

#### Immortal Destiny of Man

**27. Don't you think that the idea of immortality is due merely to the desire to live on?**

I know that it is not due merely to that. Men without any desire to live on have the conviction. At the same time normal people do desire to live on, and by such an irrepressible tendency that we must admit it to be a clear indication of immortality. I do not say that everything a person wants to be true is necessarily true. But here we have, not a transitory wish, not a momentary craving, but a natural tendency implanted in our very nature and always with us. Aristotle said long ago that "nature does nothing in vain." The eye demands light; and there is light. Our very constitution demands air; and there is air. And it is part of our very nature to look forward to immortality. All men experience this urge at times. They have not to persuade themselves that they will live on. They have to try to persuade themselves that they will not. Or else they



just forget it. However, in addition to this argument from purposive tendencies there are other reasons of equal and greater weight. The very nature of thought shows the soul to be immaterial, and not subject to the laws of disintegration and destruction which govern all material things. We must consider, also, the facts of the moral law and the necessity of ultimate justice. All these arguments, taken together, are quite satisfactory to reason. If people say that they are not satisfied by such considerations, it is because they unreasonably expect too much. We cannot expect to prove the immortality of the soul as we can prove that lead is heavy by testing it on a pair of scales. But there are different orders of being with different orders of proof. Who would be so unreasonable as to deny the existence of humility because it can't be bought by the pound? All the reasonable proof of the immortality of the soul man can rightly demand is available.

**28. Would you please amplify the evidence that the human soul is immortal.**

Reason tells us that the soul is a spirit, not composed of parts like material things, and unable to disintegrate and go to pieces like material things. All corruption is disintegration of parts. But the soul has no parts. It is not a composite thing. It is a simple spiritual substance; and it must, of its very nature, continue when the body perishes. Again, all men as naturally judge that the soul is immortal as they are conscious that they exist. They do not have to persuade themselves that it is true, but that it is false. Man's intelligence, if not warped, seeks the truth for which it is built. It cannot rest contented with a lie. Left to itself it spontaneously judges immortality to be a truth; and this universal judgment cannot be doubted without casting suspicion on all our faculties. Furthermore, God has established a moral law written on the conscience of men. He knows and loves the moral order He has established. And He is infinitely just. It is certain that right conduct cannot be ultimately the worse for a good man; evil conduct cannot ultimately be for the good of an evil man. Things will be leveled up somewhere. Yet certainly they are not leveled up in this life. Public laws and human justice cannot cover interior wickedness. Honors are often conferred on the unworthy. An evil man has less remorse of conscience over a serious crime than a good man over a small fault. Since things are not rectified in this life, they will be in the next, and the responsible element of man will have to be there. It is not the body, which we have seen die and which will rise only on the last day; it is the soul. From the viewpoint of fact, God has revealed that man's soul is immortal; and Christ raised at least three people to life from the dead, recalling their souls to their bodies, besides rising Himself in the Resurrection after His death on the Cross.

**29. I know that it's nice to believe that the soul is immortal when you feel sure of eternal happiness. But, if you look out of yourself, and think of the millions lost, it is not a very nice thought.**

If immortality is a fact, it does not matter whether it is nice or not to think it. Our likes and dislikes cannot alter the fact. If it is true, it is each man's plain duty to save his soul; for if he loses that, all is indeed lost. So Christ put the question, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he suffer the loss of his soul?" Meantime, there is no need to think of the millions lost. To all men God gives sufficient grace for their salvation. Only those are lost who sin despite the known will of God, and die without repentance.

**30. Cicero said that when he read a book proving the soul immortal, he believed it; but when he read a book against it, he did not believe it.**

Such a stray remark on occasional states of mind proves nothing. No one maintains that the conviction of immortality is one which may never momentarily become obscured. A man reading arguments against a given doctrine, and not immediately perceiving the answer to them, may arrive at vague doubts, and speak hesitatingly. But even with Cicero, nature reasserted itself, and in the end he said it must be so. However, what this individual or that has thought or said avails nothing against the general judgment of mankind.

**31. All my own inclinations are to believe it. But desirability does not make it true.**

I have already given you reasons independent of man's natural inclinations. But even your inclinations here are a reliable indication. I admit that we do not find sufficient justification for believing a doctrine merely because it is a pleasant concept. But if you find yourself endowed by nature with deep-seated inclinations

tending necessarily towards it, things are very different. This does not count for nothing. If all our thoughts go one way, if we have needs, desires, aims, and aspirations, all of which demand an object, and imply by their own very existence that that object does exist also, then that object must exist. Could anyone conceive that God would form that most delicate organ of hearing, the ear, so wonderfully adapted to every kind of vibration, yet endow no objects with the power of causing sound? The whole tendency of the ear would be to hear, yet it would never do so because its complementary object would be wanting. Every natural tendency implies and has an object. More, if nothing in this life really and completely satisfies the soul, and if there be a message professing to be from God, teaching us that of which we already have the presentiment, and to provide the means to attain the destiny of happiness we crave, surely it is deserving of our attention. And whilst I am at it, let me suggest to you that it is the Catholic religion above all others in this world that is most deserving of your attention.

**32. Is it pride of intellect that makes one agnostic on this subject, or just inability to have any firm conviction?**

No man is unable to have a firm conviction of a future life. And I do not think agnosticism on this point is due to pride of intellect. There would certainly be no grounds for such pride. The agnostic who says that he does not know whether death ends all or not is one who is simply unintelligent, or who refuses to think about the subject at all, or who pretends not to have a conviction which he really does possess, but which he constantly tries to repress for reasons best known to himself.

**33. Have you ever seen the other world?**

Apart from the indications of reason in favor of immortality, One who has seen the future life of millions who have already gone from this world, and who knows what awaits us, has given us all the information we need. God Himself has stepped in, and speaking by the prophets, and by His own Son, has told us of the future for which we must prepare. And Christ had only one word for the man who does not prepare-fool! To the rich man who had neglected all thought of life after death He said, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." Take my advice, and think out this matter more carefully.

**34. Belief in immortality is most harmful. It diverts men's attention from the good they can do in this life.**

It does just the opposite. It inspires still greater works of devotedness and charity in the cause of humanity for the love of God. And the doctrine is in the best interests of man. All mankind lifts its voice with mine. Generation after generation has agreed. In fact, it is part of man's very nature. The conviction of a future life is so deeply ingrained that it could not be based on a lie. It is as true an instinct as that of a baby which carries everything to its mouth, knowing that thus it will be nourished, though it can explain nothing about the processes of nutrition. Destroy man's conviction of immortality, and he degenerates, even as the fish taken out of the sea will perish, or the tree torn up by the roots will die. Most of those who deny immortality are interested in denying it. Nor are they very convinced themselves of their position against immortality. They have no proofs whatever. They deny, because they don't want to prepare for it.

**35. Why do you Christians want a future life?**

Why do you want to know that? You will say, "Well, it is natural for a man to desire knowledge." So I say that it is natural for man to desire further life beyond the few years earthly existence can offer.

Can Earth Give True Happiness?

**36. I am perfectly happy in this world, and will be quite content if death ends all.**

No man is either perfectly happy or perfectly miserable in this life. Life is a succession of days alternating between joy and suffering. There are enough miseries in this life to prevent perfect happiness, yet enough happiness to compel us to look beyond this world for the complete fulfillment of lawful hopes. If death did end all, of course, you would be neither contented nor discontented. You would be nonexistent. And it is absurd to say that you are perfectly happy, and to give that as a reason for being content even now with the prospect of death ending all. If you said that you were perfectly miserable and that you longed for death to end everything, you would speak more intelligently, even though that, too, would be an exaggeration.

**37. So you deny that I am perfectly happy?**

Yes. You will never come to a stage when all your desires are quite satisfied whilst you are still in this life. If you were perfectly happy, and in want of nothing more, why did you bother writing in order to secure a further knowledge you did not possess? One who has all he wants seeks nothing more.

**38. It is enough for a man if the good he does lives after him.**

You are impelled to say that by the very desire of immortality. It is the effort to conquer time. Why should you want anything of you to live on? And if you want the lesser thing to live on, why not yourself? You are more important than what you do.

**39. Would it not be better for men if death did end all?**

To that I must say, firstly, that our conjectures as to what might or might not be better cannot alter the fact that man's soul will live on whether he likes it or not. Yet, secondly, the prospect of facing a future life is not fearful save to those who have reason to be afraid. The wicked have reason to tremble; the good to rejoice. Virtue should have a corresponding place in eternity And if virtue, so also vice. As a matter of fact, all that is good in civilization has been built up by those who believe in an eternal destiny. And civilization tends to go to pieces when belief in immortality is destroyed. We need belief in eternal life in order to believe in the seriousness of this life.

Do Human Souls Evolve?

**40. The question is ever arising as to whether man appeared suddenly on the earth by a special creative act of God, or whether he evolved.**

The evolution of man's body would not be opposed to any defined doctrine of the Church, though it is far from being a proven fact, and the probabilities are against it. But man as a reasoning, thinking spiritual being certainly did not evolve. His possession of intelligence introduces a new fact into the universe, for, intelligence differs entirely from material conditions and development. It is a spiritual power, and must come from the realm of spiritual being. We maintain, therefore, that the soul, to which intelligence belongs, is a special creation by God in each case simultaneously with its infusion into the material embryo as soon as that embryo is fit to receive it; and that is at the moment of conception.

**41. If descent from animals is proved, would it mean that God only added the faculty of reason to the brute soul in order to make it human?**

Firstly, I do not believe that the descent of man from brute animals will ever be proved.

Secondly, even if it were proved, it would not mean that God had merely to endow an animal with the faculty of reason. God would have to create a human soul endowed with reason and will, and infuse that soul to supplant the existent brute soul or life-principle in the animal body selected to be the body of the first man. Personally, I do not for a moment believe that any existent animal body was chosen by God to be the recipient of the first created human soul. Such an animal body would be so unfitted for the reception of

an intelligent soul that the immediate formation of a human body seems far more likely than the miraculous alteration of an existent animal body.

**42. Would Eve also have attained to a certain degree of physical perfection, and then have been endowed with reason in the same way as Adam?**

No. As I have said, it is not a question of superadding reason to some animal soul. That could not be done, because the animal soul is material, whilst reason is immaterial. No life-principle entirely conditioned by matter could be endowed with a spiritual faculty. For the first woman, as for the first man, God would have to create a special human soul endowed with the spiritual faculties of reason and will. This would be the case even did men prove the bodily derivation of human beings from beasts. But that is a merely speculative supposition never likely to be proved.

**43. Since animals already have sensitive life in common with man, why could not God merely add reason and will?**

Because reason and will are purely spiritual powers, and can belong only to a spiritual nature. Now the brute soul is not spiritual of its very nature, and it could not be the subject of purely spiritual powers. The brute soul is essentially limited to the vital functions of a material organism, and cannot transcend material conditions. But whilst the brute soul is essentially unfitted for higher spiritual operations, the human and spiritual soul endowed with reason and will can, when united with a body similar to that of animals, direct all the lower functions of which animals are capable. But we cannot argue that because a superior principle is capable of lower operations, an inferior principle is capable of higher operations. Nor can we say that the inferior principle could be endowed with higher powers, when those higher powers belong to a completely different order of being. The essentially spiritual powers of reason and will require an essentially spiritual nature-and the brute soul is nonspiritual.

**44. I do not see why the soul could not evolve. If gasoline is sufficiently heated it bursts into flame. Could not matter be rarefied by some natural process until it merged into spirit?**

No. Rarefaction may turn a solid into a vapor, but a vapor is not spiritual. By condensation a vaporized solid can be solidified once more; but a soul cannot be thus treated. Your analogy of the gasoline does not meet the case, for both flame and gasoline are in the same material order. But thought and matter are opposed to each other. The object of bodily sight may be a material thing; but the object of thought is an idea of the thing. Ideas are spiritualized abstractions outside the realm of matter. Two and two potatoes make four potatoes. You can put them into a pan and fry them. But you cannot put the truth that two and two make four into a pan and cook it. The idea of that truth is not conditioned by space or time; and it is universal, not individual. In what place, at what time, or what individual material beings could evolve into the truth that two and two make four?

**45. Thought seems only a higher form of animal sensation, for ideas are only generalized images.**

Thought is more than a higher form of animal sensation. Animal sensations may give images, but images are not ideas. An image of some object may be thrown on the retina of the eye, and a man may be able to picture that image to himself later on in his "imagination." But every such image is of some particular measurable thing. Nor could a multitude of images of a multitude of different things add up into one idea of all these things. By sensation a man secures a foundation for thought, but sense images are not thought. Reflection shows that ideas are in a different order altogether, and we rightly implore men to go by reason, and not by mere imagination. This is more clearly seen when we leave ideas of concrete things and proceed to ideas of mathematical relations, or even to ideas of ideas in reflex thought. Ideas are not material things.

Now, a being is characterized by its powers; its powers by their activities; and those activities by their object. Since ideas are not material, the act of thinking by which those ideas are produced is not material; and the power of intelligence which enables us to think is not material. Therefore, the soul which possesses

that intelligence is not material. All these things are in the same order, and that order is not material. God must have intervened in creation with a new and spiritual element when He made the soul of man.

**46. Since man is a material being, he should share the fate of material beings.**

You are thinking of man's body only. Equally I could say that, since man's soul is a spirit, he should share the immortal destiny of spiritual beings. Man is a mysterious being, blending the two spheres of matter and spirit. But, in his present state, he is an unstable composite tending to that dissolution of the union between body and soul which we call death. Whilst the body, however, dies, the soul does not. It lives on. It is of higher value than the merely material, and does not depend upon the body for its existence. Rather, the body depends upon the soul, which surpasses all material conditions and survives them. God Himself does not destroy that which carries within itself no principle of destruction. In other words, He does not create souls essentially fitted to live on forever, only to annihilate them. That would be quite opposed to His infinite wisdom.

Is Transmigration Possible?

**47. Is transmigration of souls, and our return in animal forms impossible?**

Yes. The human soul is essentially an intellectual being, and the nature God has given to man demands a proportionately constructed bodily counterpart. An intellectual soul united with a body incapable of cooperating in thought processes, as, for example, a human soul inhabiting a dog, would be a metaphysically repugnant monstrosity, and a direct contradiction of Divine Wisdom. Moreover, God has revealed that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment. We do not come back as animals and die again. Also the judgment of each soul concerns its final destiny, and does not allow of another temporary and earthly existence. So our returning in animal forms is outside the realm of both possibility and fact.

Animal Souls

**48. Speaking of animals, do you deny that animal souls exist?**

No. It is impossible to doubt the existence of animal souls. The only point open to discussion is as to whether animal souls survive after the death of their bodies.

**49. What is the attitude of the Catholic Church towards the question of their survival?**

Catholic philosophers reject belief in the immortality of animal souls, chiefly on the score of their nonspiritual operations. A study of animal psychology reveals nothing that transcends the sensitive and material order, and there can be no reasonable doubt but that death terminates the existence of animals both as regards body and soul. Revelation gives no indication that animals will have a future life; in fact, the general trend of God's revelation seems to exclude it.

**50. Each animal seems to have its own distinctive personality.**

Personality supposes intelligence, and a moral responsibility following upon free will, which no one would attribute to mere animals. Each animal may have distinctive characteristics; but we are not justified in attributing personality to them in the strict sense of the word.

**51. Does not the Catholic Church defend the rights of dumb beasts?**

When you speak of dumb beasts you admit that they are on a lower plane than human beings. Not being persons, they have not personal rights. Still, the Church teaches that cruelty to animals is sinful. Now sin means the violation of rights. But whose rights are being violated by wanton cruelty to animals? Certainly not the rights of animals themselves. Wanton cruelty is a sin because no man has a right to brutalize his own humanity. Man has an obligation to develop what is best in his own nature, and not to indulge in vicious tendencies. And by wanton cruelty he sins against this obligation. Again, God has the right that His creatures should be used in accordance with His will, and that means reasonably and kindly. Cruelty, therefore, is a sin against God's rights. But that cruelty is a sin does not imply that there are any moral rights vested in animals themselves. It is a violation of rights belonging to God Himself, and of the responsibility vested in the dignity of our own rational nature.

**52. If animals are not immortal, God's treatment of them is unjust.**

That is not true. All justice is in the moral order, and supposes the violation of rights possessed by morally responsible subjects. Animals do not possess reason, and cannot refer their actions to moral standards which they know to be imposed upon them by their Creator. And if animals have no personal rights to be violated, there can be no question of injustice towards them.

**53. Think of noble animal traits often exceeding those of men.**

The good instincts of animals, for which they are not morally responsible, may be preferable to the vices of men as such. But the very moral degradation of a man who chooses vice rather than virtue indicates a nobler type of being than any mere animal which is incapable of truly moral conduct.

**54. If we deserve to survive, don't animals by their virtues deserve the same?**

Strictly speaking, we cannot attribute virtues to animals. They may have good habits, but virtue and merit suppose moral freedom, and the deliberate choice of things which are not a matter of physical necessity.

**55. Are there no compensations for animal sufferings?**

Only rights imply compensation and animals as such have no rights.

**56. Many people abandon religion because the interests of animals are not made a special part of its teaching.**

The interests of animals can never be a special part of reasonable religion. It is a religious duty to God and to man's own dignity to practice restraint and kindness in the use of animals. But that will result from the really important duty of worshipping and loving God, and attending to the salvation and sanctification of our own souls by the practice of Christian virtue.

There is a great danger of excess in this matter. As Christian ideals fade, human beings forget their own dignity, reduce themselves to the animal level, and grow hard towards one another. And by a strange kind of distortion, the human sympathies which they cannot suppress entirely tend to go out to the animal world. Many women marry, refuse to have children, and lavish their starved instincts upon pet animals as a substitute. So we have beauty parlors for pet dogs, where ladies can take their little Pomeranians to have them "bathed, shampooed, groomed and manicured" at a price which would provide a week's food for a starving child. I do not suggest that you would approve of such extremes, but you echo ideas which have led to them. Meantime, if people will not practice religion to attend to the interests of their own souls, it will be quite useless for them to do so in order to attend to the interests of animals. You may think me hard, but I cannot win sympathy for religion by sympathizing with ideas utterly opposed to it by their extravagance. We must love God, and let our love for God extend to all His creatures reasonably and proportionately. It is a distortion to love animals, and then be prepared to love God provided we can let our

love of animals extend to Him also! It is essential that we have a correct knowledge of the order of things established by God, that we obtain a genuine notion of religion and of its duties, and that we fulfill those duties. Sentiment cannot be exalted to the dominant element in religion.

#### Fatalism

**57. How would you answer the assertion that what has to be, has to be?**

By granting it. If a thing has to be, it has to be. But I deny that everything has to be.

**58. If a man riding a bicycle is run down by a car and killed accidentally, did that have to be?**

If such a thing happens, then it happens. And it could not "happen" yet "not happen" simultaneously. At the same time, granted that it does happen, it does not happen by any absolute necessity. The man need not have chosen to go for a ride on that particular day. The car driver was under no compulsion to be on the road at the time. So we cannot say that the accident was foreordained by God and inevitable. There was no determining force outside and independent of those two men compelling them to come into collision, with fatal consequences for the rider of the bicycle.

**59. Is the hour of one's death appointed by God at the moment of one's birth?**

No; for a man is physically free even where his own life is concerned. Keep in mind this principle. Although God's providence extends to all things from a universal or general point of view, that same providence has willed that within the universe there should be a vast series of secondary causes affecting each other immediately. Now amongst these secondary causes is man, a free agent. The moment of a suicide's death is obviously not determined by God, for God forbids suicide; and if the suicide had obeyed God's law he would have lived longer. The same thing is true of murder, where a man's life is terminated by the rebellion of another man's will against the will of God.

#### Freedom of Will

**60. If my future actions are preknown by God, they must have been predetermined, and free will is impossible.**

That is not true. God does know what you will do in the future. Yet when you do it, it will be by your own free choice. Your difficulty arises from the fact that you are speaking of God as if He were conditioned by time exactly as we ourselves. He is not. We are space-time creatures, and God is outside all space-time limitations. Actions which, from our standpoint, must seem to be preknown, are not really preknown to God. For "preknown" supposes successive knowledge, and succession supposes time. God, in reality, simply "knows" in an ever-present eternity. We are quite unable to comprehend the relationship between an eternal intelligence and successive events conditioned by time. The only experience we have is of the time-sequence. I know that talk of God as being outside time is like talking color to a man born blind. But that can't be helped. We have to talk of these things. But we must realize our limitations, and know that we cannot even state the problem except in terms which are incapable of expressing it adequately.

**61. Your appeal to mystery does not answer my denial of free will.**

When a problem involves the mutual relationship of two agents, only one of which is adequately within the reach of our understanding, mystery is inevitable. And categorical denials based on inadequate knowledge are themselves unreasonable.

**62. What becomes of the "proof" of free will?**

That stands. We know that it is a fact both by reason and revelation. And the positive evidence for free will deprives of all force those speculative difficulties which every reasonable person must expect to be present.

**63. If free will obtains, it is impossible for God to know the future. He is not omniscient, and Biblical prophecies are mere superstitions.**

Within the time sequence of history we have certain evidence that prophecies have been made, and that they were duly fulfilled hundreds of years later; and in such numbers and detail as to exclude any notion of mere chance. Not superstition, but reason, demands a connection between the subsequent events and what we have to term the previous knowledge of them. Meantime, men who know nothing of the conditions of eternity as related to the time in which we exist cannot reasonably declare it to be impossible for God to know the future.

**64. No system of philosophy has successfully dealt with this question.**

Sane philosophy admits the existence of free will. It successfully shows that there is not necessarily a contradiction where some people claim to find one, mistaking their inability to see a reconciliation for the impossibility of it. You must not ask philosophy to do what it cannot rightly be expected to do. If you regard as successful only that treatment of this question which enables a limited human mind to comprehend fully and completely how the eternal and Divine intelligence knows things which are future to space-time creatures, you are doomed to disappointment.

**65. What is your official position on this subject?**

That God's omniscience and man's free will are two facts known to be such, both by reason and revelation. The relationship between these two facts is necessarily a mystery; that is, the compatibility of the two facts is above reason, but not against reason. And the facts stand, despite the inability of man to solve to his full satisfaction the problem they present to the human mind.

**66. Is not a man compelled to do what God knows that he will do?**

No. It is a fallacy to think of knowledge of an event as the cause of that event. Thus, if I know that the sun is shining, the sun is not shining because I know it; I know it because the sun is shining. My knowledge of it does not make the sun shine. Nor does knowledge possessed even prior to the event cause the event to occur. An astronomer's knowledge that there will be an eclipse of the sun next week does not cause the eclipse. Knowledge as such is conditioned by the event: the event is not conditioned by the knowledge of it. But even that analogy cannot strictly apply to God's knowledge, for since He is outside time, there is nothing really future to His intelligence.

**67. If God knows my future, it can only be because He has determined that future, and I am not free, if then God knows that I will end in hell, it's no use my trying to get to heaven.**

The God who knows what your future will be, knows also that the future depends on your own choice. God has determined that your future will depend on your own conduct. His design is that "if" you try to serve Him, you will attain heaven, and that "if" you do not, you will lose your soul. Your future, therefore, has not been determined by God in any absolute sense. His very decision to endow you with free will, and commit your destiny to your own keeping excludes that. I appeal to your common sense. How do you let this problem affect you in other matters? If you were a farmer, would you say, "God knows whether I will have a crop or not. If He knows that I will have a crop, I will have it whatever I do. If He knows that I will not have a crop, I will not have it, whatever I do. Therefore, I will do nothing. I will neither plough, nor sow seed." That is foolish, for if God knows that you are to have a crop, His knowledge includes the knowledge that you will take the means. You can apply the same thought to any other matter of ordinary experience. If God knows that you will catch a train, you will catch it; if He knows that you won't catch it, you won't. Therefore, what is the use of going to the station at all? Surely you see the absurdity! God has



decreed that certain things will result from the use of certain means. Heaven will be the result of trying to serve God. Take the means, and you will attain the normal result of such means. To do anything else is to be guilty of a folly in the matter of eternal salvation of which you would not be guilty in any other matter.

**68. All the same, if I am going to end in hell, I am going to end in hell.**

It is a logical necessity that what you do choose to do, you choose to do. But it is not necessary that you make such a choice. You could go to hell only by committing grave sin. Now God forbids you to commit grave sin. He could not therefore compel you to commit it. Moreover, if you had to commit it, the choice to do so would not be voluntary, and, therefore, would not be sinful — and you could not go to hell at all, despite God's knowing that you would end there! The absurd is false.

**69. If you believe in free will, you must hold that the will is conditioned by itself, and that means that it is not conditioned at all.**

It is self-contradictory to say that a will is not conditioned at all which is conditioned by itself. To talk sense a man could begin by saying that a will cannot be conditioned by itself. Then he would have to prove that statement.

**70. An act of the free will is, therefore, an uncaused act, which is impossible.**

The will itself is the cause of its own elective activities, and its choice is self-caused. God Himself has given us the power of volitional activity. He does not compel us to use it in this direction or that. Determinists argue that it must be compelled in one direction or another, because in the material or physical universe they see necessary causes producing necessary effects. But it is begging of the question to suppose that there is no other kind of causality, and that the spiritual, intellectual, and moral order must conform rigidly to the material and physical order. These determinists are like children who have never attained to the use of reason, and who go only by what comes within the range of their senses. They confuse the uniformity of nature which is a peculiarity of the visible and tangible universe with the principle of causality. And I say that that is childish. In the material universe we see causes which are determined to produce given effects: and in the same circumstances the same causes will produce the same effects. But it is equally a fact of experience that intelligence and will transcend the conditions of mere matter, and that there is no absolute necessity why the law of causality must work in the same way both in the inner world of man's soul, and in the outer world of material things. Within man there is a power of self-adjustment not found elsewhere. Physical laws declare that friction will necessarily produce heat. They do not say that provocation will necessarily produce anger. For one man may choose to give way to his feelings of resentment; another man may choose not to do so. Let the determinists first prove that there is nothing in man transcending the conditions of mere matter, and then they can restrict their notion of causality to the uniformity of nature discernible in the merely material universe. But they cannot do that without ignoring obvious facts of human experience. And to ignore facts because they don't fit in with one's theories is to cease to be scientific.

**71. If you believe in free will, training is just beside the point.**

It is not. It is necessary precisely because human beings are endowed with free will. Irrational animals, determined by mere instinct, do not face the same problems as man at all. Magpies are not concerned with morally wrong choices made by their offspring. But human parents, concerned with the character-formation of their children, are obliged to train those children precisely because they retain freedom of will to choose virtue or vice. Children must be taught what virtue is, and must be trained to choose the morally good as opposed to the morally evil. They must be formed in mind, and will, and heart.

**72. Another absurd conclusion to which believers in free will must inevitably come, is the idea that a man is free to believe whatever he likes.**

I myself believe in free will, yet I deny absolutely that I must inevitably come to any absurd conclusion as a consequence of my conviction.

**73. It is manifestly wrong that a man is free to believe whatever he likes.**

Your trouble is a confusion of ideas. Before discussing a subject it is essential to get very clear ideas on that subject, and to know the precise sense of the terms you use. Otherwise, ambiguities and fallacies are bound to result. I know exactly what you have in mind. But you express yourself very badly. What you have in mind cannot be denied. But what you say can be denied. For example, if you drove a motor car at sixty miles an hour, you would know that that car could do sixty miles an hour. You would not be free to believe otherwise. But if I took that same car out and drove it at eighty-five miles an hour, and came back and told you I had done so, you would be free to believe what you liked about it. You have only my word for it. You could choose to believe me. Or you could choose to doubt my accuracy of observation, or my veracity. Not having experimental knowledge for yourself, it would not be manifestly wrong and absurd for you to believe whatever you liked. You see you have used the word believe without any regard for the motives of belief or for the degrees of certainty in our knowledge.

**74. No man can honestly believe that which his reason rejects as untrue.**

It is certain that so long as he rejects a thing as untrue, he cannot believe it. But he can cease to reject as untrue what he at one time thought to be untrue on discovering that he has no real proof that it is untrue, either because his former judgment was based on inadequate knowledge, or because there was a fault in his process of reasoning.

**75. For instance, I cannot believe that a man once lived three days inside a whale.**

Taking your proposition as it stands, I must confess that I would have a good deal of difficulty in believing it myself. If, however, a man said to me, "The God Who created this universe arranged that a huge fish (not necessarily a whale) should swallow a man, and by His divine power God kept that man alive inside the fish," I would certainly agree that it was not impossible for an omnipotent God to do such a thing. I could believe it, though I would not believe it actually occurred without a convincing authority for doing so.

**76. I may try for hours to convince myself that I believe this, but the simple fact still remains, I cannot believe it.**

At one time men could not believe that a person in England could speak to another person in America. But we, who know of radio transmission, find no difficulty in believing it. For the factor rendering it possible is known to us, whereas it was unknown to them. They could not believe it so long as the factor of radio transmission was omitted from the proposition. Now, if you restrict your proposition to a man, a whale, and the man's living inside the whale for three days, omitting all reference to God's intervention, your difficulties do not surprise me. But will you say that God Himself could not cause such an event to happen? I am not asking you to believe that it did happen. I only suggest that, since God could do it, you could believe it if He did do it.

**77. The only force which can possibly alter my beliefs is an appeal to my reason by way of demonstration, argument, evidence, etc.**

There are other forces which could alter your beliefs, despite your assertion to the contrary. I knew a girl who believed absolutely in the rectitude of a man she loved, despite evidence to the contrary clear to all others who knew him. After two years her love faded, and her belief changed. A human being's beliefs are

often dictated by psychological factors and this is because the human will is free, making possible the will to believe in those who desire to believe. And where the Christian religion is concerned, the will to believe involves no conflict with reason. Belief is, in fact, the reasonable choice.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Religion

#### Religion and God

#### **78. Why are religious people always talking about doing the will of God?**

Because by the teachings of their religion they know what is due to God, and by the virtue of religion they desire to render to Him the acknowledgment and obedience they owe to His laws. They know that they cannot be good people otherwise. After all, a thing is good if it does what it's for. If I construct a machine to tell me the time, it is a good machine insofar as it does as I will and intend. If it does not, it is no good. Now God made me. He made me, not for an idle freak, but for a definite purpose; and I am good insofar as I fulfill that purpose. In other words, insofar as I fulfill God's will and intentions.

#### **79. Does it not occur to them that they have very little knowledge of what that will is?**

That certainly does not apply in the case of Christians who are well instructed in their religion. Listen to these words from the Catholic catechism: "For what purpose did God make us? God made us to know, love, and serve Him here on earth, and to see and enjoy Him forever in heaven. What good shall I do that I may have life everlasting? If thou wilt enter into life-says Christ-keep the commandments. What commandments am I to keep? I am to keep the ten commandments of God, and the six commandments of the Church." And the catechism gives a clear explanation of the obligations imposed by those commandments; or, in other words, a clear explanation of the will of God. Finish reading this book, and by the time you have done so, you will have lost the notion that we have very little knowledge of what God's will is.

#### The Duty of Prayer

#### **80. Religion involves the whole question of prayer, and for my part prayer is both unreasonable and useless.**

Apart from the obtaining of benefits, by prayer we express our love of God, and our gratitude to Him, as also our sorrow and regret for such sins as we have committed against Him. But also prayer is a normal and intelligent means by which we obtain many blessings from God, together with His protection and consolation in difficulties. Prayer is neither unreasonable nor useless

#### **81. How can prayer be reasonable?**

Reason itself dictates the necessity of prayer. Reason tells you that you are not the author of your own existence, that YOU owe your origin, as does the whole human race, to an outside Cause Who is more intelligent than the creatures of His own making. Every man also, who is not mentally deficient, knows that he himself is limited in a thousand ways, in size, in strength, in mind and will. Man is small, weak, ignorant, and inconstant. Enabled by reason to realize these imperfections, man is impelled by reason to appeal to, and rely upon his Maker for the help and protection necessary lest his defects should lead to disaster. Prayer to his Maker is as natural to man as the instinct of a child to turn to its parents for help. All creatures, of course, are subject to such limitations. But man alone is conscious of them, arid, therefore, rational people alone are given to prayer. Brute animals do not pray. It is irrational not to pray.

#### **82. If there be a God, it should not be necessary to tell Him of our needs.**

We do not pray in order to inform God of our needs. We pray to fulfill a condition laid down by God for our own sakes. God demands of us the humility which acknowledges our dependence on Him, and the confidence which acknowledges Him as our Father. Even earthly parents, who know their children's wants, and intend to supply them, insist that they ask respectfully for what they need. It is in a child's own interest that it should be trained to behave properly.

**83. Is it not more generous to give spontaneously than to wait to be asked? If God be supremely generous, it is an insult to Him to implore Him to give us anything.**

It would not be more generous on God's part to give us all we need without waiting to be asked. God has, of course, given us very many things without any request from us. But it would not be more generous to do that always. It is more generous to secure our still greater good by making us ask. And even apart from our training in religious behavior, it is a great happiness and privilege to be allowed to converse with God concerning our own interests.

**84. If God is unchangeable, can you hope to change Him by fervent appeals?**

**God is unchangeable.** But prayer is itself part of God's unchangeable providence. He has decreed that many benefits will depend upon our **praying** for them. We shall get them if we ask for them; if we do not pray we shall not receive them. The change is not in God.

**85. How can I pray when I cannot feel sure that anyone is listening to me?**

How do you want to feel sure that God is listening to you? What type of evidence do you want? Do you want the certainty you have of the existence of a speaker when you hear his Voice from your radio set? If so, you will want in vain. But man is not limited to his senses, as are mere animals. By reason he can attain to the knowledge of a truth not accessible to the senses. Take the truth of thought. Were a dog sitting near you, it would hear the sounds of a human voice as you hear them with your ears. But it certainly could not grasp the truth conveyed by those sounds. Your reason can rise to a perception of a reality which is above and beyond any powers of sense-perception. If you cannot feel sure of God's existence and knowledge merely because He is invisible and inaudible so far as your senses are concerned, you abdicate as a reasonable person, and descend to the lower level of irrational creatures. Your very expression, "I cannot feel sure," is unfortunate. For feelings belong to our sensitive natures, not to our rational natures. We don't believe things with our feelings. We believe them with our minds.

**86. But supposing even my reason gives me no certain conviction?**

Even then you could still pray. If you are not certain that God does hear you, you are not certain that He does not. But if you thought it only possible that He hears you, you could quite reasonably pray, even if you did so like the famous agnostic, "O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have one." But apart from your own mental state, there are many considerations which intensify the reasonable character of prayer for you. If, on a given day, there was to be a huge meeting in a city hall, and you came from the country to attend that meeting, but did not know where the hall was situated, you would quite reasonably adopt the same line of conduct adopted by the crowds of people all flocking in the one direction. So, too, despite your uncertainty, you see crowds of people who are not in the least uncertain, and who give themselves to prayer, convinced that their prayers are heard by Him to whom they pray. And not all these people are fools by any means. You will admit that Marconi was a very clever man, a genius at experimental science, and a great contributor to the possibility of the radio transmission we enjoy today. Yet he says of prayer, "I believe it would be a great tragedy if men were to lose their faith in prayer. Without the help of prayer I might perhaps have failed where I have succeeded. In allowing me to attain what I have done, God has made of me merely an instrument of His own will, for the revelation of His own divine power." The very certainty of so many other intelligent men, and their conviction as to the efficacy of prayer, make it quite reasonable for you to adopt the practice also.

**87. If God knows that I will commit a sin, it's no use praying that I won't.**

God's knowledge can be left out of your question, for that knowledge does not affect your conduct. If He knows that you are going to commit a sin, it is because you will choose to commit it. However, you may ask what is the use of prayer if you will, as a matter of fact, fall into sin after all. In the first place, since you will not be compelled to commit that sin, there is at least less likelihood that you will do so with the help of special graces due to prayer than without them. But supposing that **YOU** do so? Even then the prayer was

not useless. In itself it was a meritorious act of religion prior to the sin. Even granted the sin, you would probably have been far worse on the occasion than you would have been had YOU not prayed. And in virtue of the previous prayer God would give you the grace to repent more quickly and sincerely of your fault.

**88. For centuries humanity has prayed to God for deliverance from floods, famines, plagues, and distress; but God has ever been silent.**

You can't gulp down the whole of humanity like that. For centuries some men have cursed God: some have simply ignored God; and some have prayed to God. Humanity as a whole has not prayed to God for deliverance from evils. And amongst those who have prayed, many have done so in order to praise God, or to thank God, or to repair their sins against God, or to ask spiritual graces from Him. Prayer is not confined to the asking of temporal benefits only.

But even if you restrict your question to prayer for temporal favours, thousands would rise in protest, and **prove** to you that prayers for temporal favours have been granted far more often than can be explained by mere coincidence. All that Christians claim as regards prayer for temporal favours is that such prayers are sometimes heard in the way we wish when God knows that the granting of our request will be really for our good. Prayer of petition is not the kind of penny-in-the-slot machine by which we obtain just what we specify as we would obtain a box of matches.

**89. God allows war to continue, though people of all religious denominations pray to Him to stop it.**

If the sufferings caused by war were entirely useless, it might be more difficult to answer that problem. But if men can benefit by such sufferings, a good God could certainly permit them; **and if** men deserved them, His justice can **NOT** be blamed. Men do deserve such sufferings; and indeed mankind as a **whole** deserves more than it gets in the way of suffering. See the flood of iniquity in the world, and ask yourself whether men deserve that all things should flatter their desires. If people prayed that the war should stop, then the fact that the war moved some people to prayers they would not otherwise have said was already a good result. And prayer did produce remarkable results in various individuals during the war. If it did not make all combatants cease fighting at the various moments, various unbelievers thought the war ought to end, that fact does not imply that prayer was useless.

**90. Will the prayers of one in a state of sin be heard by God?**

Every sincere and earnest prayer, no matter by whom it is said, will be heard by God. Prayer is, in itself, an act of religion as well as a petition. Normally, as an act of religion, it is meritorious just as any other good work. But as a person in a state of serious sin cannot merit before God, in the sinner's case no merit attaches to his prayer. But, whilst no merit attaches to his prayer, it retains value as a petition. And the petition will certainly be granted if it be for the grace to be converted and to resist further sin. If the petition be for temporal favours, such as the recovery of bodily health, or for some other earthly advantage, the petition will be granted provided God sees that it will not prove a hindrance to the petitioner's spiritual welfare.

**91. If prayer is necessary for conversion, how will one reform who finds it impossible to pray?**

Prayer is never really impossible. I admit that one who has long neglected prayer will find little taste for it, and, therefore, will find it difficult. But, despite the difficulty, he should take up his prayers once more, if necessary with the help of a prayer book, trying to mean the prayers he recites. As a child learns to walk by walking, so we learn to pray by praying. Facility will come with practice. And as his prayers increase in earnestness, so will a man receive ever more abundant graces from God to help him in his struggles against ingrained habits. God will give light to intensify his convictions, and strength to fortify his weak and inconstant will. If, then, a man persists in doing his own best to fight down acquired bad habits, and perseveres in his efforts at prayer, he will certainly succeed in the end in the desire to reform his life.

The Mysteries of Religion

**92. Are not the mysteries taught by your religion simply mental opium?**

Not in the least. They do not stifle thought. They are a provocation to thought, and have inspired the greatest minds. Unexplained themselves, they throw an immense amount of light on the problem of life's purpose and destiny, when added to what we already know by reason itself. Though we cannot sound their full depths, we find in them the explanation of most of our noblest experiences. They are the key to life; and as life itself is mysterious, so the key to it is mysterious. A key is as intricate as the lock, or it does not fit. It is only by combining the clear and the mysterious that we arrive at a proper understanding. We have an example of that in science itself. In spectroscopic analysis a ray of light is broken up into its various colors; but the spectrum reveals a series of dark lines which are most mysterious. Their explanation is found only by noting where they fall in relation to the colors which are clearly shown. Now, in his search for knowledge man finds that his own power of sight is limited to a very narrow band of wave lengths. He can see neither infrared nor ultraviolet rays. These would be absolute mysteries to him if he depended only on sight. But his intelligence has discovered them. Faith goes further, and by a knowledge secured from God's revelation, gets an inkling of the great mysterious reality of God Himself, who clarifies the puzzling lines and dark shadows by which the whole of our knowledge and life are crisscrossed from end to end. So we find that the mysterious and the clear give the true sense to life.

**93. All mysteries yield sooner or later to reason. Science will know tomorrow what it does not know today.**

Mysteries necessarily exist, and ever will exist. Even in the merely natural order, it is useless to say that what is a mystery now will not be a mystery in the future, as if all mysteries in nature will thus be eventually unraveled. Knowledge begins with mystery and ends in mystery. The further science pushes its conquests, the more mysteries it will discover, every advance revealing further mystery ahead. Transmission by radio was an unsuspected mystery to previous generations. It is an accomplished fact today, but it has led to a host of other mysteries.

But these natural mysteries are not even on the same plane as supernatural mysteries. Were all natural mysteries eventually solved, supernatural mysteries would remain. Not all the scientific knowledge of the universe could manifest to us the infinitely mysterious inner life of God Himself. From the natural point of view God's intimate nature and vital activities are inaccessible to man. And any knowledge of His personal inner life given to us by revelation—a life completely transcending the natural order of created being—will be as mysterious to us as it is beyond our natural and experimental ideas. These revealed mysteries satisfy reason by surpassing reason, since reason itself tells us that a divine religion, introducing the Infinite, must contain elements exceeding every finite capacity.

**94. Are we expected to believe things to be true without any evidence for them?**

We are expected to believe what God has revealed, because God must know the truth, and because He could not deceive us. Where revealed mysteries are concerned, we accept them, not because they appeal to reason as evidently true in themselves, but because of God's authority. This supposes evidence, of course, that God has actually revealed the mysteries we thus accept. We believe what God says, but we must know that He said it. It will be necessary, therefore, to study the historical evidence for the fact of revelation.

Can We Believe in Miracles?

**95. Why are miracles fewest where people are most enlightened?**

I deny your supposition.

**96. I am a civil engineer, and my profession treats largely with cause and effect, and is based on mathematical accuracy.**

I must ask you to keep in mind that proficiency in the knowledge of natural causes gives no special competency in matters not due to those causes.

**97. I have never witnessed a miracle; nor has any other member of my profession whom I have asked witnessed one.**

Because you have never personally witnessed a miracle, you cannot conclude that, therefore, miracles have never occurred. As regards your fellow professional men, had one of them declared that he had witnessed a miracle, would you have accepted his evidence? If so, why will you not accept the sworn evidence of equally accredited medical men? You may say that you do not know of any such evidence. But your not knowing of it does not prove it to be nonexistent. The evidence exists.

**98. I once questioned a group of illiterate, dirty, drunken peons at La Paz, Bolivia, all of whom were Catholics.**

If they were Catholics, it was in spite of, and not because of the conditions you describe. I am a Catholic, but I am neither illiterate, nor dirty, nor drunken; so those qualities are not necessarily associated with Catholicism. Also, on your own methods of testing evidence, since I have never seen a group of illiterate, dirty, drunken peons, you can scarcely expect me to accept your word for it that they do exist.

**99. All declared that they had witnessed miracles.**

Granted that you did ask them, and that they replied as you say, the fact that the witnesses you consulted were drunk renders their evidence worthless. It would be on a par with the evidence of a drunken man who swears that a given lamp post has duplicated itself. Even if they were not drunk, I would put their evidence down to a great deal of superstition—a superstition found, of course, not only amongst the illiterate. We are surrounded by superstitions even amongst the educated. There are the superstitions of the sceptic, of the spiritualist, of the Christian Scientist, of those who believe in the infallibility of novels and newspapers, of those who swear by astrology, of those who reject miracles without giving a single valid reason for doing so, of the man who thinks that witnesses who have not seen a thing afford reliable evidence that the thing does not exist. But, in the whole of this affair, the most striking thing is that you should seek evidence for miracles from such obviously unreliable sources. If a sensible man really wants evidence, he does not bother about taking that evidence until he has some reason to believe the source reliable. It is a reflection on your own intelligence that you did not bother inquiring in better quarters.

**100. What kind of evidence do you call that?**

As I have already remarked, I do not regard it as evidence at all. But when you contrast civil engineers with illiterate peons, remember this: If there are educated men who do not believe in miracles, there are educated men who do; the former lacking evidence; the latter possessing evidence.

And if you wish to argue, "Drink-sodden men believe in miracles, therefore, miracles don't happen," I will be justified in retorting, "There are plenty of drink-sodden men who do not believe in miracles, therefore, miracles do happen." It's absurd argumentation, I know, but it is based on your own principles.

**101. Can you expect enlightened people to believe in miracles?**

Yes. They are the unenlightened people from whom we expect unbelief; from people who have never bothered to examine any evidence, but whose opinions are dictated by their prejudices.

**102. Does the Church require proof before she will accept any event as miraculous?**

Yes, and very strict proof. She takes little notice of people's private opinions concerning the cause of a given event. Before the Church will publicly admit and sanction any event as being a miraculous manifestation of God's power, she demands proof that no merely natural means could account for it.

**103. That could never be, because we do not yet know all the forces of nature. There may be natural laws which we do not yet know, yet which could account for an event thought to be miraculous.**

There is no need to know all that nature can do, before we can be sure of a miracle. It is enough to know what nature cannot do. And we know that when we perceive an absolute lack of proportion between the means used and the effect produced. That a man rotten with leprosy should suddenly be cured at the mere sound of Christ's voice saying, "Be thou clean," is obviously outside the scope of merely natural laws, and, therefore, miraculous. So, too, it is certain that the dead do not naturally rise from the grave and resume their earthly lives. So true is this law that, if one who was actually dead did rise, God alone could have made him do so by a quite supernatural intervention. Here the very thing accomplished is not against, but absolutely beyond the scope of the ordinary laws of nature. Thus all admit that the resurrection of Christ must be ranked as miraculous. Those who refuse to believe in it simply deny that it happened; but they do not deny that, if it did happen, it would be miraculous.

**104. You at least advise caution in the matter?**

I do. In fact, since not the abnormal but the normal is ordinary, and the miraculous necessarily rare, a prudent judgment will incline on the side of the greater probabilities, and prefer to regard events as nonmiraculous rather than as miraculous. If God really wishes to show His power to men in a miraculous way He will do so in a way which leaves no prudent doubt in the minds of those who study closely the whole affair. Thus, at Lourdes, many cures have taken place. But the Medical Bureau of Inquiry will not register as miraculous any cures which are explicable by natural causes. For example, if a person is cured suddenly of a nervous disease of many years' standing, the doctors will say, "We congratulate you on what seems to be a great favor from God, but we cannot accept it as a miracle. The natural factors of excitement, or of autosuggestion, may be responsible for it; and it does not necessarily, therefore, manifest God's direct intervention." But if a broken leg is healed instantaneously, an inch of bone being supplied to make it the same length as the other, that is a different matter. No amount of subjective persuasion, and no merely natural influences could accomplish that. In the presence of such an occurrence we can but say, "The finger of God is here"; and all reasonable men would admit it to be a miracle.

**105. I agree with those who wish to purify the Gospels by eliminating the miraculous element embodied in them side by side with so much good teaching.**

It is impossible to eliminate the miraculous element from the Gospels without rejecting them completely as fraud and forgery. You might just as well suggest a life of Napoleon without any military exploits as suggest a life of Christ without miracles. The texts describing the miracles were there from the very beginning, and were written by those who saw them, and who wrote the rest of the matter contained in the Gospels. It is unreasonable to say that the authors were quite reliable in setting down what you happen to approve in the accounts of Christ, but that they suddenly became unreliable in sections which do not happen to appeal to you.

**106. The miracles envelop His life in legend, and belittle Him rather than magnify Him.**

The miracles in the Gospels are not legendary. They are a matter of history. Nor do they belittle Christ. There is no element in them of the merely curious, ostentatious, and puerile. They bear directly upon His mission as Redeemer. Christ manifested His goodness by curing bodies as well as souls, and proved His divine power against objectors by such sayings as, "Which is easier, to forgive sin, or to say: Arise and walk?" And He bade the crippled to rise and walk; which they did. By His miracles Christ proved both the truth and the necessity of the religion He taught.



## CHAPTER 4

### The Religion of the Bible

#### Historical Character of the Gospels

**107. I presume you accept the Canonical Gospels as historical because they give general support to one another?**

Not entirely. There are other and independent grounds for their historical character. Being historical, of course, general agreement would be one of their notable characteristics.

**108. How do you account for the fact that there are other uncanonical writings which give a different version of these affairs?**

I account for that by the fact that men wrote them, and gave the different version you mention. If you ask why these men wrote them, I can but say that some did so from rather romantic motives in order to fill in in an imaginative way the brief accounts given in the genuine Gospels; others did so with the evil intention of discrediting the genuine Gospel accounts. Some of the writers of the apocryphal gospels were, therefore, orthodox in faith; others were heretics.

**109. Can you quote any reference prior to Irenaeus, 182 A. D., which so much as alludes to the existence of your Gospels?**

It would not matter much if I could not. However, I am able to do so. Prior to Irenaeus, Tatian had written his Diatessaron, or Harmony of the Four Gospels, which is certainly a tribute to the existence of those Gospels. Tatian's teacher, Justin Martyr, was quoting the Gospels 30 years before Irenaeus wrote on the subject. Earlier than Justin, Papias had written that the First Gospel was by St. Matthew; and that St. Mark had also written a Gospel. Almost 30 years before Papias, Hermas, in his "Shepherd," had written that the Third Gospel was by St. Luke, and the Fourth by St. John. The Epistle of Barnabas, written nearly 80 years before Irenaeus, contains quotations from St. Matthew's Gospel. St. Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles about the year 63, speaks of his having written a former treatise, clearly referring to the Third Gospel, as all reputable scholars admit.

#### Canonical Books of the Bible

**110. Did not the selection of the Gospels to be regarded as Canonical depend upon the various Councils?**

The selection of the Gospels depended upon the authoritative decisions of the Catholic Church, decisions formulated in her official Councils, and always to be approved by the Pope. And it is the authority of the Pope which alone counts in the final analysis. Above all, such matters are not dependent upon the authority of "various" Councils, when you wish to include false gatherings of recalcitrant bishops whose proceedings have been repudiated by the Church, and whose decisions have been declared null and void. The authority of Councils can be cited only when those Councils have been authorized by the Holy See, and when their decisions have been approved and sanctioned by the Pope. Under these conditions, the decisions of Councils are quite reliable.

**111. Matthew Tindal says that no good ever came of any Council, and that if all the accusations and libels were extant which the bishops hurled at each other, few would have reason to boast of the First Oecumenical Council.**

Matthew Tindal was a rationalist, and an enemy of the Christian religion. His verdict, therefore, is prejudiced. But any man who says that no good ever came of any Council stands self-condemned. He is talking obvious nonsense. As for the First Oecumenical Council, if the accusations and libels of the bishops are not extant, information concerning them is wanting, and to hazard a guess is valueless. The First Oecumenical Council of Nicea, in 325 A. D., was a Council of the utmost importance to the Church, and did immense good. That it condemned heretics is not surprising, since it was convened for the purpose of safeguarding the truth against false teachings. And that the heretics who were condemned should have taken their condemnation badly is not surprising. They were not men of outstanding patience and virtue.

**112. Is it not a fact that, in the Second Council of Ephesus, Dioscurus, Bishop of Alexandria, assaulted Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, with such violence that the Patriarch died within three days of his injuries? Can we accept the verdict of such Councils?**

It is a fact that the heretical Bishop Dioscurus assaulted Flavian, the lawful Patriarch of Constantinople. But the Second Synod of Ephesus is known as the "Robber Council," and its proceedings were at once declared null and void by the Pope. Flavian died of his injuries, in reality a martyr for the true faith. But the citation of the bad conduct of a heretical bishop in an abortive Council in no way supports any of your contentions where the Gospels are concerned.

#### Original Manuscripts

**113. Are any of the original manuscripts of any of the Gospels extant?**

No. The original manuscripts have perished, the Gospels surviving in later copies only. Manuscripts cannot last forever. If we have the Odes of Horace, or the Annals of Tacitus today, we have them only in copies derived from the now perished original writings of those authors. An elaborate attempt to prove that the Annals of Tacitus were really composed by an Italian scholar named Poggio was rejected as absurd; but for definite refutation scholars had to rely upon one allusion to them occurring some three hundred years after the death of Tacitus himself. The evidence was a thousand times more slender than that available for the Gospels; yet all scholars accepted it.

**114. What is the date of the earliest copies available?**

The earliest copies containing the complete Gospels are the Vatican and Sinaitic Codices, dating from the fourth century. There are several fragments of Gospel manuscripts dating from the third century, and one of St. John's Gospels belonging to the second century, a copy probably made within fifty years of the Apostle's death. But besides these actual Gospel copies, of course, we have a wealth of citations in the earliest Christian writers, citations which presuppose the existence of the Gospel manuscripts.

**115. Why should not a Catholic who believes in miracles expect that the original Gospel manuscripts should last forever?**

Because, although a Catholic believes that miracles can occur, and have occurred when God has willed to grant them, he does not expect miracles where God has not willed to grant them, nor that God should will to grant them wherever men might think it wise that He should do so.

**116. Here surely was an occasion that could provide an unshakable basis for faith.**

Any one miracle would provide an unshakable basis for faith in any person of good will. But, if the original Gospel manuscripts were in fact preserved by a miracle, you would not accept that as a miracle any more than you accept existent miracles already wrought by God. If you want miracles for your consideration, there are plenty available. "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets," said Christ, "neither will they believe if one rise from the dead." He said this because the refusal of the Jews to be guided by Moses and the Prophets was due to bad will. And a man who has a bad will and does not want to believe, will not believe, no matter what motives are put before him. If you reject the Christian religion despite all its present credentials, neither would you believe even were the original Gospel manuscripts miraculously preserved.

**117. Here surely was psychological momentum for a miracle, if such things are.**

Miracles do not go by "psychological momentum." And, in any case, if there is to be talk of possible miracles God might have thought fit to grant, I could think of a thousand miracles which would have much wider and more efficacious appeal than the preservation of the original Gospel manuscripts.

**118. Do not say there was no need for the survival of the originals because transcriptions could be made without fundamental error.**

I must say precisely that. If I want to read the works of Charles Dickens, it makes no difference whether I read them in the original edition, or in a reprint of a hundred years later. So long as we have the Word of God, it does not matter by what medium it comes to us. All this, of course, is supposing that the Gospels are necessary at all. Absolutely speaking, quite apart from any written Gospels the Catholic Church would have been sufficient provision in itself for the preservation of the Christian religion. But of that, more later.

**119. Rev. Dr. Hort has said that absolute fidelity of transcription in the first three centuries was little valued.**

Dr. Hort held the highest opinion of the accuracy of transmission of the Gospel text. His allusion to mistakes and to lack of fidelity must be taken in a very restricted sense. He would certainly have admitted that such minor variations as crept into early copies do not hinder us from getting back to the original text in all important and substantial matters, and even in almost all unimportant points. The minor error of one copyist would not be that of another. And a comparative study of texts proves a corrective of minor variations.

**120. If all errors were rectified, is it not possible that an entirely different conception of the Scriptures would become inevitable?**

No. Textual criticism could never give an entirely different text of Scripture. In their interpretations of the meaning of Scripture, of course, independent readers will arrive at very different conclusions as to the sense of what is written. But what is written will not undergo any substantial change. For example, a close study of manuscripts, whether of copies or translations, together with quotations in the early Fathers, reveals some 150,000 variant readings. But the vast majority of these are merely transpositions of words, or the substitution of synonyms. Scarcely 100 have any significance, and only about 10 of them could have any relation to doctrinal matters. Nor would any of these 10 have any substantial effect upon Christian doctrine. Moreover, any possible doubt concerning any essential Christian doctrine would be excluded by its being clearly laid down elsewhere in undisputed section of the text. It is impossible that critical research should ever render an entirely different version of Sacred Scripture necessary.

**121. I have read that the Greek Septuagint contained many errors which were not corrected until about 200 A.D.**

The Greek Septuagint Version is the name given to a translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew, made by seventy Jewish scholars at Alexandria for the benefit of the Jewish colony there about 250 B. C. In Palestine copies of what are called the Palestinian Hebrew Scriptures were in use. At the time of Christ,

both the Palestinian Hebrew Scriptures, and the Alexandrian Septuagint Greek were equally acknowledged by the Jews as authoritative. It is certain that neither Christ nor the Apostles ever challenged the value of the Septuagint. Both direct and indirect references to the Greek Septuagint abound in the New Testament.

Now, at the time of our Lord, the original Hebrew writings had already perished. And many minor errors and discrepancies had crept into the copies through inadvertence on the part of copyists. There was no officially corrected Hebrew text at the time of Christ. And errors went on increasing as handwritten copies were multiplied. The Jewish Rabbis, therefore, about the second century after Christ, determined to secure a correct official Hebrew text; and in order to do so they used the Greek Septuagint translation to check discrepancies. Not the errors of the Septuagint, therefore, but the errors of the Hebrew text were being corrected. In his preparation of his Latin version, called the Vulgate, St. Jerome used both the Hebrew text and the Greek Septuagint.

#### **122. Would Christ use Scriptures which contained errors?**

Christ made use of existent copies of the Bible, despite their errors. For those copies were substantially correct. The errors were isolated, and of minor importance. And there is no reason why He should not use existent copies for the matter in them which He knew to be quite correct. For that matter, the Protestant Authorized Version in English today contains many errors. But it is not entirely erroneous. And where it is not erroneous, it is certainly the inspired Word of God, and could be quoted as such.

### Truth of the Bible

#### **123. From the natural point of view I find the stories of Adam and Eve, of Noah and the Ark, of Lot's wife, of Samson, of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, of Jonah and the whale, etc., very difficult to believe.**

I am not surprised. And to me they would seem often enough quite impossible from the merely natural viewpoint. If I were expected to believe in these things as being the result of any merely natural laws or forces, I would refuse to do so. They become credible only when they are attributed to some cause outside merely natural forces; and to me they are credible only because Almighty God Himself has stepped in with a special manifestation of His infinite power. Every reasonable man has to admit that God could cause such things to happen; and a Christian is obliged to believe that He did so, wherever the Bible obviously intends to declare such events to be matters of historical fact.

#### **124. Must these be accepted in the literal sense?**

We have to believe in the inspiration and truth of the Bible. But we have to believe in the truth intended by God, not in the first superficial idea that comes to our mind. In other words, we have to believe in the Bible rightly interpreted. Of various passages we must ask whether God intended them to be taken as literally true, or whether they are meant to convey the truth in a metaphorical way. Normally speaking, presumption stands for the literal sense, and no details are to be taken as metaphorical without sufficiently grave reason. It must be noted also that an historical event may be described in such a way that figurative expressions abound. In such a case, we have to accept the account as substantially historical fact, but need not accept every secondary detail in a similar way.

Now let us take the examples you give. Are we obliged to believe that God intended all the cases you give to be taken entirely in their literal sense? There are certainly metaphorical details blended with the history of Adam and Eve. But we are obliged to believe in the substantial accuracy of the narrative. The Catholic Church insists on our acceptance of those basic facts which are at the very foundation of the Christian religion. We must believe that God did create all beings apart from Himself; that the creation of man was a distinct action; that the first woman was formed from the first man; that the whole human race is descended from the first pair, Adam and Eve; that this first pair disobeyed God, and by their sin put themselves and all their posterity into a state of evil from which they needed redemption by Christ. We have to believe in the historical interpretation of these fundamental details in a spirit of obedience to the Church, and because there are no sound reasons for thinking otherwise.

Personally, also, I see no sound reason for rejecting the historical character of the accounts of Noah and the Ark; of Lot's wife; of Samson; and of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Jews. There is no room for a metaphorical interpretation of these things. It is possible to accept the story of Jonah and the whale as a kind of parable, truly typifying the burial and resurrection of Christ, just as the parable of the Prodigal Son truly typified God's mercy towards sinners. But I cannot see any real need to do this. I would have no difficulty in accepting the story of Jonah and the whale as literally true once I was certain that the account was intended by the original writer in that sense.

**125. Is it not absurd not only that God should want to try Abraham's faith, but that He should order Abraham to kill his own son?**

God did not test Abraham in order to secure further knowledge concerning him, but in order to give Abraham an opportunity of performing a meritorious act of obedience which Abraham would not otherwise have received. The trial was not necessary from God's point of view. It was necessary from Abraham's point of view. It was God's immutable will, based upon His infinite knowledge of all things, that Abraham should first be asked to offer his son; and then that he should be freed from the necessity of sacrificing that son in actual practice. But even had God intended Abraham to kill the boy, God, as supreme Lord and Master of life and death, would not have exceeded His rights.

**126. Can you believe it true that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, so that he refused to release the Jews from Egypt?**

The expression, "God hardened the heart of Pharaoh" occurs only after the repeated statement, as in Exodus VIII., 15, "And Pharaoh hardened his own heart." The context shows that God did not positively harden Pharaoh's heart, but that He merely permitted Pharaoh to harden his own heart. Pharaoh himself admitted, in Exodus IX., 27, "I have sinned this time also. The Lord is just. I and my people are wicked." Pharaoh knew quite well that he could have yielded to God's commands and released the Jews.

**127. Do you believe that God sent the plagues upon Egypt, and above all, had the innocent children of the Egyptians killed?**

Yes. Our speculations as to what God would or would not do are not evidence. I might be inclined to say, "Surely God would not permit cancer!" But God has permitted it. The prudence of man's limited intelligence is not the measure of God's wisdom. As for the innocent Egyptian children, we must not view them merely as individuals. It is essential that they be viewed as social units. One nation as a nation was grinding another nation down in abject slavery and immense suffering- a nation whose services God wanted for a special purpose. The offending nation was punished as a nation, the parents suffering through their children. Those individually innocent children had their lives in this world curtailed, but they continued their existence in the next where they received just treatment from God. Meantime, if those children lacked some of the joys experienced by others who live longer, they also escaped many of the sorrows and afflictions of this world. In any case, a created being is completely owned by its Creator, and we have a right to life only so long as our Creator decrees.

**128. I could go on almost forever quoting extraordinary things believers in the Bible must accept.**

You could. But nothing would be gained by doing so. It would be surprising if an account of an omnipotent God's dealings with men did not contain extraordinary things. Once God's rights and God's power are in question, the extraordinary cannot be advanced as disproof of the events recorded. The Bible certainly cannot be proved untrue in that way.

**129. Did the flood recorded in Genesis really occur?**

Yes.

**130. So you believe that God repented that He had made man? In what sense do you understand that expression?**

From the viewpoint of the human beings to whom God spoke. Naturally, in addressing a message to men, God speaks in a way which is intelligible to them. Now, when a man makes a thing which will not fulfill the purpose for which he made it, he destroys it, and sets to work again. Men did not fulfill God's will, and in quite a human way God says that He regrets having made man, and predicts mankind's destruction by the flood. But there was no change in God. There is a big difference between changing one's will, and willing a change in the destiny of others. God had always willed that if man did good, man would not be destroyed; and that if he did evil, he would be destroyed. The change was in the fortunes of men, not in God. The words, "God repented," therefore, are to be understood metaphorically according to human analogies, and from the aspect of the effects experienced by men.

**131. To my mind the flood is simply a myth.**

Your only reason for terming it a myth is the fact that you cannot see how it happened according to forces which no one claims to have been responsible for it, and according to conditions arbitrarily appointed by yourself. That is not a rational position. You should first ask what exactly is claimed concerning the flood, and what forces are supposed to have caused it.

**132. Do you believe that rain for forty days could cover the whole earth with water above the highest mountains?**

The Bible attributes the flood, not only to the rain, but also to an invasion of water from the sea. Moreover, the flood did not cover the whole of the earth, but the whole of the particular region where it occurred. The interpretation of the flood as local is not opposed to the expression in the Bible referring to "the whole of the earth." That is quite a usual expression for the whole of some given region. Thus, the famine in Egypt is described as a famine "over all the face of the earth."

**133. The water could not remain banked up in a given region even to the height necessary to cover the mountains.**

You forget that the Bible declares God to have been the cause of the flood. God is omnipotent. He can suspend, dispense with, and regulate the physical laws He established as He pleases, and without the slightest difficulty. Imagined difficulties by one who thinks only of created natural laws, leaving out the direct power of God, are of no value. The only way to refute the account of the flood is to refute the historical character of Genesis on other grounds: or to show that there is no God, or that He is not omnipotent. In other words, you must show that the cause alleged by Genesis either does not exist, or could not accomplish what is attributed to Him. But it is of no use to say that you do not see how it could happen in accordance with merely natural factors, when we grant that merely natural factors could not account for it. The waters were maintained in position by God's power during the time willed by God. This involved a miracle, insofar as God acted in a way outside the ordinary course of nature. But an omnipotent God who

can create a universe can do with that universe, or any part of it, what He wills. The question is not as to whether God could do it, but as to whether He did do it. The Bible says that He did. There is positive evidence for it. There is no evidence against it. The flood is not a myth. It happened.

**134. How could Noah build an Ark capable of holding two animals of every kind in the world?**

The flood did not cover the whole face of the earth, but the whole area of that locality in which men existed. Animals, created prior to man, could have spread much farther afield, or could have been created according to their specific kinds in various places over the face of the earth. If we consider all types of animals in the whole of the world, there is a difficulty as to how the Ark, with its known measurements, could accommodate representatives of every type. But there is no need to imagine such conditions. Innumerable varieties of animals could have existed outside the flood area, and not come into contact with the disaster. It is sufficient that types of those animals in the locality subject to the flood were represented in the Ark.

**135. To contain types of all animals in the world the Ark must have been of a tremendous size, probably larger than the Berengaria. What was its probable tonnage?**

Allowing for the local character of the flood, the Ark would not have to be of so great a size as you think. As a matter of fact, the Bible tells us the size of the Ark. It was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet deep. It was, therefore, much smaller than the Berengaria, which was 883 feet long, 98 feet wide, and 57 feet deep. We can scarcely estimate comparative tonnage, as the Berengaria was of steel, with immense inner constructions and heavy engines. Its gross tonnage was 52,226. But the Ark was built of wood. I would say that in size it would have been much about the same as the average 6,000-ton steamer of today.

**136. With two of every living thing on the Ark, the food problem would have to be considered. Many of the animals would have eaten the others, or would have died themselves.**

The animals taken into the Ark for the sake of preservation were duly preserved, and emerged safely after the flood. Noah took on board stores of suitable food, at least sufficient to preserve life, even though it were possibly not the normal diet of every given animal. Keep in mind that the number of animals was far fewer than many imagine, for they were local specimens only. And here is a remarkable fact: In 1609, Peter Jansen, of Horn, in Holland, built a vessel according to the dimensions of the Ark as given in Scripture. And it was found that, even if a quarter of the space were given to storage of food, there would still be left more than 50 cubic feet for each 7,000 pairs of animals. But it is doubtful whether there were 7,000 pairs of animals in the Ark. And the provision of food for the duration of the flood was not so great a problem as is imagined.

**137. If only the human beings in the Ark were saved, all men today must be descended from Noah and his family.**

That is true.

**138. Is it necessary to believe that there were no human survivors except those in the Ark?**

That is not an article of faith. The opinion could be held, though it is the far less probable opinion, that not all men were drowned in the flood, but that some races had proceeded far afield, and had escaped it. Personally, I do not accept that opinion, which raises far greater difficulties than the ordinary view.

**139. Anthropologists say that the Australian aboriginals are the most ancient of all peoples. In that case, they must have been in Australia when the flood occurred, contemporaneously with Moses.**

That would not affect the doctrine of the flood, for Moses wrote of the flood many centuries after it occurred. I might mention that anthropologists are growing more and more modest in their attempts to gauge the antiquity of various races. They admit that many of their earlier speculations have failed to allow sufficiently for all the factors involved. Moreover, expert opinion declares that the Australian aboriginal belongs to the Caucasian group of peoples, and that his presence in Australia is due to migration from Asia.

**140. You see no difficulty in accounting for the presence of the aboriginal in Australia, and the Indian in America?**

No great difficulty presents itself. America was almost certainly joined to Asia in the remote past, at least in the North where Alaska almost touches Siberia. Australia, too, was probably connected by continuous land with Asia where today we have the numerous islands from Cape York to Singapore. But actual union between the countries would not be necessary. From time immemorial men have traveled vast distances in skiffs, or on rafts. In our own times, natives travel great distances in primitive boats made of the bark of trees, or of hollow logs. The difficulty of getting to remote places by water is not regarded today as any serious objection to the doctrine of a common source for the human race.

**141. In Exodus XX., 5, we are told that God is a jealous God. Do you believe that to be true?**

Yes, in the sense intended. Wherever there is love, there must be some kind of jealousy, for jealousy is but zeal on behalf of the object of one's love. But, just as there are different kinds of love, selfish or unselfish, so there are different kinds of jealousy. The more one loves, of course, the more one tries to exclude whatever could come between himself and the object of his love. Where a man, however, is usually jealous of others who would take from him one whom he thinks necessary for his happiness, God is jealous of all that would prevent Him from giving happiness to the souls He loves. To bring this home to the Jews, as His chosen people, and the particular object of His love, God spoke to them through the prophets in a way they could understand. He told them that Israel was wedded to Him; that He had espoused His chosen people; that idolatry, or worship of false gods, was simply "adultery" in His sight. And just as a man is jealous of his wife lest another should rob him of his exclusive right to her affection, so the Jews understood that, on the religious and spiritual plane, God insisted on His exclusive right to their devotedness and love. God's very justice demanded such a return for all the benefits His love had lavished upon them. His use of the human term "jealousy," therefore, was meant to bring home to them on their own level His exclusive claim to their spiritual allegiance. But in God, the term would have to be understood in a way proper to God, and not in a way proper to men.

**142. In Exodus XX., God is recorded as forbidding us to kill, yet in XXXII., as ordering the Israelites to kill even brothers, friends, and neighbors!**

The authorized and just death penalty ordered in the latter case was not in conflict with the commandment forbidding unauthorized and unjust killing. You must note, firstly, that this death penalty was ordered by the very God who forbade men to kill unjustly and on their own personal responsibility. And God should know His own law. Secondly, you should note the theocratic nature of the Jewish regime.

The Jews had God Himself as their Supreme Ruler even as regards their earthly welfare. Those who abandoned God for idolatry were guilty of treason, and punitive measures were justified. Also, they were giving themselves up to all manner of wickedness and immorality, and did not deserve to retain a life they were so abusing. God, therefore, the Supreme Author of life and death, decreed their extinction, but only after they had been afforded an opportunity to repent and return to Him. Those who refused to repent were to be put to death, and no tie of friendship was to hinder the execution of justice.

You speak as though God the Creator were conditioned by and limited to the rights of a creature. God is the Author of life, and we have no right to live longer than He wills. He who makes a thing has the right to unmake it, if it does not fulfill the purpose for which he made it. God has no obligation to keep rebellious



men in existence; and He can appoint any given means of removing them from this world; above all, when it is supremely necessary to impress the gravity of man's obligations upon others.

All that is by way of explanation of God's command. The absence of contradiction between the two passages you quote is evident quite independently of the reasons for the particular event mentioned in your second reference.

**143. If Moses is the author of Deuteronomy, who wrote the account of his death and burial towards the close of the Book?**

Moses certainly could not have written those words. Joshua might thus have completed the Book, or else some other inspired, but unknown writer.

**144. In Joshua X., 13, we read that the "sun stood still." Quite evidently the writer thought that the world was flat, and that the sun moved across the firmament.**

It is not surprising that the writer was unaware of facts not discovered until hundreds of centuries after his time. But that has nothing to do with the inspiration or truth of the Bible. The writer set down the truth as it appeared in the external order. Even had he known that the earth is a globe, that it rotates on its own axis, and that it moves 'round the sun, he would probably and in fact certainly should have described the phenomenon just as he did. With all our scientific enlightenment we still speak of sunrise and sunset, though the sun does not rise, nor "go down." We express the apparent truth in everyday speech without any fear of being challenged concerning our veracity.

**145. Did the sun stand still?**

Relatively to this earth the sun is always still. It only appears to rise, move across the heavens, and set. The question should be, "Did God suspend the rotation of the earth for a given period?" There is no need to admit that He did so. The prolongation of daylight was a miracle wrought by God, but it could have been accomplished by a prolongation of the sun's rays. We all know how density of atmosphere apparently enlarges the sun towards evening, and how, too, by the refraction or bending of the sun's rays, the sun appears to remain visible even after we know that it must have gone below the ordinary line of vision with the actual horizon. By a miraculously caused refraction of the sun's rays God probably caused a prolongation of daylight, giving an effect which men would naturally describe as the sun standing still.

**146. Did Jonah actually live in the whale for three days?**

That depends upon the further question as to whether the incident be intended as strictly historical, or as a kind of parable with typical truth only. Catholic interpreters are free to regard it as an allegory. Most Catholic authors regard the story as historical. Granted the intervention of an omnipotent God, no one can say that it would be impossible. However, the Church has defined nothing concerning the interpretation of the Book of Jonah save that it is truly canonical and inspired by God.

New Testament "Contradictions"

**147. Are there not many such contradictory passages in the New Testament?**

There are no real contradictions in Scripture. A superficial reading may find passages which appear to be contradictory, but an examination of text and context by one who has the requisite knowledge and training in Biblical scholarship removes all idea of conflict. There is not a single instance of alleged contradiction that has not proved capable of rational solution. Enemies of revealed religion could continue asking captious questions interminably, stating objections in two or three plausible sentences, leaving to us the minute research, laborious examination, and the thirty pages of explanation necessary to educate them up to

the standard required for an understanding of the problems they raise. From the earliest years of Christianity, critics have thus attacked the Scriptures, and they will do so till the end of the world. But the Scriptures remain, and will remain, accepted by intelligent and expert men of good will as the inspired Word of God. These men are as conversant with the objections as those who make them; but they are aware, too, of their superficial character in the vast majority of cases, and they know how all such difficulties yield to further examination and research. There is scarcely need to point out the folly of the man who thinks that, because he does not see the solution of a difficulty at once, no solution is possible!

**148. In Galatians I., 15-22, .St. Paul says he did not go to Jerusalem to see the Apostles, but into Arabia, and then back to Damascus. In Acts IX., 25-30, St. Luke says that he went from Damascus to Jerusalem, and there met the Apostles.**

No contradiction occurs there. St. Luke merely omits the additional details given by St. Paul to the Galatians. In writing to them, St. Paul wished to impress upon them that he had received the Christian revelation from God quite independently of the other Apostles. He practically says, "Do not think for a moment that any human being taught me what I preach to you. After my conversion I did not consult others, and I did not even go to Jerusalem to see the Apostles. I went into Arabia, and thence returned to Damascus. Then, three years after my conversion, I went to Jerusalem to see Peter." You see, St. Paul does not deny that he went to Jerusalem. He merely says that three years elapsed before he did so. St. Luke simply omits reference to St. Paul's solitude in Arabia, and merely states for the purpose of his summary of events that he went from Damascus to Jerusalem. He does not say that he did so immediately after his conversion. If a man left England, spent three years in Colombo, and then came on to Australia, a shorter account of his life could say, "He left England and went to Australia." By its omission of reference to Colombo, the shorter account would not contradict a longer one which included such reference.

**149. In Galatians I., 22, St. Paul says that he was unknown by face to the whole of Judea. Yet in Acts XXVI., 20, he tells Agrippa that he preached unto all the country of Judea.**

There is no contradiction there. When he wrote to the Galatians he was speaking of the time before he had preached throughout Judea. When he was speaking to Agrippa, he had already preached there. The fact that he preached there subsequently cannot alter the fact that he was unknown by sight to the people of Judea before he did so.

**150. The Old Testament says that lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, yet St. Paul writes to the Romans, "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie, am I to be judged a sinner?"**

St. Paul puts that question only to refute the suggestion. He puts the question in Rom. III., 7, but in the very next verse says, "We are slandered, as some affirm that we say let us do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just." In Eph. IV., 25, the same St. Paul writes, "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor."

**151. Christ praises marriage saying that, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife." But St. Paul says, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."**

There is no contradiction in that. Our Lord says that, if a man does marry, he leaves father and mother in order to live with his wife. But He Himself counsels the renunciation of marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Matt. XIX., 12. St. Paul therefore declares that one who chooses not to marry makes quite a good choice. The context shows, of course, that St. Paul had in mind not any merely selfish motives, but a choice based upon the idea of self-sacrifice, and a complete consecration of oneself to the love of God and the service of one's fellow men.

**152. The Acts of the Apostles declare that women will prophesy, and speaks of a man's four daughters who did prophesy; yet St. Paul writes, "Suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."**

St. Paul in no way contradicted what was written in the Acts. Personal prophetic gifts were bestowed by God upon both men and women in the first days of the Church. But there is no trace of suggestion that they necessarily conferred any judicial authority or administrative rights in the Church; and St. Paul is dealing precisely with such rights. Also there is no suggestion that the bestowal of prophetic gifts was to be a permanent feature in the Church; and St. Paul's subsequent legislation that women were not to teach publicly in the Churches contradicted no acquired rights of such women. Apart from all this, however, a woman could still receive the gift of prophecy from God without any conflict arising with St. Paul's legislation forbidding women to teach or usurp authority.

**153. St. Paul says that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that we must not resist them. Yet the powers that were are blamed for condemning Christ.**

St. Paul justifies legitimate authority acting within the limits of its proper jurisdiction, and in accordance with the demands of justice. There is no obligation to admit that legislators are right when they exceed their powers, and are manifestly unjust. To have power is one thing. To abuse that power is quite another. And the condemnation of Christ was a criminal abuse of power which it is impossible to justify.

**154. Both St. Peter and St. Paul say that we must be subject to our masters; yet Christ said that one only is your master, and St. Paul himself says, "Be ye not servants of men."**

There is no conflict here. Christ was not referring to ordinary relationships between masters and servants, but used the term "master" in the sense of "teacher": and He declared that He only was the source of doctrine, and that all were to be taught by Him and to hand on His teachings. No one was to set himself up as an independent teacher in his own right. Such words certainly do not gainsay the necessity of obedience on the part of servants to the authority of masters in ordinary everyday affairs. The explanation of St. Paul's words, "Be ye not the servants of men," is given by St. Paul himself. He is speaking of our allegiance to Christ as Christians, and merely declares that that allegiance must never be abandoned in favor of men. We must regard our souls as belonging to Christ, and to no one else. But this does not exempt us from duties within their own proper limits to earthly employers and masters. In fact, St. Paul adds, "Let everyone remain in the condition of life wherein he was called, but abide therein with God." Servants of men will, therefore, remain servants of men; but once they have become Christians they will regard their duties as duties to be fulfilled for the love of God, and not as before, a matter of routine and with no spiritual motives whatever.

**155. St. James says that the anger of man worketh not the righteousness of God, yet St. Paul says, "Be angry and sin not."**

St. Paul warns us not to go to excess and commit sin when we have just reason for resentment and indignation. St. James is dealing precisely with that excess. Man's tendency to anger is implanted by God as part of our very nature, and is quite a good thing in itself. It braces us to ward off things that could be to our harm. Indignation and anger are certainly good when they help a girl to repel unwelcome advances on the part of some evil man. Far from being sinful, anger is then a preservative against sin. In such a case St. Paul's advice is sound. "Be angry, and sin not." Unfortunately, however, anger, like all other passions, tends to get out of hand. It easily becomes immoderate, and we get angry over trifling matters, or merely because we dislike people, and then it is true that the anger of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Anger then tends to vent itself upon others without just cause, and often without any restraint at all. There is no contradiction therefore between St. Paul, who urges us to make a good use only of our tendency to resentment of evil; and St. James, who warns us against bad temper and excessive irascibility.

**156. St. Paul told the Ephesians that they were saved by faith, and not by works; whilst St. James says that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone.**

St. Paul's doctrine is that good works cannot contribute to a man's salvation before he is united with Christ by faith. Because the gift of faith is supernatural, no previous good works can deserve it. A man can ask the

gift of faith from God, and if he receives it, it is the first step towards his salvation. St. James tells us that after a man has received the gift of faith he is expected to live up to it. The two passages show that both faith and a life of good works in accordance with faith are necessary if one is to be justified in God's sight. Such has ever been the Catholic doctrine, and it excludes the two extremes of rationalism and early Protestantism. For the rationalist says that natural goodness without faith is enough for any man; whilst the early Protestants attacked the Catholic doctrine that good works are necessary for salvation, and taught that salvation depends on faith alone. But I have said enough to show that there is no trace of contradiction between St. Paul and St. James in this matter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **The Christian Religion**

#### Christianity Alone True

**157. You seem to think that the Christian religion is the only true religion.**

I do not merely think it to be the only true religion. I know it to be so. I know that religion is as necessary to the human race as breathing. I know that there must be a true religion. I know that all other religions save that revealed by God and recorded in the Bible are false. Reason alone can provide sufficient grounds for that. Moreover, I know by the gift of divine faith that the contents of the Christian religion are true with the very truth of God.

**158. If you were a Mahometan, you would think the same of your Mahometanism. So, too, if you were a Buddhist.**

I deny that either a Mahometan or a Buddhist, or a member of any other non-Christian religion can ever have the same kind of certainty concerning his religious beliefs as that which is given by that particular grace of God known as the gift of Christian faith. Meantime, that others are convinced of the truth of their various religions merely shows that the human mind is limited; that men are affected by heredity and environment; and that they are prone to form very decided opinions without sufficient knowledge. But that does not affect the truth as it is in itself, and does not make all religions equal in value.

**159. Much that is in Christianity is to be found in other religions also.**

It would be very surprising were that not so. Religion is natural to man; and if men try to construct religious systems in accordance with their natural instinct and needs, they will naturally hit on some truth. And the basic natural truths in their various systems tend to content those who know no other religion, and to distract their attention from the accompanying human errors.

#### Not the Product of Religious Experience

**160. It is often argued that Christianity is true because of its beneficial effect upon humanity.**

Where it is practiced, it undoubtedly has that beneficial effect. Life is benefited by the Gospels. That could not but be the case, since both life and the Gospels have the same Author, God.

**161. But the adjustment of the Gospels to human needs does not prove divine origin.**

If we consider Christ's person, His doctrine in itself, the manner in which He taught it, together with its effect upon the lives of those who have practiced it sincerely, we have moral certainty that the religion of the Gospels is from God. We cannot account for it by merely human ingenuity. In fact, the greatest miracle of all would be for the merely natural ingenuity of Christ, were He nothing more than the son of Joseph, the carpenter, to evolve such a doctrine out of a merely human mind. In fact, it is impossible that a religion so perfect in all respects should be wrong in one point only, and that of such fundamental importance, its claim to a divine origin. Christ has been able to do what no other religion, and no philosopher, has ever been able to accomplish. He has given a doctrine which completely satisfies every legitimate aspiration of mankind. The argument is strengthened when we see that the loss of Christian faith and of the grace of Christ in a soul, or even in a nation, leads to vice, discord, pessimism and despair.

**162. Could we not say that Christianity is the crystallization of the wisdom of mankind?**

Not reasonably. Christendom drew its wisdom from the Gospels, and every departure from them has resulted in but a manifestation of folly.

**163. I mean that the Gospels should be regarded as the fruit, and not the cause of human experience.**

I don't think we could say that any more than we could say that a baby, being nourished, is giving, and not receiving milk. It is not human wisdom that made the Gospels. They are the Gospels that correct human folly.

Compared With Buddhism, Confucianism, Mahometanism, Bahaism, etc.

**164. Since other religions contain so much good, why do you rank them all as false?**

Because not every particle of truth is "the" truth. Non-Christian religions are wrong because side by side with such natural truth as they have, they contain many errors; and because they say they are from God, whereas they are not.

**165. Buddhism and Confucianism have an immense number of adherents, far outnumbering Christians.**

Even if you take those two religions together that is not true. If you were to include all other non-Christian religions in the world you would attain your desired majority. Taken individually, neither Buddhism nor Confucianism is numerically equal to Catholicism. It would not matter if they were, for error could not become truth merely because those who are wrong happen to outnumber those who are right. As a matter of fact, the approximate and proportionate figures are as follows: Catholicism, 400 millions; Greek Orthodox Christians, 150 million; Protestantism, 220 million; Confucianism and Taoism, 350 million; Buddhism, 150 million; Hinduism, 230 million; Mahometans, 210 million. You apparently regard Buddhism as including Hinduism, though they differ. Also it must be noted that the Indian and Chinese systems are rather moral philosophies than religions strictly so-called; and that the religious elements in them are due to the natural religious inclinations of men trying to find vague expression through these philosophies.

**166. Buddhism is of far greater antiquity than any Christian creed.**

Superficially that may seem to be true, insofar as Christianity dates from Christ, whilst Buddhism originated with Buddha or Gautama, who was born about 557 B. C. In reality, however, Christianity is very much older in origin, for it is but the legitimate development of the primitive revelation given by God to our first parents, and of the progressive revelations given through the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as through Moses and subsequent Prophets. The primitive, patriarchal, and Mosaic religions were simply preparatory Christianity. And centuries before Buddha was born, men were looking forward to Christ their Savior, as we ourselves look back to Him for our salvation through His death on Calvary.

**167. The Buddhist and Christian codes of conduct are apparently of similar portent.**

You must not confuse external similarities in conduct with the code of that conduct. Man is essentially a social being, and it is not surprising that a leader should attract disciples and inculcate naturally good principles of morality. But the code of conduct in Buddhism differs immensely from the Christian code. Buddhism knows nothing of God nor of duties to God. It is based on a pessimistic view of life, and is entirely self-centered. It teaches that man is not essentially different from animals; that he goes through a series of transmigrations, ending practically in annihilation. Whilst Christians believe that they are created by God, and owe to God obedience and worship, serving Him in humility, and doing all for the love of Him, Buddhists regard man as a particle of a blind universe, whose whole aim is to escape distress and be at peace in this world. Even charity to others is based on love of self insofar as enmity disturbs one so much interiorly. Where Christians are saved by Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Buddhists need no savior. Buddha saves no one. He indicates his way, and each can attain the end by his own powers. Again there is but one Christ for all ages. But there must be a series of Buddhas, a new Buddha appearing as the work of each one fails. I cannot go through all the differences. But I have said enough to show that the codes of Buddhism and of Christianity are essentially different.

**168. Has it not been claimed that Christianity copied many rules of conduct from Buddhism?**

That has been claimed, but by writers who have judged too hastily from apparent resemblances. Some scholars have asserted a derivation of certain Christian practices from Buddhism; others, that later Buddhistic practices have been derived from Christianity. But deeper research has led scholars to deny both suppositions, holding that the similarities are more apparent than real; and that they are natural developments, independently of one another, from the respective aspirations of the two systems.

**169. Has not a virgin birth been claimed for Buddha?**

No authentic claims can be advanced on behalf of any abnormal birth in regard to Buddha. The oldest writings concerning him were compiled several centuries after his death, and they are full of imaginary elements. But even the legend of Buddha does not claim a virgin birth. We are told that Buddha was born of Maya, the wife of Suddhodana. Suddhodana and Maya had lived as husband and wife for years, but Maya was childless. Maya, however, miraculously conceived a child "by a ray of the sun." The child was named Siddhartha, with the surname Gautama, in honor of a Vedic poet. His followers speak of him as Buddha, the "wise one." The Buddhist tradition, therefore, does not say that Gautama was born of a virgin; and the cause of his conception—a ray of the sun—is obviously folklore. There is no parallel between the legendary birth of Buddha, and the historical virgin birth of Christ.

**170. How do you account for the solidity and perpetuation of Buddhism and Confucianism?**

So far as solidity is concerned neither Buddhism nor Confucianism has preserved a really consistent body of doctrine through the ages. There is nothing in them like the stability of dogmatic teaching in the Catholic Church. Both are rather ethical systems of conduct. Their perseverance is easily accounted for. Man is naturally religious, and he will tend to cling to the religion he has been taught, above all, when the true religion has not been brought within his reach. And even when the true religion has been put before him, the influence of heredity and environment, together with prejudice, may prevent his viewing it impartially.

**171. How do the personalities of Buddha and Confucius compare with that of Christ?**

They cannot be ranked as on the same plane as that of Christ. Neither Buddha nor Confucius claimed to be more than ordinary human beings. They did not even claim to be able to show their fellow men the way to God, for they knew nothing of God. They claimed to show men the way to peace of soul, and how to escape the worries and trials of this life. Christ claimed to be God, and demanded for Himself the love and absolute service of men. There is all the difference in the world between the Divine Personality of Christ and the merely human personalities of Buddha and of Confucius. According to Buddha's own teachings, he

himself has gone through various transmigrations, having previously been a beggar, a lion, a bird, an elephant, a king, and various other types. He attained perfection, so the legend says, and had a right to enter Nirvana; but he preferred to be born again in order to teach men the road to wisdom and to freedom from the miseries of life.

Confucius was born about six years earlier than Buddha. This Chinese philosopher was a great reader and collector rather than an original thinker. He edited the ancient Chinese classics, and taught a system of natural ethics. He concentrated on behavior in this world, and admitted that he knew nothing beyond this world, although he did not deny a future life.

Of no other person in history could such words be written as those used by St. John in speaking of Christ: "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."

**172. Does not Mahometanism worship the true God?**

It does, but in the wrong way. No one with a sense of logic and a knowledge of history could accept Mahometanism as a religion truly revealed by God. Mahomet was born about 570 A. D. He founded a religion of his own, blended of Arabic, Jewish, and Christian elements. But his moral standards fall infinitely below those of the Christian teachings, whilst many of his doctrines and the history of his religious movement cannot possibly claim a divine origin and protection in the light of critical analysis.

**173. Perhaps if you knew more of other religions you would not continue to be a Roman Catholic.**

You have no grounds for that supposition. Of one thing I am quite certain. If there be any true religion in this world today it is the Catholic religion. It is a choice, therefore, between Catholicism, or no religion at all. But to have no religion is such a complete violation of reason that no instructed and intelligent man could entertain such an idea for a moment. You can be quite sure that I will spend the rest of my life as a Catholic, and die in that faith. If such absolute certainty seems strange to you, it is only because your own religion has never been able to enkindle a similar confidence within you.

**174. Have you yourself ever studied other religions besides the Catholic religion?**

I have been doing it practically all my life. Like everybody else, of course, I was born a pagan. But after a few weeks I was christened in the Anglican Church, and took Anglicanism for granted until later reflection altered my views. Despite my being an Anglican, I attended Methodist and Presbyterian Sunday Schools as a child; but later on, when I left school and went to work, dropped all religion in practice. When, for the first time the claims of the Catholic Church were brought to my notice, I reacted against them rather violently, and resumed my attendance at the Anglican Church, and sought the help of the Anglican rector of the parish to preserve my Protestant faith. With him I went into the whole question of religion deeply, and he ended by telling me that he thought I ought to become a Catholic, considering the convictions at which I had arrived. I had no thought then of becoming a priest, of course. But later on, I felt that such was God's will, and after a twelve years' course of studies here in Australia, I was ordained as a Catholic priest. Thereupon I went to Rome to do two more years of study there, and ever since have been engaged chiefly in the study of comparative religion. This has necessitated the constant reading of what other religions and churches have to say for themselves, and I can but assure you that the more knowledge I have attained, the greater has become my certainty of the truth of the Catholic Church.

**175. Have you ever studied the religion of Bahaism?**

I have. It is a popular religion of mushroom growth in recent times, though it claims to be very ancient in origin.

### **176. Could you tell me something of its history?**

According to the Bahais, the last of the Mahometan Shiite sect of 12 Imans died in Persia about 940 A. D. But he did not really die. He continued to live in the beyond, directing the world from a distance through an intermediary or a gate called a Bab. This went on for 69 years when the last Bab died without appointing a successor. In 1844, a young Persian decided to announce himself as a Bab, restoring communication with the last Iman. This young Persian was murdered in 1850, but his followers, the Babis, said that he had promised the advent of the One longed for by all peoples, the Mighty Educator, who would give the Most Great Peace to all mankind. One of the leaders of the Babis, named Baha'u'llah, suddenly declared, in 1863, that he was the Mighty One promised. Baha'u'llah preached his religion chiefly in Baghdad. One of his followers, named Ibrahim George Khay-ar'u'llah, who had married an English wife, went to America about 1892, and began to spread the worship of Baha'u'llah there. The movement so grew that in 1902 a magnificent temple was commenced in Chicago, on the shores of Lake Michigan. In 1911, Abdul-Baha, whom Baha'u'llah, before his death, had appointed Chief Apostle, went to America, and Protestant Churches of various denominations were thrown open to him for lectures. He taught that Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, and Mahomet, had all been precursors of Baha'u'llah, and that in Baha'u'llah men would find the fullness of God's revelation, and the Most Great Peace. Moreover, Baha'u'llah is responsible for all that happens in the world, and those who become Bahais will attain true spiritual power and share with him in supreme control of all things. A National Assembly has been formed in America to rule the cause of the Most Great Peace there, and to see to its expansion. This strange religious aberration is winning many credulous souls who have lost their grip on such religion as they previously possessed, and are in search of a new one.

Rejected by Modern Jews

### **177. Why do the Jews today still deny the claims of Christ?**

Because they are not sufficiently interested to go into the question. Most of them are content with what their fathers before them have believed. Then, too, the Jews have a most strong national bond identified with their religion, and their very sense of isolation from other peoples even whilst in the midst of them keeps them aloof from the religion of others. Furthermore, the Jews still center their hopes and expectations upon a salvation restricted to this world, devoting little thought to the hereafter and to the supernatural. Finally, I think most Jews have a latent consciousness of the ill-treatment to which they have been subject, often most unjustly, by professing Christians; and this in itself would leave a kind of repugnance for the religion of those who injured them, predisposing them against so much as considering its claims.

### **178. How do the Jews stand in relation to Christianity today?**

Judaism as a religion is no longer acceptable to God. The one true religion in this world is the Christian religion. But the Jewish people, as a whole, are a witness to the Christian religion in spite of themselves. They are dispersed everywhere, yet are one race and a permanent feature of this world. They manifest the very predictions of their own Scriptures, and of Christ, by their very refusal to see the realization of those predictions. They preserve the very texts and prophecies announcing that they will love the promises, yet reject the fulfillment of those promises. It is a marvelous thing. How far individual Jews are responsible to God for their rejection of Christ must, of course, be left to God. The modern Jew would not be nearly so responsible as those Jews who actually saw and heard Christ in person.

### **179. Would a good and practicing Jew go to heaven, despite his not being baptized a Christian?**

Yes, provided through no fault of his own he did not at any time advert to the truth of Christianity, and to the necessity of actual baptism; and provided he sincerely believed Judaism to be still the true religion, and died truly repentant of all serious violations of conscience during life.

The Demand for Miracles



**180. If God wants people to become Christians would not you, seeing the appalling conditions today, and believing in miracles as you do, expect God to work more miracles to convert us unbelievers?**

No. You see, as a Catholic, I believe that miracles can occur, and I know from history that miracles have occurred. But I do not therefore think that miracles should occur whenever human speculation decides that they would be opportune. As for the appalling conditions of today, history makes me doubt whether it is relatively more appalling than in other ages. There is a danger that we, who are sensitive to the present ills of humanity, will tend to discount the miseries of previous ages to which others were sensitive, and to think that no one has suffered as we.

**181. If Jesus was God, as you believe, and came to earth once, might He not reasonably make an occasional reappearance, especially in such times as these?**

That is not a reasonable expectation. How could it be, when we know definitely that when God did appear in the midst of men, He declared that His next coming would be at the end of time? That necessarily excludes occasional reappearances in our midst. Nor can I see what benefits you think would arise from such reappearances. When God did become incarnate and dwelt amongst men, multitudes who met Him refused to believe in Him. The same thing would happen again. He came once to pay the price of man's redemption; and that having been done, all who have the good will may benefit by it. If they have not the good will, they would not benefit by His coming again. And such times as these have no greater claim upon Him than any other times.

#### The Necessity of Faith

**182. The problem of religion seems to be extraordinarily difficult.**

The problem is extraordinarily difficult yet extraordinarily simple. The simplest truth revealed by God is extraordinarily deep when we try to sound it to its full depths. Yet faith in all that God has taught is a simple act, based not on the understanding of every least thing God has revealed, but on a consciousness of the claims of God to our allegiance no matter what He reveals. By this faith, which a child can possess, we accept all that He reveals in general, and each thing as further study reveals it to us as contained in the general revelation. But this faith is a gift of God, to be prayed for rather than to be attained by our own efforts, even though our own efforts are required as a disposing condition.

**183. You maintain that faith in Christ is necessary for salvation?**

I maintain that Christ is the Savior of mankind, and that there is no salvation except through Christ. A man's own efforts cannot accomplish his salvation, for man cannot be his own redeemer. If any man is saved, therefore, he will owe it to the grace of Christ. But as regards actual faith in Christ, professed during one's lifetime, that will be required only of those who have had Christian teaching sufficiently manifested to them. One who has had sufficient opportunity to believe in Christ is guilty before God if he refuses deliberately to do so, and dies still rejecting His teaching authority. Therefore, Christ said, "He who believes shall be saved; he who believes not, shall be condemned."

**184. What of those who have never heard of Christianity and follow other beliefs?**

God obliges no one to the impossible. If these people are sincere in their mistaken beliefs, try to obey natural conscience, and repent of their failures and sins, God will give them the necessary interior graces for their salvation, graces due to the merits of Christ. The moment after their death they will know that Christ has been their Redeemer, even though, through no fault of their own, they did not recognize the fact during life.

**185. What of the countless millions before Christ?**

The same answer applies to them also. Those who knew of the Old Testament promises of the Redeemer to come had to have faith in those promises of God as a condition of their salvation. Others were in the same position as those today who have never heard of Christ. But all graces given prior to Christ, whether to those who believed in God's revelation, or to the inculpably ignorant, were given in view of Christ's death on the Cross; and He is the Savior of all.

**186. Faith is a blind acceptance of what we do not know to be true, and religion is but organized ignorance.**

The Christian faith is certainly not blind. It is wide-awake acceptance of what God has taught only after one has solid evidence that God has so spoken. If a man is ill, it is faith in the medical profession that takes him to the operating table; and far from this being an ignorant action, it is a most wise one. The same principle is involved in an act of faith in God's reliability when He deigns to teach us truth in the supernatural order.

**187. Is it a virtue to be so convinced of one's own beliefs as to exclude any possibility of being wrong?**

Not if one's own beliefs happen to be the result of one's own speculations, with nothing particularly in their favor save that one desires to maintain them. It is a virtue, however, to maintain the absolute truth of what Christ has taught, once one has attained the reasonable conviction that He is God. For true virtue refuses to admit that God does not know what He is talking about, or that He is given to telling lies. It is not a question of refusing to admit a possibility of our being wrong. It is a question of refusing to admit the possibility of God being wrong. Virtue forbids blasphemous insults against God.

**188. Once you say that your religion deals with the infinite and the supernatural you rule out any possibility of knowing it to be true.**

You are confusing two things, a religion as a religion, and the contents of its teachings. For example, we can know in the strict sense that Christ really existed, that He claimed to be God, and wrought more than enough signs to justify belief in that claim. A Christian knows that his religion is the one true religion. The teachings of that religion, which deal with the infinite and supernatural, he believes by faith. He knows that God teaches certain things, but because they are beyond human comprehension, he believes them by faith in God's knowledge and veracity.

**189. However reasonable a thing may be, if it is not demonstrable, it remains mere theory.**

You are not making sufficient allowance for the different kinds of demonstration, the one from intrinsic evidence, the other from extrinsic evidence. For example, I know that two and two make four by intrinsic evidence. I have only to set out two units with another two units before me, and I know that there are four units. But proof by extrinsic evidence differs. I prove that God exists from reason. By history I prove that He said this thing. But since what He says is as far above me as the Einstein theory of relativity is above the powers of a child of seven, I believe it simply because He says so. And I have a genuine knowledge of the truth based upon His authority. It is not mere theory. A theory is a probable guess, a conjecture, or an hypothesis. But the doctrine I believe is not a guess, conjecture, or hypothesis of my own.

#### Difficulties Not Doubts

**190. Take faith in the Trinity. You admit that, since it is a mystery, you cannot demonstrate its truth beyond doubt.**

We know the truth of the Trinity beyond all doubt. We cannot demonstrate the existence of three divine Persons in the one divine Nature by intrinsic evidence drawn from an experimental knowledge of the divine Nature as it is in itself. But we can give all that reason requires to exclude all doubt as to its truth.

Negatively we can show that the doctrine does not violate any rational principles. Positively we can show that God has revealed the doctrine.

**191. The evidence in support of the theory of the Trinity, like the evidence in support of the theory of evolution, is incomplete; therefore, we cannot "know" either theory to be correct.**

Not for a single moment can one speak of the theory of evolution and of the doctrine of the Trinity as if they were on a par in the realm of our knowledge. Evolution is a conjecture of men based on a probable guess of human reason alone, and without adequate data. The doctrine of the Trinity is the authentic teaching of Christ with all the authority of God, who obviously must know the facts. The Trinity, therefore, is not a theory; it is absolutely certain with all the certainty of God's omniscience.

**192. Does not the Church demand faith precisely because we cannot know it to be true?**

We have a mediate knowledge of its truth. We know that God is a reliable source of information, and that He has taught the doctrine. We believe it because God teaches it, and our faith gives us a knowledge of the truth which has an extrinsic certainty far above all degrees of mere probability. Evolution is a mere theory because man has not sufficient evidence to demonstrate its truth, and has no other source of information concerning it save that of the world about him. If, however, God stepped in and revealed to man that the evolutionary theory is true, then it would no longer be a mere theory, but a certainty, even though men discovered not a scrap more natural evidence to support it. Men would know of its truth just as a child would know the right answer to a sum if told by a teacher, despite omission or inability on the part of the child to do the preliminary work necessary to arrive at that answer. In the same way we have certainty of the religious truths God has revealed.

**193. Can one cling to the Christian faith despite intellectual difficulties which defy solution concerning its doctrines?**

Yes, for difficulties concerning revealed mysteries do not affect the sound and reasonable foundation for one's acceptance of Christianity as the revelation of God. A difficulty in comprehending the full significance of a thing is not a doubt concerning its existence. There are scores of difficulties concerning things we know to be facts in the natural order with scientific certainty; but we do not deny them because of that.

Proofs Available

**194. You admit, then, that Christianity cannot be proved?**

I have never said that. It may demand faith in doctrines above the powers of human reason in themselves, but it can prove itself to have been revealed by God.

**195. If you have anything like proof, men like Professor Haldane, who was deeply versed in the arguments for Christianity, yet who does not believe in it, must be incurably stupid.**

Professor Haldane is not deeply versed in the arguments for Christianity. He has made the most elementary blunders in his attempts at stating them. And however well versed he may be in his own department of natural science, I am afraid that he is incurably stupid in at least some other matters. Listen to one of his considered statements: "I am prepared to admit the possibility," he writes, "that I am nothing but a biologically and socially convenient fiction." That is certainly a stupid statement, and a repudiation of reason as a guide to truth at all.

**196. You really mean that you can find arguments to support the belief of those already inclined to such belief.**

I do not mean that. Men have been convinced by the evidence for Christianity who were not in the least inclined to Christian beliefs when they took up the study of the question. And of those convinced, some have yielded to their convictions, making their act of faith in Christian teaching; others have not. Whether a man is inclined to accept Christian beliefs or not, sufficient proof is available for every reasonable man to show that the Christian religion has been revealed by God, and that its teachings have the guarantee of His authority.

#### Dispositions of Unbelievers

##### **197. Look at the numbers thirsting after all sorts of panaceas for salvation.**

I deny that they want salvation as we Christians understand it. They may thirst for panaceas of this world's ills so that they can enjoy this world's goods and bodily comforts and pleasures without concomitant penalties. They want what they desire, not what God tells them they ought to desire. And the end in view being wrong, they naturally ignore the means to the right end. Rejecting the supernatural end or destiny which God offers, they propose another end to be attained independently of Him. All they know is that all the means they have tried so far to get to their self-constituted end have failed. But they will not renounce the material and selfish end they propose to attain. So they are still trying and grasping at all sorts of panaceas, and are left still thirsty.

##### **198. Don't say that men do not choose to believe because the way of salvation is hard.**

That is precisely what I must say. Some people are so intellectually lazy that it is too hard on them to undertake the study of God's revelation. Others are so proud that it is too hard on their self-esteem to ask them to submit to authoritative teaching of any kind. Others are so immersed in earthly ambitions that it is too hard on them to accept supernatural and spiritual ideals instead. Others again are so subject to self-indulgence in a hundred and one ways that a religion asking self-denial is altogether too hard for them to consider for a moment.

##### **199. Men are ready to submit to anything provided they can realize their ideals.**

You will say "their" ideals. But they are not prepared to sacrifice "their" ideals for those proposed to them by Almighty God. Men will sacrifice what they consider the lesser good for what they consider the greater good. And often some good of the present moment will seem greater than a future good which in their calm moments men will admit to be really the higher and better. People whose one ideal is to have a good time will sacrifice rest, health, and money in the cause. Others, whose ideals are based on utilitarian rather than upon pleasurable earthly ambitions, will sacrifice comfort and well-being in the fight for their objective. With some people individual motives prevail. But they stake all on earthly and materialistic considerations, which they are not prepared to sacrifice for supernatural and spiritual considerations. They will not serve God. It is humanity that is to be served and worshipped, either in their own precious persons, or in mankind as a whole. Man is lord of creation to a certain extent, but he is a vassal king, subject to God, and obliged to serve God. But human pride revolts. Men refuse to admit that they owe homage to God. They will be independent, self-sufficient, the sole object of their own worship. All must minister to them, and they to nobody. And all must be measured according to its relationship to their earthly progress, comfort, and welfare. In other words, man is made for man, and not for God. And this deification of man is the great idolatry. Men are fascinated by it. Humanity is set up on an altar, as was a woman as the goddess of reason in the Cathedral of Notre Dame during the French Revolution. And sacrifices are made for the glorification and satisfaction of humanity whether in self, or the nation, or the race, to the accompaniment of clouds of incense in the form of adulation, and of hymns of praise for men's noble ideals of themselves. This is the great obstacle to religious belief in God, and to the acceptance of His revelation.

##### **200. See what men have endured under Communism and Fascism, in order to realize their ideals!**

These things are bound up only with the earthly and material interests of humanity. Men are striving for what they think will serve themselves best, not that they themselves may serve God. And whatever they may be prepared to sacrifice for their own sake, they are not prepared to sacrifice themselves for God's sake. That they find too hard; and that is why they refuse to consider a revealed religion which demands an abdication of self and detachment from the fascination of earthly attractions. Even did they study it scientifically and sufficiently to realize that God's revelation is credible, they would refuse to make its teachings the object of their faith and conduct. Not every man yields to evidence; and there is a lot of truth in the saying that "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." The basic difficulty as regards the Christian religion is that men's wills are wrong. And that hinders the perception of the truth. So Christ said, "Everyone that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reprov'd." And to love this world as if it were the be-all and end-all of man is doing evil. It is the repudiation of God. And Christ warned us against it when He said, "Love not the world," indicating the supreme law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength." Lack of the good will to do that is the basic reason for intellectual rejection of God's revelation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### A Definite Christian Faith

#### One Religion is Not as Good as Another

#### **201. If Christ came to earth today, would He not bless all the Christian Churches, despite their doctrinal differences?**

No. Remember that Jesus said, "I am the Truth." Truth excludes error. He founded His Church and said, "If a man will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen." That does not sound much like a blessing. Again He said to His Apostles, "He who despises you despises Me; and he who despises Me, despises Him that sent Me." Also, "He that is not with Me is against Me." And if it be true that Sunday should be observed by Christians, would He have a blessing for the Church which still insists on the Jewish Saturday? If He be really present in the Blessed Eucharist, would He be equally pleased with the doctrine of those who deny His presence there? He would say, "I do not blame those who are mistaken through no fault of their own, but I object to doctrines which deny the truth I revealed to mankind. And I cannot bless organizations devoted to the diffusion of error."

#### **202. I'm not a Catholic, but God has heard my prayers in many ways.**

That in no way disproves what I have said. The Catholic Church teaches that God will hear the sincere prayer of anyone at all, even though that person's religion be quite erroneous, provided the person be in good faith and does not suspect it to be wrong. God would hear the earnest prayer of a sincere Mahometan; but that would not make Mahometanism the correct religion. And that God hears the sincere prayer of a sincere Protestant does not make it just as right to be a Protestant as to be a Catholic. Those who really love Christ want to belong to the true Church He founded, and not to any other. And the Church He established is the Catholic Church.

**203. Are not a conscientious Catholic and a conscientious Protestant equal in God's sight?**

They may have equally good dispositions, but they have not equally good religions. The Catholic has the advantage of the full truth, and greater means of grace at his disposal. Protestantism, after all, lacks the Mass, and many of the Sacraments, besides a clear knowledge of Christ's teachings on many essential matters.

**204. At judgment will Protestants be told that they were on the wrong path?**

They will certainly be told that. But they will not be blamed for the mistake if they were in no way responsible for it. God will judge them on other factors; and if indeed they have been faithful to their conscientious convictions, they will save their souls. But realizing then that the Catholic religion was right, little as they suspected it, they will say, "Had we but known when we were on earth, we certainly would have become Catholics."

**205. Would you deny that God offered grace and guidance to such Protestants?**

Certainly not. God gave them the graces necessary for their salvation, and to do His will according to their convictions. If in His goodness God had offered them the gift of faith in the Catholic Church they would have become Catholics. If they did not become Catholics it was only that they did not receive the particular grace necessary to perceive the truth of the Catholic Church. God respected their good will, and gave the graces necessary for a life of sincere virtue, or at least necessary for final repentance and death in His love and friendship.

Changing One's Religion

**206. It is only natural that people should believe what they have been taught from childhood.**

That is quite true, and, therefore, we do not blame people for mistakes for which they are not responsible. But the fact that people tend to believe what they have been taught from childhood does not make what they have been taught right. Would you say that, because a Protestant child takes it for granted that Protestantism is right, and a Catholic child takes it for granted that Catholicism is right, both Protestantism and Catholicism are equally right? They cannot be. Catholicism says that it is absolutely necessary to be subject to the Pope. Protestantism says just the opposite. How can both be right?

**207. I think we should die in the religion in which we are born.**

That is an antichristian principle. Were it sound, why did not Christ tell the Jews to die in the religion in which they were born, instead of asking them to accept His religion? And, even on reason alone, must a man live and die in the religion of his parents even though he discovers it to be wrong?

**208. One who leaves the religion of his parents is a traitor.**

A traitor is one who leaves a cause he knows to be right, and does so from unworthy motives. But would you say that St. Paul was a traitor when he abandoned what he knew to be wrong in order to embrace the religion of Christ once he had perceived it to be right?

**209. Should people change their religion when they get married?**

If they discover their religion to be wrong, they should abandon it whether they marry or not. If they know it to be right, they should not abandon it for any consideration on earth. Marriage has nothing whatever to do with this question. Religion is concerned with duties to one's Creator. No desire to please a fellow creature can affect one's duties to God.

**210. Should not a woman embrace the religion of her husband?**

Such a principle could never be admitted. For then, were her husband a pagan, she would have to become a pagan; if a Jew, she would have to become a member of the Jewish religion; if a Methodist, or a Presbyterian, or an Anglican, or a Baptist, or anything else, she would have to become a member of one of those religions. God's rights, and the claims of conscience, would then become a mockery. The principle must stand that the relation between the soul and God cannot be affected by any relationships with human beings. This principle is of universal application.

**211. Then a Protestant cannot become a Catholic in order to marry a Catholic?**

That is true. However desirable it might be that both should be Catholics, if the Protestant party conscientiously believes the Catholic religion to be wrong, he cannot possibly embrace that religion. What he can do, however, is this: He can suspect that he has not enough knowledge of the Catholic religion; or that he even has mistaken notions about it. For the sake of his wife he can, therefore, study the Catholic religion. Then, if he becomes convinced of its truth, he can embrace it for its own sake, and for the love of God. I hope all is now clear. Marriage is not a reason in itself for the changing of one's religion. But marriage to a Catholic would certainly justify a Protestant in undertaking a close study of the Catholic religion to see whether he could conscientiously accept it.

**212. It is out of place for a man to adopt his wife's religion.**

As no woman should adopt a religion merely because it is that of her husband, so no man should adopt a religion merely because it is that of his wife. Every human being owes it to God to find out the true religion, and having found it, to embrace it. This obligation falls on every soul, independently of the question of sex. If the wife's religion happens to be the true religion, then the man should embrace that religion, not for his wife's sake, but from a sense of duty to God. If the man's religion happens to be the true one, then the wife should join it.

Catholic Convictions and Zeal

**213. In mixed marriages it is always the Protestant husband who is converted to the Catholic wife's religion, never the Catholic who accept the Protestant religion. Why do Catholics cling to their position so rigidly?**

Because it is certain that the Catholic party has the true religion. And, therefore, Catholics cling to their religion for the love of God, and of Christ, and of their own souls. Knowing that the Catholic religion is true, Catholics know that they can please God only by fidelity to their religion; and that they would offend Him seriously by leaving it. Duty to God is the most important thing in life. To be what God wants her to be is a better and nobler thing for any woman than to be what her husband would like her to be. And no husband can take God's place in his wife's soul. Secondly, we must think of Christ. He established the Catholic Church only, and to that Church we owe obedience for the love of Christ. To abandon the Catholic Church is to abandon Christ, and cry out with those who put Him to death, "Away with Him. Let Him be crucified." Catholics cannot bring themselves to do that. Thirdly, we Catholics understand the duty to our own souls. Our religion is dearer to us than life itself. We know its truth and beauty and value as others do not. And we need the help our religion alone can give us. To abandon our Holy Mass, our Communion, the opportunity of sacramental absolution in Confession, our devotion to our Lady, the Mother of Christ, in fact, all the privileges of our religion—one who asks us to do this does not realize what he is asking. Never can there be any peace of soul for us save in the Catholic religion.

**214. Can any one group claim to be exclusively right, and that others are accordingly wrong?**

If not, every one of us is radically uncertain as to whether his religion is right or wrong. Christ could never have intended that. He taught the truth with authority, and promised to safeguard it till the end of time.

Being the very Son of God, He could do so, and He chose to do so by means of an infallible Church. And he who wants the religion of Christ must belong to that infallible Church. To understand this, contrast Christ with some merely human philosopher. Take Aristotle. When Aristotle was dead, his teaching, so coherent, intellectual, and positive fell into the hands of disciples of diverse tendencies, who dragged it in all directions, and finally degraded it into rank materialism. Now Christ, knowing what was in man, and possessing means not possessed by Aristotle, took precautions against such distortion and destruction of His teachings. He organized and guaranteed His Church from the doctrinal as well as from the practical point of view. He Himself was the Light. When He departed He left His Church to be the Light of mankind to shine, not with a light of its own, but with His Light, as infallibly reliable as Himself. All religions which conflict with the Catholic Church therefore are mistaken.

**215. If others think their own religion the right one, should Catholics try to convert them?**

Yes, although prudence is required in the exercise of that duty. Christ bade the Church preach the Gospel to every creature. And every Catholic shares to some extent in the obligation laid upon the whole Church. No Catholic, therefore, can be indifferent to the conversion of non-Catholics, however sincere they may be. Catholics are obliged to hope for their conversion, and contribute towards the apostolate by prayer and good example, letting their light shine before men. Where advisable and acceptable, also, they should speak of the subject to others, giving good advice, suggesting the study of Catholicism, and urging the reception of instruction from accredited priests. The fact that others are in good faith, and think themselves right, does not alter the fact that they are mistaken, and that they would be far better off spiritually did they possess the full truth. And charity should make every Catholic desire to bring such blessings into the lives of others.

Religious Controversy

**216. It seems a tragic waste of power against the common enemy of evil when the Churches detract from each other's good works.**

I do not detract from any good works of other Churches. I regret indeed their mistakes, and pray for unity. But I know that the only way to unity is by the return of the children of Protestantism to the one Catholic Church their forefathers should never have left. Meantime, you have hit upon one of the tragic disasters which resulted from the divisions due to the abandoning of the Catholic Church by so many at the time of the Reformation. I have watched an ant dragging to its home a dead beetle. Other ants with equal good will rushed to help it, but only to pull in other directions. It seemed a ludicrous waste of energy. Now, the Catholic Church alone was really commissioned by Christ to bring back humanity to God. No one could blame the Protestant Churches for trying to do the same. But it is a vast pity that they separated from the Catholic Church, each pulling in a different direction.

**217. I do not believe in religious discussions which always awaken strong feelings.**

Religion does not exempt us from the use of reason. The head as well as the heart has its duty. And if we are obliged to think about religious matters, there is no reason why we should be forbidden an interchange of thought with others on the subject. Why should a discussion about politics be right, yet a discussion about religion be wrong? The interchange of thought by discussion has led thousands from erroneous ideas to the truth on innumerable subjects. Surely, you will not say that it is good to rectify mistakes in other matters, but that religious mistakes should be the accepted thing. With you, I would certainly object to quarreling over religion. But there is no need for religious discussion to develop into a quarrel. The rejection of some particular religious position is quite consistent with politeness, and respect for the person who sincerely maintains that position.

**218. Since quarrels do arise with much sectarian bitterness, would it not be better to avoid all discussion of religion?**



If truth has any value, the search for it must go on, even though it hurts at times. After all, Christ came to teach the truth, and He was not deterred from doing so by the disturbances He caused amongst those not disposed to hear it. We know the ill-feeling He caused in many of His listeners, and what it meant to Himself in the end. The fault, of course, was in the evil dispositions of His enemies. We ourselves must learn to confine our efforts to reasoned judgments on doctrines, principles, and historical facts. Great difficulty arises even here, for unconsciously there is a danger of distorting the truth itself through partisan spirit and lack of intense love for intellectual honesty. We all have the tendency to accept as true those things we would like to be true, and merely because our inclinations tend in that direction. To rise above that tendency, and to put aside all likes and dislikes, is almost the first requirement in all who earnestly wish to discover the truth.

**219. Mutual recriminations are so futile.**

I wish they were only that. They are positively injurious and never justified. Both Catholics and Protestants should discard once and for all everything unfair, rude, hateful, unkind, or simply unpleasant about each other. Mutual recriminations do no good and much harm. Instead of perpetuating causes of irritation and hostility, we should all try to correct religious errors wherever we may find them, whether in ourselves or in others; but this must be done with a calm loyalty to truth, and without any concession to blind feeling and prejudice. And always, whilst weighing the value of principles, we must leave persons to God, our own charity giving them credit, as far as possible, for the best of intentions. This does not mean that one must be a hypocrite, adjusting all that is said to what one thinks other people will like, whether it be right or wrong. One must be sincere and straight, never seeking to win people at the expense of truth. That the problem is exceedingly difficult, owing to the psychological differences in various types of people, I do not deny. But we must do our best, leaving results to God.

The Curse of Bigotry

**220. Do you think intolerance and bigotry will gradually disappear as the denominations get to know one another better?**

There is, of course, far too much sectarianism and bigotry in existence, and no one could condemn it too strongly. But the remedy for it goes beyond a merely closer knowledge of others. The essential thing is an immense increase in charity, or love for all others, whatever be their beliefs. In the meantime, all should work to eliminate the basic cause of sectarianism, that almost unintelligible division of the sects from one another, and from the Catholic Church.

**221. The very claim that yours is the only true Church indicates your bias against others.**

If you mean that I am unreasonably prejudiced against them, I must deny the charge. If you mean that I accept the Catholic religion to the exclusion of the claims of other religions, I must plead guilty. But in that case every person who refuses to believe what others want him to believe must be regarded as biased.

**222. Such claims cannot but meet with the charge of bigotry.**

Anyone who has set convictions on almost any subject, but above all on religious matters, is liable to that accusation from two types of people—from those who have set convictions of an opposite character, and from those who have no set convictions and think that nobody else should have set convictions. But when I

say that anyone with set convictions is liable to the accusation of bigotry, I do not mean that the accusation is always justified. In some cases it is; in other cases it is not.

**223. How far should tolerance go?**

We should be tolerant towards our fellow men, whatever be their mistakes, provided their mistakes be not injurious to the common good, or to the peace of society. But such tolerance does not oblige us to admit that their mistakes are not mistakes. Truth excludes error. And he who wants the truth will not get it by tolerating error. Tolerance does not mean that one must agree that the ideas of others are right when he believes them to be wrong.

**224. The Catholic Church wants all to submit to her; but only bigots expect to be able to impose their views on others.**

Not bigots, but only fools could expect to be able to impose their views on others. But a Catholic, knowing his religion to be the true religion, can at least ask others to study it; and then, if convinced, to become Catholics for the sake of truth and for the love of God. If not convinced, of course, others cannot become Catholics.

The Catholic Church absolutely forbids any attempt to compel acceptance of the Catholic religion by unwilling people.

**225. I have heard Catholics say that one must be a bigot where truth is concerned.**

By such expressions the case is not well put. In the strict sense of the word, bigotry is a blind and obstinate attachment to a particular creed, together with excessive zeal and a refusal to make allowances for other people's sincerity. No one should adopt such an attitude, even in the cause of truth. In a loose sense of the word, bigotry is a term used to denote a firm and reasonable adherence to what is true, despite the fact that others do not think it true. In that sense, one sometimes hears the expression that one has to be a bigot where truth is concerned.

**226. It is a known fact that the Roman Catholic Church is intensely intolerant and bigoted towards what she terms the so-called Christian Churches.**

That is not a just estimate of the Catholic attitude. Truth must exclude error; but Catholics who have the truth are forbidden to behave intolerantly towards the persons of those who differ from them. Bigotry is a narrow and unreasonable dislike of others, with a readiness to think and speak evil of them. That is forbidden to Catholics. Yet we must retain a reasonable consistency. We cannot believe that our own Church is the one true Christian Church, and then inconsistently admit that other and opposed Churches are equally true and equally reliable representatives of the Christian religion. Yet the Catholic conviction is not a blind conviction. This book should be evidence of that. But the Catholic Church teaches her subjects that their conviction must inspire no dislike of others; that it must not prevent them from making full allowances for the sincerity and goodness of others, despite their mistakes; and that it never dispenses them from charity.

**227. Truly religious people humbly bow in respect to every other creed, so long as people are sincere.**

By humility one may depreciate self; but one does not practice humility by depreciating Christ. Humility does not demand that we respect creeds opposed to the teachings of Christ, and declare them to be permissible. St. Paul wrote to Titus. "A man that is a heretic avoid, knowing that such a one is subverted, and sinneth." St. John said, "If any man come to you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him: God speed you." It is impossible to visualize St. Paul or St. John "humbly bowing in respect to every other creed." If people are sincere in a wrong creed, we may respect their sincerity, but that

certainly does not mean that we must respect their creed. I believe that you are a truly religious person. Now, we Catholics hold as part of our creed that the Pope is the infallible and supreme head of Christ's only true Church on earth, and that all Christians should be subject to him. Here you may test yourself by your own principle. Do you humbly bow in respect to that creed?

**228. Why cannot there be a spirit of unity between all Christian bodies? How do you account for the lack of it?**

There should always be a spirit of unity in charity and respect for each other's persons. There cannot be doctrinal unity, of course, until we all accept the same doctrines. I must confess, however, that much antipathy does exist, and this is greatly to be deplored. The cause of it is chiefly to be found in social influences. Catholics and Protestants, for example, have false and unkind feelings about each other because they have inherited them. They have been handed on from generation to generation. We have got them from books we thought to be reliable, or from our parents and religious teachers, and have taken for granted that they must be right. But nothing that destroys charity and leads to bitter ill-feeling can be right. We must try to emancipate ourselves from the legacy of prejudices, sentiment, and bitter sectarianism. Either a given doctrine is wrong, or the dispositions of those who resent that doctrine are wrong. The first problem for every one of us is to check our dispositions, making sure of our love for all our fellow men, and also of our love of the truth for its own sake. I do not say that it will be easy to rectify these things. But I do say that it is essential.

**229. Would you grant a Protestant the right to take just as firm a stand as you do without accusing him of intolerance?**

If a Protestant were absolutely convinced that his religion is the one true religion in this world, I would not accuse him of bigotry and intolerance did he say that he believed all other religions wrong. A convinced Protestant in such a case would be no more intolerant in firmly asserting his belief than an equally convinced Catholic in supporting the Catholic position. To stand to one's principles, such as they may be, is not intolerance. It is evidence of sincere conviction. But no one is dispensed from charity in his treatment of others from whom he is compelled to dissent religiously.

**230. It is the Catholic claim to infallibility that is the trouble. That makes her hard on others as non-infallible Churches need never be.**

The Catholic Church is not hard on others. She is uncompromising. With this reservation, I admit that her exclusiveness is due to her infallibility. She denies that men have the right to dispute any truth revealed by Christ. That necessarily follows from her doctrine that Christ is God. Sabatier, a French Protestant, admitted straight out that an indisputable religious truth supposes an infallible Church. He proved that no Church could maintain any definite doctrines unless it were infallible, and accepted as infallible. And he showed that psychologically, socially, and in actual fact, doctrinal chaos and unbelief must result without the safeguard of a final living authority. He himself refused to accept any infallible Church, so gave up believing that any indisputable truth can be known. In other words, he gave up Protestantism for Modernism, denying all real value to statements of belief issued by any Church, whether Catholic or Protestant.

**231. A Catholic, taught Catholicism only, is ignorant of other religions. Anglicanism could be true for all he knows. I speak as an Anglican, with knowledge Catholics do not possess.**

I, at least, speak as one who was an Anglican, and who only in later years became a Catholic. But let us take your point on its own merits. It suggests several reflections. Firstly, a Buddhist monk could have urged

the same argument with St. Thomas, the Apostle, whose apostolate carried him to India. "Thomas," the monk could say, "You have been taught in the school of Jesus Christ, but you are ignorant of our Buddhistic religion; and our Buddhism could be true, for all you know." What would Thomas reply? Would you advise him to suspend his faith in Christ, and throw himself into an intense study of Buddhism so that, after some years of it, he could return repentantly to Christ and say, "Lord, by trying what you said was wrong I have found out that you were right after all"? Secondly, because a Catholic is ignorant of every other religion save his own, it does not follow that, therefore, the Anglican Church might be the true one for all he knows. Because one always travels home from work by the right train, can he never know that other trains traveling in other directions are wrong trains until he has tried traveling by them also? A Catholic has been taught the truth, and knows that the Catholic Church is true. He knows also that the Anglican Church is not the Catholic Church. Thirdly, you have been brought up as an Anglican. You have not studied Catholicism. Catholicism could be true for all you know. Will you act on your own principle, commence attending a Catholic Church, and receive instruction in the Catholic Faith from a priest? We Catholics do not admit your principle. But you do. And it is not unreasonable to ask you to act upon it.

### **232. Catholics should at least try the Church of England.**

Why the Church of England in particular? If one cannot be sure that Catholicism is true till he has tried Anglicanism, he cannot be sure that Anglicanism is true until he has tried Mahometanism, and every other form of religion in this world. Catholicism and Anglicanism are not the only two possible religious positions. Will you set to work to try every religion in the world? If not, why should a Catholic act on a principle upon which you yourself will not act?

Towards a Solution

### **233. The only solution seems to be to let each denomination carry out enthusiastically its own special program.**

That is not a solution of the real problem. The problem is that there should be but one definite Christian Church. And the solution you propose leaves that problem untouched. That there should be separate denominations each with its own special program is absolutely opposed to the principles of the New Testament. Rev. Dr. H. L. Goudge, an Anglican, and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, writes as follows: "Today we often mean by 'the Churches' separate Christian societies recognizing no common authority, and possessing no visible unity; but that use of the word is unknown to Scripture, and should not be accepted without protest." He adds that the New Testament knows of only one Church against which the gates of hell will not prevail—one Church locally represented by Churches in different places. "So," he writes, "the Post Office is one Government Department; but it is represented by the local Post Offices. And in dealing with each of them, we are dealing with the Post Office itself." That is the Catholic position. It rejects the idea of a multitude of small independent Churches scattered through the world, all rejecting unity with the one great and original Catholic Church.

### **234. I do not object to the Catholic Church affirming her own truth. But she should not deny others. She should let them live their own life, and win their good will by making concessions.**

If you do not object to the Catholic Church affirming her own truth, you cannot object to her denying the truth of other Churches opposed to her. Every affirmation is a denial of the opposite. If I say that New York is in America, I deny that it is elsewhere. Remember that the denial of the Catholic Church that other Churches are right is really an invitation to the supporters of those Churches to come to her, and get the full truth. It is not prompted by hatred, but by fidelity to Christ, and by a desire that all should possess the truth. When you speak of other Churches living their own life, you take too much for granted. They are dying their own death. Whilst they are asking anxiously what is the essence of Christianity, the Catholic Church lives, and gives life. The obvious disintegration of non-Catholic Churches is not a sign of life and vitality. Finally, your suggestion that the Catholic Church should make concessions is impossible. Protestantism has been making concessions, one after another, to rationalism, and the results are disastrous. The Catholic

Church is strong precisely because she has refused to have anything to do with such concessions. But, apart from this, she simply cannot make the concessions you have in mind. The certainty and the urgency of her teachings forbid it. And she would be abandoning what does not belong to her but to Christ. Christ has commanded her to teach His doctrine, not to abandon it. And concessions would merely be the betrayal of Christ.

**235. It is regrettable that there are barriers which seemingly will always exist.**

I share your regret. And I have to agree that the barriers will always remain save in the case of those non-Catholics who break through them and return to the Catholic Church which their forefathers left at the time of the Protestant Reformation. But, where the barriers do remain, at all costs they should be confined to differences in the religions professed, and not allowed to become barriers of dislike, bitterness, and hatred between those who profess the different religions. We must not confuse a lack of sympathy with what we believe to be error with a lack of sympathy towards those who profess what we believe to be error. We may feel that the barrier of truth and consistency forbids acknowledging as correct those religions which contradict our own. But no barrier of ill-feeling and ill-will towards one another personally should be given any quarter. Charity must sweep all such barriers away.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **The Problem of Reunion**

#### Efforts at the Reunion of the Churches

**236. Whatever their differences may have been in the past, would it not be a good thing if all the Christian Churches composed their differences, and formed a single United Church once more?**

Not only would that be good; there is an obligation on all professing Christians to do so. The New Testament knows nothing of a system of separated Churches professing to be Christian. As the Anglican Dr. Goudge has remarked, "The relation of the Churches to the Church is like the relation of local post offices to the G. P. O.; there is only one Post Office, private enterprise not being here permitted. But the G. P. O. has its local representatives in the towns and villages, and in dealing with them we are dealing with the Department itself. Everywhere in the New Testament the Church is one, and only one." No one who believes in the New Testament, therefore, can admit that divisions between the Churches is lawful.

**237. Could it not be that, as the king of England speaks of his empire, although it is a commonwealth of nations, so Christ intended by one Church all religions which recognize Him as their Savior?**

That is not admissible. As the British Empire is a commonwealth of nations, so the one true Catholic Church subject to the Pope is a vast confraternity of English, American, Japanese, French, Australian, Indian, German, Italian, Spanish, and other national peoples who are united in faith, worship, and discipline. But members of non-Catholic Churches are not members of this one true Catholic Church.

**238. This view seems to be supported by Christ's own words in St. Mark, IX., 38-41.**

It does not more than seem to be so. The text is as follows: "John said to Him: Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, who followeth not with us, and we forbade him." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him. For there is no man that doth a miracle in My name, and can speak ill of Me. For he that is not against you, is for you." Now notice that St. John spoke of two things—the fact that another was doing good, and the

fact that he did not follow the Apostles. Of the latter point, Christ does not here speak. Elsewhere He spoke strongly of the necessity of submission to the authority of His Church. But here He confines Himself to one aspect only, and rightly so. Insofar as others do good, do not blame them or forbid them; for in doing what is good, they are not against your cause, but for it. Now the non-Catholic Churches do try to inculcate the worship of Christ. And with that aspect of their work no one could quarrel. Insofar as they stand for the supernatural and spiritual, and for the love of Christ as opposed to brute materialism and rationalism, they are not against the Catholic Church, but fighting for her cause. And certainly, if Protestants will not become Catholics, we Catholics would rather see them true to such good principles of Christianity as their respective denominations do contain than see them drift from them to rationalism and unbelief. And that is the aspect with which our Lord deals. The other section of the text, "He followeth not with us," is dealt with elsewhere. In Matt. XII., 25. Christ says, "Every kingdom divided against itself shall fall"; and in Verse 30, He reverses the saying you quote, remarking. "He that is not with Me is against Me." Fortunately, the Catholic Church is not divided against itself. It would be, if it embraced all the contradictory denominational sects. But it does not. They are not part of that true Catholic Church which stands with undivided unity. And whilst these Protestant sects are not against the Catholic Church in preaching that Christian virtue is necessary, they are against her insofar as they are not with the authority of Christ in the Church against which they rebelled.

**239. Other Churches are devoting more and more attention towards the reunion of the Churches, and working for unity.**

Other Churches should not have to work towards unity. It is a confession that they should never have got out of unity. The Catholic Church preserves her unity; she does not work to secure a unity she has never lost. And we must face the fact that the non-Catholic Churches will never secure unity. Unity will be possible only when they renounce their independent existence, and their members, one and all, return to the Catholic Church. Where the Catholic Church gathers people to herself, men gather together to form the various non-Catholic Churches. Of its very nature, Protestantism does not unite; it divides. And on the principle of private judgment and authority, it logically leads to as many variations as there are men. Unity may engage the attention of Protestant Churches, but it will do no more than engage their attention until they have ceased to exist. And when they have ceased to exist, and Catholicism is the only form of Christianity in this world, then we shall have unity.

**240. It is wrong to magnify the divisions amongst Protestants. They all believe the same thing, and do not differ in essentials.**

I am afraid that they do not even agree as to what is essential. In fact, a host of Protestants have drifted so far from the Christian Faith that they believe no particular belief to be essential, and they are prepared to maintain any peculiar idea of their own creation on the score that, after all, it does not matter what one believes.

**241. What are the essential differences between Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Baptists, Christian Scientists, Christadelphians, Salvation Army, Pentecostals, Liberal Catholics, and the Churches of Christ?**

It would take far too long to analyze the doctrines of these twelve different variations. Briefly, however. Anglicans and Liberal Catholics believe it essential to have priests and bishops. The others do not. The Liberal Catholics believe in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Anglicans do not. Leaving these two, let us turn to the others. Baptists and the Churches of Christ forbid infant baptism. Presbyterians hold to what is called the Westminster Confession, and say that the ultimate authority is vested in their General Assembly. Methodism has no formal confession of faith, holding that creed is not essential. Lutherans hold that creed is essential, and support the Augsburg Confession by faith, believing in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist by consubstantiation as opposed to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Congregationalists say that it is not essential to have organized unity at all. Each local Church is independent, the members walking by faith, each according to what he privately judges faith to imply. Christian Scientists deny the Divinity of Christ, and believe that Christianity is ordained to the attaining of

physical health by autosuggestion blended with prayer. Christadelphians deny the immortality of the soul, believing that Christ will come again, recreate the elect, and reign over them forever on this earth as their civil ruler. General Booth broke away from Methodism, and began a social crusade with his Salvation Army. Doctrinally the Army is very vague. The Pentecostal Church thinks that all others have missed the essential thing, and its members concentrate on contact with the immediate and personal influence of the Holy Spirit, whom they gratuitously constitute their direct guide whilst they do as they please. I cannot now go more deeply into their differences; but it can be said that each sect has at least one thing it thinks essential which it believes the others to lack. Were it not so, it would never have commenced its own separate existence. If we study the origins of the different sects, we find that their founders fought almost violently for things which modern Protestants now declare to be nonessential. But how far even modern Protestants believe their differences to be nonessential is a problem. If their differences be nonessential, why do they find reunion amongst themselves so impossible a task? They talk of unity, hold conferences to discuss it, discover that their positions are essentially irreconcilable, determine not to unite after all, and tell the world that they were all good-tempered about it. and that a wonderful unity was obvious in their decision to tolerate a continued lack of unity!

**242. At least these Churches are trying to unite and find a common dogma.**

As I have pointed out before, to acknowledge that unity is necessary, and yet that they lack unity, is to stand self-condemned as lacking a necessary qualification of the true Christian Church. And how can these Churches set out to convert the world to Christian teaching whilst, on your own admission, they cannot agree as to what is the Christian teaching?

The Church of England as a "Bridge-Church"

**243. When reunion comes, do you not think that the Anglican Church will have a contribution of great value to make to the reunited Church?**

We Catholics cannot accept any suggestion that the true Church is divided, and that it needs reuniting. The Catholic Church is obliged to insist that there is but one indivisible Church according to the will of Christ, and that she is the one indivisible Church. Those who rebelled against her authority and left her are simply outside the Church and no longer part of it. There can be no question of uniting divided fragments of the Church. Those whose forefathers wrongly left the Catholic Church must return to her. Many Anglicans are beginning to see this. Recently the Rev. Spencer Jones, an Anglican clergyman, published a book pleading that the Church of England should return to Rome. "It is plain," he wrote, "that the power formally to change her position, which is denied to the Church of Rome, is a conspicuous characteristic of the Church of England." Another Anglican clergyman, the Rev. T. Whitton, M.A., speaks in the same way. "On the Roman Catholic side," he writes, "there is their dogmatic position which they cannot give up if they would. If Rome were to admit that even the most Romanizing Anglicans were Catholics, she would admit the division of the Church, and commit suicide." This is not pride on Rome's part. It is fidelity to the truth that Christ founded but one Church and guaranteed to preserve its unity. To say that He did not preserve its unity is to renounce belief in His Divinity, and throw Christianity to the winds. Rome will never do that.

**244. Anglicans are working harder than any others for the reunion of all Christian Churches.**

The return of all separated Churches to the one Catholic Church they left in years gone by is greatly to be desired. But reunion will never be accomplished by dream-solutions based on wrong premises--solutions which can never be realized, and which, if they were realized, would mean the destruction of the Christian religion.

**245. Is not the Anglican Church an ideal "Bridge-Church," belonging both to the old and the modern Churches?**

The Anglican Church does not belong to the ancient Catholic Church. It commenced its existence with the Protestant Reformation some four hundred years ago, and has no connection with the previously existing Church in England.

**246. The Anglican Church is distinguished from other branches by having thrown open its doors to fresh revelations of good that came through the advancing scholarship of its great divines.**

The Anglican Church is not a "branch" of the true Church. What distinguishes it from the genuine branches of that Church is that all true branches are still in communion with the parent tree, and at one with the Pope as successor of St. Peter and supreme head of the universal Church. Anglicanism is an independent Church founded by Henry VIII. in 1534, when that earthly king broke away from the Catholic Church to set up his own religious body in England subject to his exclusive control. The Anglican Church is a Protestant sect, distinguished from other Protestant sects by the fact that its founder differed from the founders of other forms of Protestantism. It does not differ from the others by having thrown open its doors to fresh revelations of good from advancing scholarship. All, more or less, have been infected by that peculiar form of "religious rationalism" called modernism. Modernism accepts as fresh revelations of good the latest deviations from the Christian Faith. But they are not revelations. Revelation is not the fruit of advancing scholarship, the product of human thinking. The Christian revelation is essentially the teaching of men by God through Jesus Christ. His Son.

**247. In Anglicanism the pre-Reformation and post-Reformation periods of the Christian Church can be used to bring together all the broken branches of the Church.**

The Anglican and the other Protestant Churches have no pre-Reformation period of which to make use. They are not branches, even broken ones, of the true Church. They are independent Churches, set up by men who had no authority to do so, at various times centuries subsequent to Christ. And if they all unite amongst themselves, they will be no nearer to unity in the one universal Church - the Catholic Church - than the uniting of the independent states in America restored the U. S. A. to unity with the British nation they abandoned. There is a fundamental fallacy underlying all such talk of reunion. The true branches of the one universal Church do not need bringing together. The geographical distribution of those branches has not affected their unity. The Catholic Church in America, or the Catholic Church in England, or in Italy, or Germany, or the scattered Islands of the Pacific, or anywhere else in the world, all these branches form but one Church in unity with the Pope as its supreme head on earth.

**248. You think Anglicans are following a will-o'-the-wisp in holding out the hand of friendship to both sides?**

I am certain that Anglicans will never induce all other Churches to accept a unity such as they specify. It involves an acceptance of Anglo-modernism. Catholics can have nothing to do with it. The Greek Orthodox Churches cannot accept it. Nonconformists would have to unsay the whole of their history in order to yield to it. The dream that all other Churches will merge with Anglicanism is a fond thing vainly invented.

**249. By holding out its hand, the Church of England has actually succeeded in drawing together many members of the old and modern Churches.**

The first question that arises is this: Which hand did the Church of England hold out? It held out an Anglo-Catholic hand or High Church hand to the Greek Orthodox. And at once there were violent protests from Low Church Anglicans that the beliefs of the Church of England had been completely misrepresented to the poor deluded Greeks, who had no idea of Anglican variations. When the Low Church hand is held out



to Nonconformists, there are equally indignant protests from the High Church section. So, for example, when a Nonconformist preacher was invited to preach in the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, uproar resulted.

#### Anglicans and the Greek Orthodox Church

#### **250. Anglicans must first approach the Greek Church, the oldest Church in Christendom, founded actually before the Church of Rome.**

It is not true that the "Greek Orthodox Church," as it is popularly known today, was founded before the Church of Rome. It may be true that the Catholic Church took root and consolidated itself in various parts of the East and amongst Greek-speaking peoples before it was established in Rome where St. Peter finally set up his Bishopric. But the "Greek Orthodox Church" came into existence in the first place through the schism of Photius in the ninth century, just as Anglicanism came into existence in the sixteenth century through the revolt of Henry VIII. against the Pope.

#### **251. A close alliance now exists between Anglicanism and Greek Orthodoxy.**

Some High Church Anglicans have exchanged courtesies with some representatives of the Greek Churches. But nothing approaching unity has been effected. Nor is the cause of unity helped by mutual compliments paid by members of one rebel Church to those of other rebel Churches, whilst all ignore the one universal Church they left, and to whose authority they still refuse to submit. No advance is made towards reunion by looking everywhere except to the very source of unity-Rome.

#### **252. Does not Rome accept the Orthodox Church as Catholic, even though schismatic?**

No. Firstly, there is no one united Orthodox Church. There are many independent forms of Orthodoxy, as there are many independent forms of Protestantism. Secondly, and even taking all these independent forms as a general group, Rome does not admit that members of the Orthodox Greek Churches are Catholics. The Catholic idea supposes the universal extension of one and the same united Church. Catholicity, in the proper sense of the word, is impossible without unity. And as the Orthodox Greeks are out of unity with the Catholic Church, they are not regarded as Catholics. Rome recognizes that the Orthodox Greeks have retained valid Orders, but that is another matter altogether. Thirdly, although traditionally the Greeks are spoken of as schismatics, Rome does not regard them merely as schismatics. They are heretics also on various points of doctrine.

#### **253. The Orthodox Church accepts the Church of England as Catholic.**

That is not true. Firstly, there is no united voice emanating from "The Orthodox Church." The admissions of one Patriarch would be indignantly repudiated by others. One of the greatest difficulties of reunion between Rome and the Orthodox Greeks is the fact that the Orthodox Greeks are not united amongst themselves. Secondly, no single Greek Patriarch has really admitted that the Church of England is Catholic. Some Greek Patriarchs have expressed that opinion after hearing a High Church account of Anglicanism. But of what value is the admission of isolated Greek leaders who have been misinformed concerning the true nature of the Church of England?

#### **254. If Orthodox and Anglican Churches unite, what then will be Rome's attitude to Anglicanism?**

Such a union will never be effected. Before a united Ortho-Anglican Church could exist, the various Greek Churches would have to form one united body; and there is no prospect of that. Then it would be necessary to get the Low Church majority in the Church of England to accept Greek Orthodox teachings. And there is no prospect of that. But if, as is impossible, such a union were effected, Rome would regard the Anglican Church exactly as at present -and that is as an heretical Protestant sect. By uniting with the Greek Church, therefore, the Church of England would be no nearer union with Rome. It would be but the union of two

schismatical and heretical Churches; and the resultant Church would still be in schism and heresy. If Germany and Russia were to unite as one nation, they would not be any closer to membership of the British Empire. The road to Church unity does not lie in the union amongst themselves of those who have no unity with Rome. The road lies in the submission of the various independent Churches, or of their individual members, to the authority of the Catholic Church, and to that of the Pope as its supreme head on earth. There is no other way out.

#### The "Old Catholics" of Holland

**255. The "Old Catholics" are trying to secure the union of all separate Churches on the basis of a non-Papal Catholicism.**

Having renounced the very principle of unity, the authority of Christ in His Church, they are attempting an impossible task. Events have shown this in the most practical manner possible. The "Old Catholics" are rapidly disintegrating. In the beginning they received great government patronage in Germany and Switzerland, where politicians had great hopes of fostering what they believed to be a disruptive movement in the Catholic Church. But nothing came of it, and the radical liturgical, disciplinary, and constitutional changes adopted in the first fifteen years convinced them that the "Old Catholic" claim to Catholicism was but a fiction. They lost interest in the "Old Catholic" movement, and its vitality rapidly declined.

**256. The Lambeth Conference of 1930 agreed that there was nothing in the Declaration of Utrecht inconsistent with the leaching of the Church of England.**

That is the death-blow to the "Old Catholics." For it means, not that Anglican doctrine is Catholic, but that the "Old Catholics" are Protestants.

**257. There is now complete intercommunion between the "Old Catholics" and the Anglican Communion.**

That is not surprising. The "Old Catholics," being simply "New Protestants," recognize those with whom they have a real affinity. If you think I take a harsh and unreasonable view of things, let me ask you to consider a parallel case. If a Congregationalist boasted to an Anglican that his Church had intercommunion with the Methodist Church which had broken away from Anglicanism, would the Anglican be deeply impressed? Can a Catholic be deeply impressed, therefore, when an Anglican boasts that he has intercommunion with a schismatic body which itself has abandoned the Catholic Church? The same difficulty ever recurs. If, instead of merely having intercommunion with the Anglican Church, the "Old Catholics" were completely absorbed in full communion with the Church of England, Christendom would be no nearer unity than it would be if Aimee Macpherson with her "Four-Square Gospelers" decided to amalgamate with Judge Rutherford and the "Witnesses of Jehovah." The union of heretical bodies amongst themselves really leaves the problem untouched. The only hope of a united Christian Church is the return of all schismatical and heretical bodies to the Mother Church of Christendom-the Catholic Church. When all have come back, then, and then only, will there be "one fold under one shepherd."

#### Reunion Conferences

**258. Would you be in favor of one State Church, compelling all religious bodies to unite?**

Such a plan for bringing all religious bodies into one faith and one Church could not possibly be accepted. Christ died for all men without exception. No State Church, therefore, could be the true Church of Christ. A State Church would be essentially national. People belonging to other States and Nations would feel that it was not for them. Christ is not for this nation or that; He is for men of all nations. All true followers of Christ, therefore, should be united in one great Church which is not national, but international. There is such a Church-the Catholic Church. If men really wish for unity, the remedy is there before them. Let them return to the Catholic Church.

**259. Why does the Roman Church refuse to take part in the World Congresses of other Churches for the securing of unity?**

Because she can never sanction by her participation Congresses which admit that the unity of the Church has been lost, and that it must be found again; and which hope to attain unity by a compromising policy of give and take. The unity promised by Christ has been retained by the Catholic Church. That Church believes that she is but the custodian of the religion of Christ, and she has not the right to make any compromises, to pare down and whittle away His doctrines in order to placate those who refuse to accept them in all their fullness. It would be useless to attend a Congress working on the idea that "we are all wrong, and must put our heads together to see how we can put ourselves right." The acceptance of such a principle would mean that the Catholic Church must unsay her infallibility. Did she do so, she would no longer be the Catholic Church at all. Yet Congresses of non-Catholic denominations would welcome her participation only on the understanding that she admits herself to be as fallible as themselves. It cannot be done.

**260. Did not negotiations for the reunion of Anglicanism and Catholicism take place during the Malines Conversations?**

The Malines Conversations were an unofficial discussion of the subject between Lord Halifax and several leading Anglican clergymen on the one hand, and Cardinal Mercier with several French theologians on the other. The Conversations were for the sake of inquiring as to whether any common basis could be found upon which an attempt at union could be inaugurated.

**261. Why did those Conversations fail?**

Because the participants were trying to find a way to reconcile the irreconcilable. Moreover, the Anglican Delegates presented only the High Church views to Cardinal Mercier and the French theologians, giving them a wrong outlook on the Anglican Church as a whole. Low Church Anglican papers throughout England denounced the Anglo-Catholic Delegates for misrepresenting Anglican doctrine, denied their right to speak on behalf of the Church of England, accused them of being "Romanizers," and declared that they would never submit to any undoing of the work of the Protestant Reformation. With such chaos reigning in the Anglican Church the Conversations could not but fail. Unity in Anglicanism itself is absolutely necessary before it can even discuss the question of possible unity with the Catholic Church.

**262. As an Anglican I was bitterly disappointed with the result.**

If you believe that the Church of England ought to be in communion with Rome, and is not, how can you justify yourself in remaining where you ought not to be, and in refusing to take that step personally which the corporate Anglican Church cannot and will not take?

Catholic Unity

**263. Will you explain just what Catholics mean by the unity of the Church?**

By the unity of the Church we mean the unity of belief, worship, and government for all peoples and for all times in the one religious body. This is the first great requirement of the true Church. Unity is reality. Unity and life, in fact, go together. If the Church is the union of God with man, and man with God, how can there be several different Churches? That would mean division in the very thing that should unite us in God. If God is one, and men are one in Christ, then there can be but one Church, a divine yet human organization, of which Christ is the Head, the Holy Spirit the Soul, and all men members. The Church is but a continuation of Christ in this world. Therefore, St. Paul asks, "Is the body of Christ divided?" There is but

one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one Church. The Catholic Church is this one Church; and any religion which differs in character from the Catholic Church, and wishes to exist independently of it, is outside the true Church.

**264. History shows that the Roman Church has had crisis after crisis. She has not always had unity, but only recently has perfected her concentration.**

The Catholic Church has always had unity. It is true that there has been crisis after crisis in her history. But that does not imply loss of unity. In all life, whether individual or social, civil or religious, crisis follows crisis. But where civil kingdoms have been dissolved, the Catholic Church has ever emerged with a still more concentrated unity. Today there is no possibility of a Greek schism or a Protestant reformation by any movement from within the Catholic Church. Modernism was soon settled as far as she was concerned. And all previous disloyalties and rebellions provoked a reaction of unity proving the vitality of the Catholic Church, and that will to live which is her preservation. What you call the concentration of unity in the Catholic Church is merely her interior principle of control responding to the complications incidental to growth.

**265. The exclusive claims of the Catholic Church will never lead to unity. It can come only by tolerance, respect for each other, and closer cooperation.**

Continued tolerance of error can never give unity in truth. By such tolerance people will remain as divided as ever in their beliefs. Respect for the persons of others should ever prevail. Closer cooperation is not enough. Perfect cooperation is necessary. But that will be possible only under a unified control. And a unified control of a perfectly united Christian Church will result only from a return of the Churches which caused a division to the one fold of the Catholic-Church. After all, Christ sent His Church to fight the forces of evil. If a country sent an army to resist its enemies, how would that army get on if different subordinate officers walked off with groups of soldiers, disobeying orders of the higher command, and deciding to try out what they thought to be better ideas of their own? Discipline and order are essential. Our Lord knew this, and warned against such divisions, saying, "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." And if superior officers protested against the indiscipline of hotheaded subordinates, would you blame them? Or suggest that, since all aimed at defending the country, they should work harmoniously with these insubordinates, whilst still allowing them to do as they please?

**266. Could not one religion be arrived at by compromise on the part of all the different Churches?**

The resultant religion certainly would not be Christianity. Instead of being the religion of Christ, it would be a religion which all those putting their heads together would agree that it would be nice for Him to have taught. Just imagine one saying, "Well, I am convinced that Christ taught this, but you are convinced that He taught something else. But now, let us not bother about the authority of Christ. I'll give up a section of what I am convinced to be His teaching; and you give up a section of what you are convinced to be His teaching, and thus we will arrive at a working agreement to suit ourselves." Surely you can see how impossible is such an attitude. After all, to whom does the Christian religion belong? It belongs, not to us, but to Christ. For the Catholic Church, therefore, there can be no question of compromise.

**267. You cannot foresee a new and undivided Church blending all existent forms of the Christian religion?**

That will never be. The Catholic Church will never abandon such of her truths as Protestants dislike, in order to embrace the various errors all Protestants will generously agree amongst themselves to accept in a spirit of real good fellowship. How you can talk of a new Church is a mystery. Christ established a definite Church, promising to be with it all days till the end of the world. That does not suggest the abolition of all existent Churches and the formation of a new one. As a matter of fact, another true Christian Church would demand another Christ, and another Incarnation. But to what purpose? What would a new Christ do that the first Christ has not done? No. Christ established a definite Church to last for the rest of time, promising that

the gates of hell will never prevail against it. They have not done so. And that definite Church of Christ is the Catholic Church. To her men must return.

#### The Papacy as Reunion Center

**268. You have quoted some Protestant clergymen as saying that the Papacy is the only possible center of unity for the Church,**

I have; and there are very many who speak like that today.

**269. Anglo-Catholics regard the Papacy merely as a handy rule of thumb for orthodoxy, but other Protestants do not.**

If Anglo-Catholics regard the Papacy merely as a handy rule of thumb for orthodoxy, their ideas are no more acceptable to Catholics than to Protestants. We cannot accept patronizing views of Papal decisions as if they were "rather a good idea," or "quite useful!" To any Anglo-Catholics who would think in such a way I would say, "Either you believe sincerely in the infallibility and supremacy of the Pope, or you do not. If you do not, you cannot submit to the Pope on any plea that this would fit in with some favored scheme of your own. If you do, then you are not justified in refusing acceptance for a moment, and you should submit to Rome at once, instead of remaining in a false position for any supposedly good purpose."

**270. Theoretically, the existence of a visible head of the Church seems to supply a stable rallying point.**

It not only seems to do so; it does so. But these reasons of convenience are beside the point. The point is—what is the will of Christ? If it be the will of Christ that the Pope is the visible head of the Church, then we must be in union with him. If it be not the will of Christ that there should be a visible head of the Church on earth, then we cannot alter things to suit our own notions. Anglo-Catholics consistently refuse to face this issue.

**271. In practice, the Roman claims have been the very basis of division in the Church.**

There is no division in the Church. The Church is essentially One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. Being one, it is at complete unity with itself, and must ever retain perfect unity. The Catholic Church alone does so. You may speak of divisions from the Church; but not of divisions in the Church. All non-Catholics are divided from the Church—that Catholic Church their forefathers left. And the Roman claims were not the cause of these divisions. Will the criminal in jail say that the laws of the State which he violated are the basis of his division from society? They are, of course, but the guilt is his own, not that of the State. And those who rebelled against the lawful authority of the Catholic Church, and left that Church, are responsible for their separation from it.

**272. What kind of a center of unity is the Papacy, when it possesses the assent of less than half of Christendom?**

Since they are the divisions of "Christendom" (not of the Church) which are to be united, one could hardly expect the proposed center of unity to possess the assent of all before they are united! It is not true that less than half of Christendom acknowledges the Papacy. Out of some 700 million of professing Christians, 400 million profess the Catholic Faith and admit the authority of the Pope. About 300 million reject the claims of the Pope, and repudiate the Catholic Church. But they are not united amongst themselves, save in protesting against Rome. If we ask these others to state their beliefs we get a chorus characterized chiefly by negations and contradictions. They are not unfairly described as a group of dissidents who cannot agree amongst themselves.

**273. The Church as a whole judges against Papal claims, preferring schism to assent on terms dictated by Rome.**

One cannot speak of the judgment of the Church as a whole whilst asserting in the same breath that it is split into fragments by schism! Those belonging to one of the fragments separated from the Catholic Church appeal to the verdict of the other separated fragments that Rome is wrong, although they will not accept the verdict of those other fragments on anything else.

**274. The witness of Rome is to be respected and weighed when it agrees with the rest of Christendom.**

Is that to say that Rome might possibly be right if only she will admit that she is just as likely to be wrong as the separated sects which abandoned her?

**275. So long as Rome persists in ignoring the witness of the rest of Christendom she will be subject, like the rest of us, to her own peculiar forms of heresy.**

Never was a greater tribute paid to Rome. If the rest of the Churches are subject to their own peculiar forms of heresy, is Rome to be blamed because she won't join them and accept their self-confessed heretical witness? If Rome did join them, and renounce her claim to possess the full and complete truth, it would be good-bye to all hope of unity in the truth. The only hope for unity is for those who admit that they have not got it to submit to the one Church which is conscious of possessing it. And that one Church is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church cannot be expected to take seriously the offer of those who say. "We will be prepared to consider your claims to be the true Church only provided you do not make such claims, and admit that you are just as wrong as we are."

**276. The inflated claims of Rome first compelled the Greek Orthodox to repudiate Rome.**

Not the claims of Rome, but the inflated claims of the Patriarchs of Constantinople, led to the separation of the Greeks from the unity of the Catholic Church. And that break has been perpetuated by pride and nationalism.

**277. Then Luther, after protesting in vain against abuses in the Church, was given his choice between keeping quiet or getting out.**

Luther introduced far greater abuses than any he professed to remedy. I do not deny the existence of abuses. Multitudes of good Catholics were longing for their rectification. But Luther made them but an excuse for rebellion against the Catholic Church, and for the introduction of schism and heresy of which he was the self-constituted prophet. Rome proved the safeguard of unity by expelling him, preferring to see him divided from the Church rather than allow him to cause division in the Church. He was asked to submit, not to abuses in the Church, but to the just laws of the Church. He refused, left the Church, and dragged multitudes with him in the end. But his Protestant principles proved the cause of division after division amongst Protestants, as if to bring out by contrast the unity of Catholics who remained loyal to Rome. No one with eyes to see can doubt that the Papacy means unity, whilst separation from the Papacy leads to almost endless diversity.

**278. Later still, the monstrous proportions Papal authority wished to assume in England led to the breaking away of the Anglican Church.**

Henry VIII. thought it monstrous that the Pope should refuse him a divorce from Catherine in order that he might marry Anne Boleyn. But who will subscribe to the proposition that the Pope was responsible for the schism because he would not condone Henry's adultery? Unity at such a price would not be worth having. However, the Catholic Church preserved her unity, for Anglicanism is not a division within the Church. It constitutes a separate Church which no longer has any real bond with the Church of the centuries.

**279. Then the "Old Catholics" were forced into separation from Rome by the decision of the Vatican Council that the Pope was infallible.**

Your line of argument really is that every decree necessary to preserve unity is a cause of disunity because a few recalcitrant subjects refuse to accept and obey it. And is it reasonable to concentrate on a small group of disaffected subjects, ignoring the unity of hundreds of millions of loyal Catholics? Again, if the Papal claims were so wrong that the Greeks had to abandon the Church in the ninth century, why did Germany discover them to be wrong only when Luther discovered abuses in the sixteenth century? And why did England not equally see how wrong they were until Henry VIII. wanted his divorce? And why, despite the Greeks, and Luther, and Henry, were the "Old Catholics" content with the Catholic Church until 1870? If the Catholic Church was true until Henry came along, the Greeks were not justified in their secession. If true until the "Old Catholics" had to leave, neither Luther nor Henry was justified in leaving the true Church.

Protestant Hostility to Catholicism

**280. To what do you attribute the seemingly incurable hostility of Protestantism to Catholic claims?**

I attribute it to the growth of indifference to all religion, to lack of knowledge of the Catholic Church, to inherited prejudices against that Church, to wrong ideas of the Christian faith, and to mistaken ideas of national loyalty. There is no doubt that Protestantism in general has led to a widespread indifference to the claims of religion. People don't bother about it. At the same time, whilst Protestantism has failed to hold the multitudes who have been deprived of the Catholic Faith, it has left a lingering poison of prejudice against the Church it abandoned. So it is that Protestants, who have no particular love for their own Churches, have an instinctive dread of Catholicism. It is not reasonable, and they cannot account for it. If they attempt to do so, they have to invent reasons which will not bear analysis. But the dread is there. And the more Protestant a country is, the greater its hostility towards the Catholic Church. Nonconformity, therefore, as a rule, is more hostile than Anglicanism. But besides inherited prejudices, all forms of Protestantism have a wrong idea of Christian faith. For Protestants, Christianity has become merely a subjective way of life to the exclusion of an objective acceptance of truth. They have had it drilled into them from pulpit after pulpit that "creed does not matter." That practically means that truth does not matter. They have the idea that not what a man believes, but what he does, is the sole criterion of goodness. Reason, therefore, takes a very secondary place, and religion is better measured by feelings of piety and devotion. Consequently, if Protestants have no religious feelings, they banish the whole problem. On the other hand, if they have religious feelings, they are content where they are, and do not bother to inquire as to whether the form of religion they profess is right in itself, or not. Finally, Protestantism and patriotism have long been associated in their minds, and they have a vague sense of disloyalty to their country in the mere thought of Catholicism. In any case, to become a Catholic is to violate the conventions. That is one of the things "not done." This is but a brief survey, and incomplete. But all these things, singly or collectively, with many others, contribute to the apathy or hostility of Protestants towards the Catholic claims.

**281. Good and cultured Protestant ministers cannot reconcile Rome with Scripture and tradition.**

Their inability is easily explicable. Their goodness is a matter of morality. But perception of the objective truth is a matter of mentality. Now, the formation of a Protestant minister's mentality is quite unfavorable to the perception of the truth of Catholicism. We may dismiss tradition, for the basic idea of Protestantism that Scripture is the only rule of faith diverts their attention from traditional teachings. Their inability to harmonize Scripture and Catholicism results from the fact that they do not rightly understand either Scripture or Catholicism. Protestant clergymen cannot even state Catholic doctrine clearly to themselves. Where Scripture is concerned, they lack sound principles of interpretation, and cannot arrive at its correct sense. That should be evident experimentally from the fact that they arrive at so many diverse and conflicting conclusions.

**282. High Church Anglicans go to Rome because of their community of ritual; but Low Churchmen and Nonconformists never yield ground.**

As a matter of fact, conversions to Catholicism from Low Church Anglicans and Nonconformists are proportionately more numerous than from High Church Anglicans. And, paradox as it may seem, High Churchmen are not drawn to the Catholic Church because of community of ritual. Firstly, they have the idea that, having borrowed all our external practices, they base nothing to gain by "going over to Rome." And secondly, they get so wrapped up in the accidentals of religion, that they are less likely than ever to perceive the essentials. The essential thing in all true religion is obedience. We went from God by disobedience, and the road back is to retrace our steps by obedience. And since religion is to take us back, the very heart and soul of religion must be a spirit of obedience. Therefore, the spirit of obedience has ever been an outstanding feature of Catholicism. But the High Church movement has ever been characterized by defiance of Anglican bishops. The more ritualistic an Anglican clergyman is, the more he steep himself in a spirit of disobedience to authority. And by this he is less fitted to submit to the principles of authority in the Catholic Church. I would much rather instruct a convert from Nonconformity than one from Anglo-Catholicism; and as a rule I keep Anglo-Catholics much longer under instruction.

**283. If access to the truth is not easy for these religious men, how can unbelievers and voluptuaries hope to discern it?**

Your line of thought is not justified. For conversion to the Catholic Church means the undoing of a previous mentality, and the substituting of another. In the man who has had no previous religious convictions, one has but to build. It is easier to give right ideas to one who has had no ideas on a given subject, than to substitute right ideas for wrong ideas. Again, strange as it may seem, the irreligious voluptuary, when he does hear God's voice, has grounds for a humility which are more or less wanting in those conscious of their goodness and virtue. And humility is a basic condition for the greater gifts of God. Also, as I have said, the religious non-Catholic is much more likely to rest content with his present position, and refrain from further inquiry, than the irreligious man who never quite succeeds in stifling his uneasiness. You must remember, too, that God will not force the gift of faith on anyone. That gift demands our cooperation; and the dispositions of the individual person are of immense importance.

The Demands of Charity

**284. The attitude of Rome holds out little hope of reunion, but gives promise only of continued bitterness.**

To that let me quote the words of a famous Protestant journalist, and a onetime member of the British Parliament-Mr. P. W. Wilson. He writes as follows: "The Roman Catholic Church can have had, and did have, no other origin than with the Founder of Christianity itself. But the company of the faithful, once united in a visible Church, has suffered an organic disintegration. Whatever general sentiment may be abroad favoring friendship, experts fail to find a real formula for reunion on which to agree. But I am convinced that there is a profound amelioration of atmosphere. Hitherto we have seen a Christendom in which Protestant confronted Catholic. It is a situation by no means ended. Such situations do not end quickly. But none the less, the new situation has arisen. I have lost entirely any conscious enmity against or suspicion of the Roman Catholic Church. And if reunion be not possible here and now; if it be not possible for all to share the same worship or accept the same ecclesiastical authority, it is possible for all to love one another as they love themselves, to pray for one another, and to help one another, and to be associated as far as may be in the task of serving this sad and sorrowful world." All Catholics will agree with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Wilson. But they will pray for the only possible kind of reunion---the return of all separated brethren to the Catholic Church and to the authority of the Bishop of Rome.



CHAPTER EIGHT  
**The Truth of Catholicism**

Necessity of the Church

**285. Do not Roman Catholics make too much of the doctrine of the Church?**

They give it that place in their faith which Christ intended.

**286. We Protestants have a great respect for Christ, but we do not have faith in any Church.**

That cannot be right. If you believe in Christ, you must consider as necessary what Christ believed necessary. To wish to believe in Christ without believing in the Church is a great mistake. For centuries Christians have said, not only, "I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord," but also, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." They made an act of faith in both Christ and His Church. If you no longer believe in a Church, something has gone wrong somewhere.

**287. Christ does not say, "Come to My Church." He says, "Come to Me."**

We come to Christ by coming to His Church. As a matter of fact, the Church, in the person of the Apostles, first preached Christ to the early converts to Christianity. The first fact for the early Christians was, therefore, the Church. They experienced faith in the mission of the Church, and because of that, believed in her teachings about Christ. You will notice, in the Acts of the Apostles, when Saul was persecuting the Church. Jesus appeared to him, and even identified Himself with the Church, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" The denial of the Church is therefore really a denial of Christ, if people, but realize it.

**288. People are rapidly coming to the conclusion that, without ceasing to profess Christianity, they can dispense with Churches.**

I admit that that is the logical ultimate result of Protestantism. The Anglican Dr. Goudge recognizes this. "We are," he says, "congenital individualists, and exceedingly unwilling, in religion as elsewhere, to recognize our dependence on others. It appears to us obvious that our religion is wholly bound up with our individual relation to God, and that others are not concerned with it. We become members of Christ, so we think, by our individual faith alone. This is the Protestant view. The result is that we neglect the doctrine of the Church. It is not so much that Protestants have a false conception of the Church as that they seem to be without any clear conception of it. We all tend to be hazy on this subject. Yet the doctrine of the Church is, next to the doctrine of God and His redemption, the most important doctrine of revealed religion, both in the Old and in the New Testament."

**289. I can be religious without the Church.**

But you cannot thus be religious in the way God wants you to be religious. And since religion is concerned with duties to God, it is for God to dictate the terms and conditions, not for us. Your attitude is due to lack of knowledge and thought. You are contenting yourself with no more than a vague religious sentiment. But religion demands a devotedness of the whole man to God, a devotedness of mind and heart and will. That means that we must believe what God has taught, love Him above all else, and serve Him both by worship and obedience to His law. For all this a man must study and know just what God has revealed, and not be content with a merely vague religious outlook. And as he is not only individual, but also social by his very nature, man must render both private and public worship to God. Christ established a Church to teach all nations and to gather to itself all whom it leads to a belief in Christ. One who says he is religious, yet who refuses to have anything to do with the Church Christ established, simply does not know the Christian religion.

## The True Church

### **290. The Church as I understand it is in the souls of men.**

If the Church is an invisible quality confined to the souls of men, then no human being could say where the true Church is to be found, and no one could hear its voice or obey its precepts. No. Our Lord established a visible society in this world, even though not of this world. And He compared it to a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid. One of the visible and organized Churches in this world today is His. And the Catholic Church alone can show the characteristics which He declared should be those of His true Church.

### **291. The Church is formed, not of those who belong to a visible organization, but of those who are born again from above and endowed with the Holy Spirit.**

That could not be judged by men. No one could tell who belonged to the true Church, and who did not, according to that theory. Christ established a visible Church and appointed visible Apostles. And those belonged to the Church who accepted the teaching of the Apostles, and persevered in the discipline imposed by them. In Acts XX.. 28, we read, "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God." How could bishops rule the Church if they did not know who belonged to it?

### **292. I have a great respect for Christ, but very little for the Church.**

That cannot be right. If you believe in Christ, you must consider as necessary what Christ considered necessary. To wish to believe in Christ without believing in His Church is folly itself. As a matter of fact, Jesus did not preach to the first converts; the Church preached Jesus to the people, and on the testimony of the Church, they believed in Christ. And the first fact for the early Christians was belief in the mission of the Church. Through their acceptance of the Church and her authority they were led to faith in Christ.

### **293. You make too much of the word Church, and not enough of the Savior, who is supreme over all things.**

Jesus is certainly supreme over all things. And the Catholic Church exists to bring souls to the Person of Christ. She ever bids her children to love Him, and insists that they can never love Him too much. Meantime, those who obey our Lord by submitting to the Church He founded make more of Him than those who do not, but who insist on dictating their own terms. If I speak often of the Church it is because of the nature of the questions sent in. And that is because non-Catholics, instead of making much of Christ's doctrine concerning His Church, simply ignore it as if it had not the same value as His other teachings. A man who is not wrong in what he says, may be quite wrong in what he omits. Love Christ by all means. But do not let your love of Christ serve you as an excuse to repudiate His Church, and to assert that it is of no importance whatever to find that true Church He thought fit to establish.

## Catholic Claims Are Absolute

### **294. I can't find references to any definite religion of Christ in either the Old or New Testaments.**

If so, it is certainly not because the references are not there. Take one classical passage from the Old Testament: The prophet Isaiah, II., 2-4, certainly predicted a very definite and new form of religion to be given by Christ. The passage says, "The house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For the law will come forth from Sion; and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge the Gentiles and rebuke many people." The correct sense of that passage is as follows: When the Christ shall come, He will solidly establish the religion of God in a visible

form which all men will be able to recognize. As opposed to the one chosen people of the Jews, all nations will be represented amongst its members. And they will learn from it the ways of God, and will walk in His paths under its guidance. This promised religion will originate in Jerusalem. Now, if we turn to the New Testament, we find Christ carefully fulfilling this prophecy of the Old Testament. He says in Matt. XVI, 18, "I will build my Church." He prescribed its doctrine and commissioned it to go forth from Jerusalem teaching men, as He says in Matt. XXVIII., 20, "To observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In Matt. XVIII., 18, He gives this Church His authority. "Amen. I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven." In the preceding verse He gives the Church judicial power. "If a man will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen." And He sends that Church, no longer to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also. In Matt. XXVIII., 19, "Going, therefore," He says. "Teach all nations." His Church must remain one Church, for it is to be "one fold under one shepherd." It is to last with the constitution He gave it all days till the end of the world. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And again. "Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." All this obviously indicates a very definite religion, and a very definite Church.

**295. If I were to embrace Catholicism, would I, if at any time I was not satisfied, be at liberty to leave the Catholic Church?**

Firstly, so long as you think it even possible that you would want to leave the Church in the future, you have not attained an absolute conviction of its truth. And you cannot become a Catholic with lingering doubts in your mind. When a person has really attained to the gift of Faith, all such vague fears vanish. But, secondly, if you did receive the gift of Catholic Faith in all its fullness and certainty, yet after becoming a Catholic you were to lose that Faith through your own fault, you would be under no physical compulsion to continue to profess the Catholic religion and fulfill its duties. You could walk off, declare you had left the Catholic Church, tell your friends that you had become a Christadelphian, or anything else you might wish; and nothing would be done to restrain you. The only thing that really prevents Catholics from abandoning their Church is their own interior conviction of its truth, and of their personal obligation to remain loyal to conscience and to God. Whilst they have that conviction, they themselves do not feel at liberty to leave the Church. Should they lose that conviction, they would feel at liberty to do as they pleased. But, if ever you receive the gift of Catholic Faith, I can assure you that you won't be afraid lest you cannot get away from it; you will rather dread lest anybody or any thing should get it away from you. For you will find that, instead of robbing you of your liberty, it has given to you the liberty of the children of God; liberty from error, and weakness, and sin; and the liberty to use wonderful means of divine grace, thus to progress in virtue and holiness of life before God and man.

**296. What does your Church teach concerning the fate of a man who was brought up as a Catholic, but who leaves the Church, and dies still rejecting the Catholic Faith?**

The Catholic Church has no teaching concerning the ultimate fate of any individual soul. She leaves that to God. But she does teach that no Catholic who has been brought up as such can ever have a sufficient reason to justify his abandoning it. If, therefore, a Catholic should lose his faith and abandon the Church he has certainly been guilty of sin; and if he dies in that state without repenting of his sin he will lose his soul. Whether any particular soul goes from this world without interior repentance God alone, of course, can say.

**297. What if a man reasoned himself out of his faith?**

In such a case the man would have misused his reasoning powers. No instructed Catholic can renounce the Catholic Faith without a grave fault on his part. Always he has a grave duty to adhere to his faith, and always he has reasonable grounds for doing so. If he abandons it, he does so by a wrong and guilty choice as well as by an unreasonable choice. If any reading awakens or fosters doubt in the mind of a Catholic, he knows at once that he must cease reading things which endanger his faith. If he goes on reading such things, he does so at the price of violating his conscience. Then, too, when some difficulty presents itself, he behaves most unreasonably in thinking that because he can't solve it, therefore there is no solution of it. Ordinary prudence dictates that he seek advice from some competent guide. Certainly, if such a Catholic

did end by losing the faith, it would involve the resistance of grace, the neglect of prayer, the refusal of ordinary prudent consultation, and the guilty following of an evil will.

**298. Supposing that he carefully studies the Catholic religion in the light of science, and finds it untrue?**

As God is the Author of the Catholic Faith, and also the Author of all natural truth, there can never be any real conflict between the authoritative teachings of the Catholic religion, and the true findings of science. Any man who thinks that science proves the Catholic religion to be untrue, either does not know the Catholic religion, or has wrong ideas of science. And a man who has but an inadequate knowledge of Catholicism, and who is quite untrained in science, should know that he is simply incompetent to form such a judgment as you indicate unless he is sublimely unconscious of his limitations. He has not the elements of humility, and a sin of pride and presumption at least has preceded his fall. Most men have a general instinctive knowledge of what they must do to safeguard their bodily health. But if any serious trouble threatens, they are sensible enough not to rely upon such inadequate knowledge of physiology or medical information which they have picked up by their own reading. They seek advice from one who has received definite medical training in a qualified university. So, too, the average man has a sufficient working knowledge of the law for ordinary purposes. But if he finds himself in a legal tangle, he rightly distrusts his own knowledge and capacity, and consults one whose very business it is to be trained in legal matters. Yet, when not his bodily health, and not his temporal affairs, but his eternal destiny is at stake, this same man will consider himself fully competent to decide the gravest issues for himself. He chooses to throw to the winds a prudence he would never dream of abandoning in lesser matters. And the choice is a guilty violation of reason and conscience. The ordinary Catholic has sufficient working knowledge to save his soul. But where special religious difficulties occur, he is obliged to consult those qualified to advise him. Ignorance alone can conclude that science conflicts with Catholicism, as that famous scientist, Louis Pasteur, ever maintained. When people marveled that so great a scientist should have such fervent faith in the Catholic religion, he would reply, "I believe as firmly as the Breton peasant; and, if I had a little more knowledge, I would believe as firmly as the Breton peasant's wife." The man you suggest for consideration would be guilty of pride in setting up his judgment against the authority of the Church established by God to teach mankind the truths of religion; guilty of imprudence in not seeking counsel; and guilty of presumption in not seeking light from God by prayer. If he lost the faith, he would be responsible for doing so; and if he died without repenting of his sin, he would lose his soul.

A Clerical Hierarchy

**299. Protestants, guided by the Gospels, cannot see the use of priests.**

The Catholic idea seems strange to them, not because they are guided by the Gospels, but because, whilst they concentrate on the fact that Christ is their Redeemer and Sanctifier, they fail to grasp the means by which He desires to carry out His work in the souls of men. The Church is the kingdom of Christ in this world. Within that kingdom, an ordained priesthood, deriving its powers from Christ, communicates to the faithful in the name of a Christ the benefits of redemption. The priesthood, then, represents Christ and continues His mission. It is commissioned to forgive sin as He forgave sin; and to teach and to sanctify men in His name.

**300. Priests are only men after all; and how Catholics keep their faith in them is a mystery to me.**

Priests as such are not "only men" after all. They are men who have been ordained and have had confided to their keeping the very priesthood of Christ. And any reverence shown by Catholics towards their priests is reverence for this priesthood of Christ. It is not reverence for anything merely human in the priest. And Catholics so esteem the priesthood of Christ that the sight of an unworthy priest merely impresses them with the lofty character of his state. It is precisely because the priesthood is not proper to man but belongs to Christ that the necessity of valid ordination

becomes evident. If it be not rightly communicated to a man, that man lacks priesthood entirely in the Christian sense of the word, no matter how firmly convinced he may be that he is a priest and no matter how many people accept him as such. Finally, it is indeed a mystery how Catholics keep their faith in their priests. It is a mystery to priests themselves as well as to the Catholics who have that faith. For it is the mystery of grace itself — of God's working within their souls. In fact, so great is the mystery that no natural factors can account for it. And we are certain of one thing only — that God must be responsible for it. And this is another indication that God is indeed with the Catholic Church as with no other.

### **301. Did not Jesus say that the clergy were of their father the devil?**

He did not say that. He did not mention the clergy. The text you have in mind is Jo. VIII., 44. There He was speaking to a particular group of Jews who rejected His claim to divinity, and who took up stones to kill Him because of that claim. It is strange that Judge Rutherford who misuses that text against the clergy should himself deny absolutely Christ's claim to be God — thus identifying himself with the very ones whom Christ declared to be of their father the devil, who stood not in the truth, for the truth was not in him.

### **302. Should servants of the Lord wear special dress to distinguish themselves from others?**

There is no need for servants of the Lord who do not happen to be specially consecrated to God to do so. But those servants of the Lord who happen to be priests should wear special dress. God Himself legislated in the Old Law that His priests should wear a special dress. And human wisdom also realizes that those in official position, as in the army, or in the navy, should wear special uniforms. Thus, those from whom people desire official directions can easily be found.

### **303. How do you harmonize the fact that priests are called "Father" with Christ's words, "Call no man your father on earth."?**

Our Lord's words were simply a strong way of saying, in the Hebrew style, that no earthly father must come before God, the one supreme Father of all, in one's allegiance. So Christ said, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." His words were not intended to forbid a boy to call a parent "father," and if you may call the man on earth to whom you owe your earthly life, and education, and constant care, "father," so you may call "father" that man on earth to whom you owe your *spiritual* life. So St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "You have not many fathers. Yet by the Gospel I have begotten you in Christ Jesus," 1 Cor. IV., 15. He knew quite well that in thus calling himself their spiritual father in Christ he was not violating any commandment of Christ.

### **304. How is the priest a father of one's spiritual life?**

In a purely spiritual sense a priest does all for the life of grace in a soul that ordinary parents do for the natural life of the children God gives them. It is the priest who gives spiritual life to souls at the baptismal font. He educates those brought forth to life in Christ by their baptismal rebirth; he teaches, warns, corrects, and advises his spiritual children, and nourishes them with the bread of life in the Sacraments. When souls go out of this world to meet God, it is the priest who is at their death-beds, soothing their last hours, allaying their fears, and consoling them as no others could do. Having no family, the priest belongs to every family; and all in his parish; men, women, and children, love him and venerate him, and look up to him as their spiritual guide and friend, summing up everything in that term of supreme respect and reverence — "Father." Catholics rightly, therefore, call the priest "father," not to the exclusion of their Father in heaven, but as a manifestation on earth of the supreme Fatherhood of God in the spiritual order, even as an earthly parent is a similar manifestation of that same Fatherhood in the natural order.

**305. Priestcraft seems to be everything in your Church, filling Catholics with superstitious dread.**

The priesthood established by Jesus Christ has nothing to do with "priestcraft." Nor does superstition enter into the high regard Catholics have for the priestly vocation. The priesthood of Christ, communicated to men, is undoubtedly the highest dignity in the world. And in a way it is everything in the Church. For it is the essential manifestation of the Church. The Church is but a "collective priest," the spiritual and mystical body of Christ, the One High Priest. Through the Church Christ offers Himself to us; and He makes use of a specially ordained priesthood in order to do so. From this point of view, the priesthood is the most important function in the Church. Bishops are for this priesthood. They are to ordain priests, and control the exercise of priestly powers. And those powers are chiefly for the Eucharist. Priests are ordained to consecrate the Eucharist, and to prepare the faithful for the reception of the Eucharist by instruction and by forgiving them their sins.

**306. Catholics are told that they owe the greatest respect and reverence to priests independently of their personal character and in spite of their faults.**

That is true. But notice that the respect is independently of a priest's character, and in spite of his faults. If he has faults, no one is expected to reverence those faults. And even charity, which overlooks those faults, does not demand that we deny them if they do exist. Of course, a priest is obliged to make his personal character correspond with the sacred character of his office, and deserve personally the respect which his position secures for him. If he fails to do this, he will answer to God for his infidelity. But others are never dispensed from the duty of reverence for those who are called to the office of priesthood. Such respect is included in the reverence one has for his religion.

**307. I do not see why this should be so.**

It is really a question of justice, which inspires us to render to others what is due to them. Now we know that people differ, and always will differ, in education, ability, virtue, authority, dignity, and in many other ways. And it is but just to recognize these differences in practice. If religion is a just recognition of God's excellence and majesty, so in a lesser way we should respect the office and dignity of such men as exercise religious authority given by God. Thus, we all admit that a child should treat his parents with respect. And the faults of those parents do not dispense the child from that duty. If a mother has faults, the child is not obliged to call those faults virtues; but he will at least say, "Anyway, she is my mother, I respect her for the office God gave her in relation to me, and I prefer not to discuss her with others." But there are other bonds between people besides parentage. For example, justice demands that we render to a king or president the respect due to him as holding authority from God. And the respect we owe to him is extended to a governor or an ambassador appointed by him. The governor may have his personal faults. But they do not dispense us from honouring him in virtue of his office. In the same way, a priest is a representative of Jesus Christ fulfilling duties entrusted to him by our Saviour, and acting in His name. Our very respect for Christ is extended to those He has deigned to choose as His ambassadors to men. And one's respect will be proportionate to one's own faith in Christ.

**308. I read a book which said that a slanderer of a priest was a most despicable creature, and it quoted, "Touch not my holy ones," or some such phrase from Scripture.**

The slanderer of anybody is a most despicable creature. But if the slandering of anybody is evil, it is worse when one slanders a priest. The text to which you refer is from Ps. 104, where God says, "Touch ye not My anointed." He insists on respect for His religion being extended to His appointed ministers of religion. There are some people who try to excuse their irreligious conduct by saying that they are not anti-Christian, but merely anticlerical. But whatever theoretical value that dis-

inction may have, it has practically none in practice. Anticlericalism inevitably leads to a decrease or even a complete loss of the Christian Faith in the end. If a priest is guilty of disedifying conduct, he will be blamed on all sides because of his very identity with religion. It will be argued that he cannot but bring disgrace on the Church and the cause he represents. But this must apply both ways. To slander a priest is also to bring contempt on the Church and on the cause of Christ. And that is treachery on the part of any professing Christian.

**309. What are the duties of Catholics in this matter?**

They are three. Firstly, to allow one's respect for Christ to extend to it priest by reason of his office. Secondly, to think no evil, to avoid rash judgments, and to overlook in a spirit of charity such obvious human faults and frailties as a priest may exhibit, dismissing them completely from consideration and conversation. Thirdly, to continue most faithfully in one's own religious duties, never dreaming that neglect of duty in a priest could possibly justify neglect of duty by others.

**310. Despite their privileged position, priests are often a disappointment to their own people.**

The fact that Catholics are disappointed when individual priests fail to set an edifying example shows that they at least have right ideas as to what a priest ought to be. A priest does not need to be holy for the validity of his ministrations. In him it is the priesthood of Christ which is at work, and Christ is holy. At the same time it would be wrong for one called to dispense grace and spiritual gifts to others in the name of Christ to lack grace and spirituality himself. And if the salt lose its savour, at the possibility of which Christ so sadly hinted, the only remedy is the reform and greater sanctification of the clergy, and an increased spirit of faith in the laity. The priest is in a privileged position as regards salvation by his intimate contact with religion and holy things. But he is in a perilous position also. His responsibilities are much greater than those of others, and his judgment will be much more exacting than that of others. His priesthood will not save him of itself. He has to work out his own salvation, and his fate will depend upon the use he makes of his gifts, and his fulfilment of the duties of his exalted state. To whom much has been given, of him much will be required by God.

**311. The Church is not merely an organization, but its members are members of Christ's body.**

Those who belong to the Church are members of Christ's body. But the Church is definitely an organization. Christ called His Church a kingdom, and a kingdom supposes organized authority, not anarchy.

**312. Why has not the laity a say in the administration of your Church just as in Protestant Churches?**

Because the Catholic Church is not a Protestant Church. The Protestant idea of the Church is radically opposed to the Catholic idea. By their very departure from the Catholic Church, Protestants were forced to deny the constitutional and divine authority vested in the Pope and the bishops. Whilst they said that God is related to us through Christ, they repudiated the idea that Christ is related to us through the Church. Consequently, for them the Church lost its significance. They felt free to form Churches for themselves, insofar as they thought such associations helpful. Different men, therefore, formed different types of Churches. Hence the diversity. But all these Protestant Churches were what men made them, and had constitutions which men had given them. Their constitutions are always dependent upon men, and are revisable by men. But case is very different with the Catholic Church.

**313. We Protestants do not believe in a "passive laity."**

Nor do Catholics. The Catholic Church is a living organism, and no element is passive in a living organism. Jesus came to cast fire upon the earth, and the laity has its part to do in the enkindling of that fire. But the laity's activities are not extinguished by submission to a hierarchy; they are stimulated. Catholics are not governed without their cooperation, and the Church relies upon their active good will. The recent appeal of the Pope for "Catholic Action" is precisely an appeal that the laity should banish all passivity and do that work which lies within their province. The whole body benefits by the proper functioning of every unit. But the best government is that which unites the participation of all lesser activities with higher functions, controlling and centralizing everything in the harmony of one directing principle. This is accomplished in the Catholic Church, and Christ has given her the best possible constitution. In their very workings, the constitutions of Protestant Churches betray their purely human origin.

**314. How do priests differ from Protestant ministers?**

Protestantism does not acknowledge a sacrament of Holy Orders in the Catholic sense of the word. It repudiates anything savouring of sacerdotalism or of a priesthood distinct by its very nature from the condition of the laity. Some Protestant ministers are so insistent upon this that on principle they refuse to wear a dress distinguishing them from the layman. And many of them feel little incongruity in changing from a clerical to a secular career. On the other hand, the Catholic priest receives the very priesthood of Christ indelibly stamped upon his soul by the sacrament of Holy Orders. He is no longer a layman after his ordination, and knows that he can never be a layman again. He is forever consecrated and raised to a sacred dignity far above all earthly levels. Even did he return to a secular career, he would ever be conscious that he was still a priest. And knowing that the priesthood of Christ was communicated to him that he might offer sacrifice to God for the sins of men, and that he might dispense to men sacramental graces, he would know that a return to a secular career would be an insult to Christ, a guilty neglect of the grace of his ordination, and treachery to the souls of men for whom he was ordained.

**315. Jesus is our Great High Priest. Let us glorify Him, and not man.**

Catholics fully agree that Jesus is our Great High Priest. So even did you become a Catholic you would not have to change your views on that point. Where you do go wrong, however, is in thinking that, because Jesus is our High Priest, no human being could be empowered by Him to exercise the office of priesthood on His behalf. That Jesus is our High Priest does not forbid Him to exercise His priesthood through human instruments of His own choosing, who will thus be secondary priests. Any honour given to priests would then be honour given to Him; for apart from Christ from whom they derive their priesthood they would be nothing.

**316. Christ is the Head of the Church and the Holy Spirit is the life-giving soul.**

Christ is the Head of the Catholic Church, and the Holy Spirit is the soul of the Catholic Church. But Christ, the one invisible Head of the Church, is visibly represented in the visible Christian assembly by the Pope. As successor of St. Peter, the Pope is simply the "Agent General" of Christ.

**317. The hierarchy claims that whatever it binds on earth is binding in heaven. But Christ Himself did not have an open order from His Father to do or say what He liked.**

The only restriction on Christ was His inability to contradict Himself, or to commit sin of any kind. He Himself said, "All power is given to the Me heaven and on earth." And He said to the Apostles, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound also in heaven."

**318. As Christ did not make one new law, and warned us about the "commandments of men," is it likely that He would give men the power to make new laws?**



Christ made many new laws. I cannot spare the time to enumerate them all. But take this one example. When He said at the Last Supper to the Apostles, "Do this in commemoration of Me. and as often as you do it, you will show the death of the Lord until He comes," He gave them a new law not to be found, as previously binding, in the Old Law. So, too, when He commanded men to be baptized by water and the Holy Spirit. When Christ gave the about the "commandments of men" He was addressing the Scribes and the Pharisees. But their unauthorized impositions under the Old Law did not prevent Him from authorizing His own apostles to legislate in His name under the New Law, promising to safeguard them from error by the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is that same Holy Spirit who preserves the Church from any essential errors opposed to Christian principles to her official teaching concerning faith and morals.

**319. Christ told them to teach what He had commanded them, not what they thought fit to devise.**

Part of what He had taught them was that they had the power to legislate in His name. And that constitutional power has been handed on in the Church.

**320. Dean Inge says: "If those who are bitterly opposed to Christianity will take the trouble to trace those things in it which arouse their indignation to their sources, they will find, I think, that almost everything which offends them comes from ecclesiasticism, not from Christianity."**

Dean Inge is wrong. His appeal to the distinction between Churchianity and Christianity may have weight with Protestants who protest against the Catholic Church, and whose religion has become so self-centred and individualistic that they have little respect for their own Churches. But the distinction will avail nothing with those bitterly opposed to Christianity. They do not object to the corporate view which identifies the Church with Christ. They object to the idea of a supernatural revelation at all. They will not entertain the notion that God Himself ever prescribed a definite religion for man. And Dean Inge could attack ecclesiasticism till his dying day without converting a single one of its enemies to Christianity. It is true that bitter opponents of Christianity rejoice when professing Christians attack the clergy. They gladly repeat such utterances. But their joy is not in any hope that pure and undefiled Christianity will emerge from the painful criticism; their hope is that anticlericalism will put one more nail in the coffin of Christianity.

**321. "Religious societies must exist," writes Dean Inge, "and it is not likely that a class of officials will ever be found who do not wish to increase their power."**

I deny that, in the Catholic Church at least, the priesthood and the bishops, as an official class, will ever want to make their authority a personal matter, to be increased to their own advantage. I say that I deny that of them as it class. But I agree with Dean Inge to this extent: It is not likely that, in a society composed of human beings, there will ever exist a class of officials in which some of the officials will not abuse their office, and seek to increase their motives from motives of personal pride and ambition. That may be true of leaders in the Catholic Church, as of every other society, secular or religious in this world. Not for a moment would I deny that there have been Catholic bishops and priests who have forsaken the spirit of Christ, neglected their duties, exceeded their rights, been guilty of intolerable tyranny, and sickened those who have known them of the religion they claimed to represent. But they are the exception. Christ predicted that they would exist, and warned us not to let such failures and disappointments due to human frailty and sin shake our faith in the Church as such. The Church is to be judged by mass of those who have lived in accordance with her requirements; not by the comparative few whose conduct is their own, and possibly guilty of a violation of what the Church declares they should be and should do.

**322. "As soon as we recognise that the history of the Great Church is a monstrous abuse," added Dean Inge, "which has made the Word of God of no effect by its traditions, we shall be**

**more ready to go back to the fountain-head, and judge of the modern problems by the broad principles of the New Testament."**

In the first place, if any history depicts the Catholic Church as a monstrous abuse, that history itself is a monstrous abuse. One may agree with historians bringing out abuses of which members of the Church have undoubtedly been guilty. But to transfer the guilt from recalcitrant members or officials to the Church they disgraced is monstrous. Still more monstrous is Dean Inge's bland assertion that the traditions of the Great Church have made the Word of God of no effect and that people who learn to despise the Church will be then ready to go back to the fountain-head is against all experience. An ever-growing loss of interest in any Christianity at all is the outstanding characteristic of those whose forefathers abandoned the Catholic Church at the time of the Protestant Reformation. As for judging modern problems by the broad principles of the New Testament, those who make such statements seldom get beyond vague generalizations. They do not tell us what they think those principles to be, lest in defining them they should seem to be narrow. The main thing, apparently, is to keep on talking about the broad principles of the New Testament, but at all costs to keep them so broad that they cease to be principles.

**323. What is needed, according to Dean Inge, is "entire detachment from ecclesiastical tradition which has completely upset the moral standards of the Gospels, counting disobedience to the hierarchy a graver offence than sins against love, truthfulness, humility or purity."**

Where the Catholic Church is concerned it is sheer nonsense to say that ecclesiastical tradition has completely upset the moral standards of the Gospels. Apart from the extravagance of the statement, the Gospels themselves declare it to be impossible. As for disobedience to the hierarchy being a graver sin than sins against the theological virtue of charity or love of God, the Catholic Church expressly teaches that sins against the theological virtues are worse than sins against the cardinal virtues of justice, which includes obedience and truthfulness, and of temperance, which includes humility and purity. Apparently, too, the Dean wants to convey the idea that, in the Catholic Church, sins against love, truthfulness, humility or purity, do not matter so long as one is obedient to the hierarchy. That is a calumny. It may be argued that the Dean does not want to convey such an idea, and that he admits that they are regarded as sins. But he took care to destroy that impression by declaring that ecclesiastical tradition has completely upset the moral standards of the Gospels. One wonders why he remains an ecclesiastic even in the Church of England!

**324. Could not the outward form of a Church, frequently borrowed from earlier systems, be so engrossing as to blind one to its development through human weakness and vanity from a simple truth?**

That could happen. But I deny such is true of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, a superficial knowledge of earlier religious systems, and a fascination for the discovery of remote parallelisms in Christianity, can blind one to the historical facts concerning the independent origin of the Christian religion, and the immense differences which far outweigh what are for the most part imagined similarities. And still further, one can be blind to the laws of logic, and fall into the fallacy of thinking that similarities are of themselves sufficient proof of derivation.

**325. What powers did Christ confer upon His Church?**

All can really be reduced to three. Firstly, magisterial power or the authority to teach the truth in His name. Thus He said "Go teach all nations." Secondly, sanctifying powers for the forgiving of sin and the conferring of graces necessary for salvation and virtue. Thus He said "Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them." Thirdly, legislative power or the right to make laws for the disciplinary needs of the Church. Thus He said " whatsoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven,"

**326. You maintain that the Church will remain permanently the same till the end of the world?**

Yes. For Christ said, "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. Matt. 28, 20. By the consummation of the world is meant, not the death of the Apostles, but the end of time, and of the human race on earth. And the Church must remain with the constitution, powers, and authority given it by Christ, or it would cease to be the Church as Christ established it, and no longer, therefore, His Church, The Catholic Church, just as Christ intended it and founded it, is imperishable. It is not subject to any essential changes.

**327. Would you kindly read St. Mark, XV1., 17-18?**

Those verses are as follows: "These signs shall follow them that believe: in My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall, lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover."

**328. If the Catholic hierarchy desires to secure belief in itself, let its members do these things.**

You are asking what the Gospels themselves do not require; for you are reading more into the words of Christ than they contain. Christ said, "These signs shall follow." He did not say that they would follow always, and in every single age, and be in the power of every believer in Him, or even of every priest. Christ's prediction was verified, for such signs did follow the preaching of the Gospel. If you read the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul you will find that such things certainly did occur. Again, although such miraculous manifestations are not so abundant today as in the early Church, when they were more necessary to secure its rapid and solid extension, they have not entirely ceased. They have continued intermittently through the ages, as we know from the lives of the Saints. But, if you have any faith in the predictions of Christ, instead of urging an exaggerated extension of a particular prediction beyond any limits intended by our Lord, why not face His prediction that the Church He established will continue till the end of time, the very gates of hell failing to prevail against it? The Church is still in this world, and it is the Catholic Church.

**329. Priests can't do these things today.**

There is no particular reason why they should be empowered to do so. Our Lord did not predict that every single believer in any given age would be endowed with the ability to do all the remarkable things He enumerated. In the various ages, and more particularly in Apostolic times, some believers did some of them; others did others. And since those signs did follow those who believed in Christ, His prophecy was fulfilled. Your difficulty arises from your having read too hastily and superficially an isolated text, accepting conclusions far wider than the premises afforded by it could possibly justify. If the answer to a sum in arithmetic is to be correct, it must not contain more than the preceding figures warrant. And it is a great test of sound reasoning to go back to the propositions from which you began, and make sure you have got their right sense, and that you have not read more into them than they really say.

**330. If these promises were made to the disciples only, why are not other promises so interpreted, such as the promise of the power of binding and loosing in the Church?**

The promises of miraculous powers were not for the disciples only. I merely maintain that they were not for all believers always. Christ promised the gift of miracles, not to anyone who would believe in Him at all, but to the community of the faithful, to be exercised by some of them individually according to the will of God and the interests of the Church. The cases quoted in the passage from St. Mark are merely possible examples chosen from amongst others. So St. Paul describes in 1 Cor. XII., 28-31, the various gifts, saying that God gave to some the gift of miracles

— that in the Church were graces of healings, helps, kinds of tongues, interpretations of speeches. But he adds, “Are all Apostles? Are all prophets? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the grace of healing? . . . Be zealous for the better gifts.” And he goes on to show that charity and personal virtue are the things that really matter. The dispositions of extraordinary gifts can be left to God.

### Papal Supremacy

**331. You have repeatedly said that the Pope is the head on earth of your priestly hierarchy. But Christ is the Head of the Church, and there cannot be two heads to one body.**

There can be, in the Catholic sense, the one on earth being but secondary, and Vicar of Christ, the Supreme Head of the Church. Thus, a plenipotentiary ambassador has the power of the king. It is not a power different from that of the king. In fact, it is the king's power exercised through the ambassador. So the Pope is head of the Church on earth insofar as to him is delegated the power of Christ by Christ Himself. The Pope teaches and governs in the name of Christ. And he must be strictly faithful to the doctrines taught by Christ, interpreting them, defining them, defending them, and settling disputes concerning them. He is there for that, and such an authority is the secret of the success of the Catholic Church. And, of course, it is the provision made for His Church by the wisdom of Christ.

**332. It is wrong for the Pope to arrogate to himself the title of "Vicar of God" on earth.**

He does not do so. A person is said to arrogate to himself a title when he assumes it without any right to possess it. But, as the rightful head of the Catholic Church in this world, the Pope lawfully succeeds to an office whose occupant is rightfully regarded as God's Vicar on earth.

**333. It is the height of presumption for any man to be called the Vicar of God.**

I am afraid you do not understand what the word "vicar" means. If you imagine that it supposes authority even over God, I must ask you to dismiss that idea at once. A vicar is one who has authority as the delegate of another. Anyone who exercises authority in the name of another can rightly be termed that others vicar. Thus, in writing of the king, Carlyle says, "The authority of the king is that of law, or of right, not that of wrong. The king, therefore, should use the authority of law or right as being the vicar and servant of God on earth." So speaks Carlyle, and quite correctly. But if he who holds supreme authority in the State for purposes of temporal administration may be termed the Vicar of God, surely the term is still more justified when we speak of the supreme head of the Church, to whom the care of our spiritual welfare has been entrusted.

**334. Why is the Pope called "Holy Father"? Christ never called Peter by that title.**

Christ conferred upon St. Peter a very holy office, and appointed him as head of the household of the faith constituted by the great family of all the spiritual children of God. By doing this, Christ appointed him as the "holy father" of the whole Christian family on earth; and we Catholics as true children of the family rightly grant to him and to the Pope as his successor, the title of "Holy Father."

**335. In early times the title of Pope was given to all bishops.**

That is true. The word "Pope" simply means "Father," and the bishops from the beginning were regarded as entrusted in a particular way with the paternal care of their respective flocks. It was not until the fourth century that the word "Pope" began to be a distinctive title of the Bishop of Rome.

**336. Then how were the successors of St. Peter distinguished from other bishops by the early Christians?**

Chiefly by the title of their Bishopric. Rome, as the See of St. Peter, was acknowledged to be the supreme source of authority in the Church; and it was enough to speak of the Bishop of Rome for all to know that the supreme head of the Church on earth was intended. Yet, besides the title of Bishop of Rome, even in the earliest times when all bishops were called Popes, other distinctive titles were given to those to whom the title of Pope is now restricted. Thus, the Bishop of Rome was called the "Supreme Pontiff," or the "Roman Pontiff," or again the "Bishop of Bishops." But in general, it is enough to say that the supremacy of the Pope was annexed to the Bishopric inherited from St. Peter, and the very mention of Rome was enough to indicate supreme authority in the Church. "Rome has spoken; the case is finished" is an axiom which sums up the attitude of the early Christians.

**337. How can the Pope be Peter's lawful successor, when there was no Pope from St. Peter's death until the fourth century?**

In the second century, St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, gives the list of the Popes until his day. "The Blessed Apostles," he wrote, "transmitted the office of the episcopate to Linus. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the Apostles, to Clement is allotted the episcopacy." So he continues, giving the names of the Popes down to Eleutherius, "Who now," he says, "in the twelfth place, holds the inheritance of the episcopate from the Apostles." How could St. Irenaeus, in the second century, enumerate the names of twelve Popes, if there were no Popes before the fourth century?

**338. Then the Primacy is bound to find sanctuary in Rome, or Christendom will be without its head. What if Italy were invaded and the Pope expelled?**

The Primacy will always be attached to the episcopal See of Rome. The diocese of Rome, therefore, will never be destroyed nor suppressed. Despite any possible political changes, there will always be some faithful Christians in the diocese of Rome, and the Pope will be their bishop. The true "Eternal Rome," to use a popular expression, is not political Rome, but the Rome of St. Peter and of his successors; in other words, perpetuity belongs to ecclesiastical Rome, whatever political changes the centuries may bring.

**339. Where was Peter given power to transmit his office to others?**

Christ Himself gave St. Peter the power of transmitting his privileges and authority as head of the Church by declaring that Church to be perpetual. As a building is supported by its foundation, so the whole Church will ever rest upon the constitutional office and authority to be transmitted by Peter. If the Church is to remain all days till the end of the world protected by Christ, it must remain just as He established it. No one could alter the essential constitution He gave it, or it would no longer be the same society. As the Church is perpetual, so the Primacy is perpetual, and, therefore, to be transmitted by Peter to his successors. Those who deny this must face the formidable consequence that the Church for nearly two thousand years has been heretical, leading the overwhelming majority of Christians through all the ages into error, so that the gates of hell have indeed prevailed against the Church Christ established and guaranteed. They must concede that the Church has no single visible head on earth; that unity in faith and worship is not necessary; and that division amongst the Churches with all their variations of discipline and indiscipline is quite in accordance with the mind of Christ. And that is indeed a reduction to the absurd.

**340. Matthew XVI., 18, 19, are ambiguous verses, which claim or claimed a respectable heterodoxy.**

The text, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church," has, of course, been violently disputed by those who desired to reject Catholicism. But the heterodox interpretations of these people, however respectable in their own eyes and in those of their followers, remained, nevertheless, heterodox. Error does not cease to be error because it becomes widespread and popular. Protestant scholars are becoming rapidly ashamed of the absurd interpretations adopted in order to escape the Catholic sense. So we find the Protestant Dr. Plummer insisting that the word rock must refer to Peter, and not to Christ Himself, nor to Peter's faith, nor to Peter's confession of faith. Dr. Briggs, a Presbyterian scholar, writes, "All attempts to explain the rock in any other way than as referring to Peter have ignominiously failed." The German Protestant scholar Kuinoel wrote, "Many interpreters wrongly said that the 'rock' referred to Christ Himself or to the confession of Peter. They would not have taken refuge in these distorted interpretations if the Popes had not used the words to vindicate their own authority." Loisy, the French Modernist, said, "Protestant interpretations are based on polemical interests. But, if one does accept the Gospels in an historical sense, their interpretations are only subtle distinctions doing violence to the text." Heterodox interpretations, therefore, are still heterodox; and they are growing less and less respectable.

**341. Any pretended religion trying to function on a couple of flagrantly distorted verses, to wit, Matthew XVI., 18, and XVIII., 17, is based on a very precarious foundation.**

I agree. But the Catholic Church does not try to function on a couple of verses of Scripture; and she does not flagrantly distort Matthew XVI., 18. and XVIII., 17. even when those particular verses happen to be quoted. If you hear them quoted fairly often, it is because those who write to me, and profess to believe in the Bible, seem to forget that they exist.

**342. But then, Romanism, being infallible, can make and unmake, bind and loose, dictate the lives and words and consciences of men, make and unmake laws.**

Being infallible means that the Catholic Church is unable, even if she would, to teach or legislate officially, in matters of faith or morals, in any way opposed to the revelation given by God to mankind. The infallibility of the Church does not give her the right to depart from the principles of Christ. It is a restriction, taking away that possibility. There is no guarantee that a noninfallible Church will not go astray.

**343. Judge Rutherford says that the Pope is antichrist, and the "seven-headed, ten-horned Beast"; whilst the Roman Church is "Satan's Organisation."**

That is sufficiently refuted by the fact that it is Judge Rutherford who supplies such information.

**344. Who is the "man" referred to in Rev. XIII., 18?**

He is a symbol of the evil spirit of revolt against God throughout the ages. St. John personifies by his expression the forces of evil struggling against the work of Christ. Ever there is an antichrist. It may be this Emperor or that; or some group of irreligious men, or a collection of groups. Whether, when the world's history approaches its climax, the antagonist is to be represented by one man, or by one system of government, or even by a dominant system of thought cannot be defined. But that matters little. Certainly the generalized visions of St. John do not justify us in insisting that the "man" referred to must be a definite human or diabolical personality. And still more certainly, the expression in no way refers to the Pope.

**345. There have been evil Popes. Was it God's will that they should be head of the Church?**

It was at least God's permissive will. It was quite against God's positive will that the few unworthy Popes should have lived in a disedifying way. But we should quarrel, not with the fact that they were Popes, but with the fact that they did not live up to their obligations, and set a good personal example to the faithful.

**346. Yet you have to believe that those Popes, sinful themselves, could do no wrong where the affairs of the Church were concerned?**

Catholics certainly must and do believe that no Pope, whatever his personal character, has ever defined an erroneous doctrine to be true. But the gift of infallibility does not extend to matters of practical administration. And Popes have undoubtedly been guilty of imprudence in such matters. The Church, however, being indefectible in virtue of Christ's promise to be with her all days till the end of the world, has survived all such mistakes in management and policy on the part of the Popes.

**347. Still Catholics are obliged to obey the Pope in all things.**

There is no authority in the Church to command what is evil. If any authority did so, Catholics are obliged to disobey such commands. If, for example, the Pope sent me a special command to murder some special enemy of the Church, I would absolutely refuse to obey. And if the Pope charged me with disobedience, I would reply, "I owe you no obedience when you command what is clearly sinful." But there is not the least likelihood of any Pope commanding anyone to do what is sinful.

**348. Can you quote any testimonies to Papal claims to supremacy before the year 300 A. D.?**

Yes. In the year 96, Pope Clement of Rome, wrote to the Corinthians. His letter was official, written in his capacity as successor of St. Peter, and it gave not only advice but definite commands. After his instructions he wrote, "If you obey what we have written by the Holy Spirit, you will be our joy and consolation. But if some do not obey what God has said by us, let them know that they will be involved in no small sin and danger." Harnack, the German Protestant scholar, admitted that this letter of Clement proves that the primacy of the Bishop of Rome was an accepted fact even in the first century. Again, we have the testimony of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch from 69-107 A. D. He writes that the Church at Rome "presides over the whole assembly united in charity." And he asks for prayers for the Church in Syria confided to him subject to Christ and the supreme authority of Rome. This testimony of St. Ignatius has particular value, for St. Peter had been Bishop of Antioch. If St. Peter had remained and died at Antioch, the Bishop of Antioch would have obtained the supremacy. But St. Ignatius expressly rejects the idea that he has authority over the Christians at Rome, and admits that the Bishop of Rome is the principal and presiding bishop. Thirdly, St. Irenaeus, 130-202 A. D., Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, wrote as follows of the Roman See: "On account of its supremacy it is necessary that every Church in which is the tradition of the Apostles should be in harmony or unity with this Church." Fourthly, St. Cyprian, 210-258 A. D., an African bishop, writing of certain heretics, says, "They even dare to invade the See of Peter and the principal Church whence the unity of the priesthood has its source." Again he writes, "We exhort all to acknowledge and hold that Rome is the mother and root-source of the Catholic Church."

**349. If the Pope was supreme head of the Church, why did the Emperors convene and preside over the Oecumenical Councils prior to the Greek Schism?**

It is true that the early Councils were convened by the Emperors, but never with any idea that they could grant any ecclesiastical jurisdiction or authority to the members of those Councils or to their decisions. Whilst the Emperor might demand that the bishops assemble, the Pope alone could give the character of an Oecumenical Council to the gathering, either by sending Legates, as at the Nicene Council; or by delegating authority to one of the bishops to preside, as at Ephesus; or by confirming the Decrees, as with the Second Council of Constantinople. In no case had the Decrees oecumenical value without the ratification of the Pope. The reason for the prior action of the Emperor in convening the Councils should be clear. When the same people are subjects of both civil and ecclesiastical authority, civil disturbance can affect their spiritual welfare, and religious disturbance can affect their civil welfare. Heresies in those times greatly disturbed social peace; and the Emperors wanted questions of faith and order in the Church rectified for the good of the Empire. But they knew that questions of faith as such were subject to the authority of the Pope. They had no say in deciding such matters.

**350. If the Pope were supreme in the Church, the bishops at the Council of Nicea, and the Bishop of Rome, surely would be aware of it.**

All were aware of it. They could not be unaware of the testimonies of Clement, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Cyprian, and many others. Hosius, who presided at the Council of Nicea, was the Legate of Pope Sylvester. Yet Pope Sylvester's predecessor, Pope Julius I., had written to the Eusebian bishops, "The ecclesiastical canon forbids any decrees to be sanctioned without the judgment of the Roman Bishop." That canon was certainly known to all the bishops assembled at Nicea.

**351. Then why did the Council of Nicea confer on the Pope the title of Patriarch, but junior to the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria?**

The Council did not do so. You have been misled by a wrong interpretation of the 6th Canon of the Nicene Council. That Canon did not allot junior patriarchal rights to the Bishop of Rome. It vindicated the patriarchal rights of Alexandria against the usurper, Meletius of Lycopolis. The Bishop of Alexandria complained to the Council of this usurpation. The Council then vindicated the patriarchal rights of the great Sees of Alexandria and Antioch in their own spheres, even as all admitted the patriarchal rights of Rome. The authoritative interpretation of this 6th Canon of Nicea can be found in the 16th transaction of the Council of Chalcedon. Paschasius was asked to quote the 6th Canon of Nicea. He did so as follows: "The Roman Church has always had the primary. Let Egypt however hold that the Bishop of Alexandria has power over all members there, because such is the custom with the Roman Bishop. So, in Antioch, and in the other provinces, let the Churches of the greater cities have the primacy." All present at Chalcedon agreed to the safeguarding of the patriarchal rights of Alexandria and Antioch in relation to their suffragan bishops, but added: "We declare that the primacy, and chief honor, according to the Canons, he preserved to the Archbishop of ancient Rome."

**352. Let us go back a little further. What did the supreme Pope Victor do to the Asiatic Christians in 188-189?**

What you here think adverse to the papal claims is really strong evidence for them. Take the history of the whole affair. From the earliest times, the Christians in Asia Minor used to celebrate Easter at the same time as the Jewish Passover, the 14th day of the Jewish month Nisan, on whatever day of the week it might fall. Elsewhere, and especially at Rome, Easter was celebrated always on a Sunday, as amongst us today. A controversy arose about this divergence of custom, and Pope Victor instructed the bishops to meet in order to settle the question. Lest Jewish ideas should invade the Church in Asia Minor, nearly all the bishops declared that the Roman custom should be observed everywhere. But the bishops of Asia Minor refused this, and the Pope condemned them, and excommunicated them. St. Irenaeus wrote to the Pope begging him not to enforce the censure for the sake of peace, and Pope Victor yielded. However, the Jewish custom was gradually abandoned, and before long the Roman custom of Easter observance was accepted in Asia Minor also.

**353. What was the action of the bishops, and the results thereof?**

I have explained that. No conclusion detrimental to papal jurisdiction can be drawn from the incident. Dr. B. J. Kidd, the Protestant scholar, says: "At no point in its history is this pre-eminence so evident as under Pope Victor, when from Gaul to Osrhoene on the Euphrates his invitation for the summoning of Councils to effect a settlement of the Paschal Controversy was everywhere accepted." And he quotes Duchesne's statement that this matter "shows how evident in those ancient times was the oecumenical authority of the Roman Church." And certainly no bishop other than the Bishop of Rome claimed such a right to intervene; nor would any other have been so heeded. Though some of the bishops refused to obey, and at the request of Irenaeus the Pope did not enforce the decree of excommunication, it does not follow that they denied his authority. As a matter of fact, the letter of Irenaeus shows that his authority was admitted, for Irenaeus pleaded that so many Christians should not be cut off from the Church for observing a long-standing custom. That is an admission that if the Pope did enforce the excommunication, the effect would be their



exclusion from the Church. Harnack, the German Protestant historian, saw that. "How could Victor threaten such an edict of excommunication," he writes, "unless it was commonly admitted that it belonged to the Roman Church to define the conditions of unity in those things that pertained to the faith."

#### **354. From whom did Spain seek advice during the disturbances created by Basilides?**

Let us take the facts, and then discuss their significance. In the year 253 A. D., two bishops in Spain named Basilides and Martialis denied their faith during a persecution, and went over to paganism. Neighboring bishops thereupon consecrated two other bishops, Sabinus and Felix, to take their places. The two apostate bishops later repented and wanted to take over their previous dioceses from Sabinus and Felix. Meeting with opposition, they went to Rome, gave a false account of affairs to Pope Stephen, and implored him to use his supreme authority to restore them to their bishoprics. They were very plausible, and deceived the Pope, who ordered their reinstatement. The distressed local Catholics then appealed for advice to Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage in Africa. Cyprian told them not to reinstate Basilides and Martialis, but to keep Sabinus and Felix, declaring that the Pope's decision was based on the wrong information supplied by the two unworthy renegades. But in all this there is no indication that either the Spanish Catholics or Cyprian of Carthage rejected the Pope's supremacy. The mere fact that Basilides and Martialis had recourse to the Holy See shows the primacy of Rome as an accepted fact. Cyprian himself in his writings on the subject strongly maintained all the Catholic principles of the Roman Primacy. In practice, during the stress of controversies, persecutions, and schisms, he did not always observe his own principles, and allowance can easily be made for mistakes in administration.

#### **355. How does this square with papal claims to supremacy?**

The incident affords no real difficulty. Cyprian, without denying the supreme authority of the Pope, seems to have ignored it in a particular difficulty, giving his reasons for doing so. Probably he thought he did what was for the best in the circumstances; but even had he been moved by some traces of pride or prejudice, which are latent even in the best of men, no argument against papal claims could be drawn from his conduct. In the year 257, Cyprian died a martyr for the faith, and is a canonized Saint in the Catholic Church. Writing in the fourth century, St. Augustine speaks of Cyprian's many mistakes, and says, "Either Cyprian did not say all that his enemies declare him to have said; or else he later corrected his views in the light of truth; or else the immense charity which filled his heart covered such blemishes in his life. In any case, he expiated all by his sufferings and death for Christ."

#### **356. What of the incident concerning Apiarius, 451 A. D.?**

That case is often quoted where the right of appeal to the Pope against the disciplinary decisions of other bishops is concerned. About the year 417 A. D., Apiarius, a priest in Africa, was deposed and excommunicated by his own bishop.

Apiarius appealed to the Pope, who took up his case, and reversed the decision of the African bishop, ordering Apiarius to be reinstated. After the death of Pope Zosimus, the case was again put to Pope Boniface, his successor. For five years, letters were exchanged between Africa and Rome concerning the principles involved, and Pope Boniface died without concluding the discussion. He was succeeded by Pope Celestine I., who settled the case by admitting that Apiarius was justly condemned by his own bishop, and should be deposed; but he insisted that, by virtue of their primacy, the Popes retained the right to hear and judge appeals from Africa, or anywhere else in the world.

#### **357. What is your interpretation of the African Synod's letters to Boniface?**

It is not a question of my interpretation. It is a question of their objective historical significance. There is certainly not one word in them that can validly be urged against the Roman Primacy. The African bishops complained to Pope Boniface of the high-handed behavior of the Legate Faustinus, though without disputing in any way the fact of his authority. They also asked the Pope to verify certain Canons which had

been quoted by his predecessor, Zosimus. It is to be noted that St. Augustine was a member of the committee of African bishops who wrote to Pope Boniface. Now St. Augustine was absolutely convinced of the primacy of the Pope, and would never have sanctioned letters which could be interpreted as opposed to that primacy. For example, writing against the Donatist heretics, St. Augustine said that the Bishop of Carthage had no need to worry about enemies so long as he knew that he was in communion with the Roman Church, in which the primacy of the Apostolic Chair had always existed, and from which the Gospel had come to Africa. In Ep. 209, he acknowledges that appeal may be made from his own episcopal decisions to Rome. And in sermon 131 he declares that Councils derive their authority from the approbation of the Supreme Pontiff. "For that reason," he writes, "the two Councils sent their transactions to the Apostolic See, and the Decrees duly came back. The cause is finished." From these words of St. Augustine the axiom arose, "Rome has spoken; the cause is finished."

### **358. What was the trouble over the Nicene and Sardican Canons?**

In vindicating the right of appeals to Rome from Africa against local decisions there, Pope Zosimus had quoted two Canons which in all good faith he attributed to the Council of Nicea instead of to the Council of Sardica. The African bishops could not find them amongst the Nicene Canons, and as Zosimus died just at that time, they wrote to Boniface asking him to verify the quotation. Pope Boniface made inquiries, and found that Zosimus had mistakenly quoted the Sardican Canons as Nicene. The Council of Sardica (now Sofia, in Bulgaria) had met in 343, and had restated most clearly the law that there is always the right of appeal to the Pope "out of reverence for the Blessed Apostle Peter." But the Council of Sardica, whilst a lawful provincial Synod of Eastern bishops, was not an Oecumenical Council as was that of Nicea. But this merely technical point makes no difference whatever to the substance of the claim of the Popes to the primacy, and its continuous and general admission.

### **359. In the light of all this, can you still hold that primacy of jurisdiction belongs to the Pope?**

Of course. There is no point in searching history for isolated incidents in which the exercise of this primacy provoked opposition. Many, at various times, did not perceive fully the nature of that primacy, even though admitting it. Many did not know clearly how far it extended. Many, for personal reasons, resisted it, whilst still professing to be Catholics. Others lost the faith altogether and denied it. But the primacy was always there. I myself am not surprised by the number of cases in which the authority of the Pope was discussed, and its practical applications disputed. I marvel that there were not more. Any solicitor could tell you that there is a vast difference between a law and its application. Lawyers themselves will dispute as to the sense and amplitude of various civil laws. Test cases are brought to determine their interpretation. The wisest legal men will argue sincerely and strongly for opposing views. And out of such disputes the correct application emerges. In the same way the fact of the primacy of the Pope has ever stood, whilst disputes and discussions have but enabled us to state its implications with precision.

### **360. In a previous reply you mentioned the Council of Chalcedon. Very well. What was stated in its 28th Canon?**

The section which suits your purpose is as follows: "Always following the rules of the holy Fathers, and knowing the Canon of the 150 most God-beloved bishops which has just been read, we also define and vote the same things concerning the primacy of the Most Holy Church of Constantinople, the New Rome. And indeed, the Fathers wisely gave the primacy to the See of Elder Rome because that city was the ruler; and the 150 most God-beloved bishops, moved by the same purpose, appointed a like primacy to the most Holy See of New Rome, rightly judging that the city honored because of her rule and her Senate, should enjoy a like primacy to that of the Elder Imperial Rome, and should be powerful in Church affairs, just as she is, and should be, the second after her." Such is the famous 28th Canon of Chalcedon. It must be noted that, whilst this Canon admits the primacy of Rome, it was dictated by the ambition of Constantinople to

supplant the Patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch; and it wrongly states the origin of and the reasons for Rome's primacy.

**361. You deny that the Council gave the Pope his privileges?**

Yes. Pope Leo the Great had himself convoked the Council of Chalcedon in 451. But when the Council met, Attila and the Huns were ravaging Italy, and many Western bishops could not attend. However, Pope Leo sent Paschasius, a Sicilian bishop, to preside in his name, with four other bishops to assist him. There were 630 Eastern bishops, the 5 Papal Legates, and 2 African bishops present. The Eastern bishops were anxious to exalt the See of Constantinople, not to the level of Rome, but above all other Churches. At the 15th Session, on Oct. 31st, the Papal Legates being absent, the Eastern bishops formulated their 28th Canon. But when they wrote to Pope Leo formally asking him to confirm their Decrees, the Pope confirmed the doctrinal decisions, but refused the Canons drawn up in the absence of the Papal Legates.

**362. If the Pope had the primacy, why did the Greek bishops give him such privileges?**

The Greek bishops gave no privileges. They acknowledged the primacy of Rome, and sought privileges for Constantinople to render the Patriarch of that city next in dignity after the Pope, and above the Sees of Alexandria and Antioch. They wrote to Pope Leo that they only wanted Constantinople to be "second," and added, "We beg you then to honor our decisions so that we may add the consent of the head of the Church." Pope Leo refused, telling them that they were confusing civil and divine things; and as a result the Canon was never inserted into any Code of Canon Law, either Eastern or Western, till the Greeks revised it some 400 years later at the time of the Schism of Photius and the commencement of the Greek Orthodox Church.

**363. Does Papal Supremacy still stand?**

Yes. At that very Council of Chalcedon, when Pope Leo's dogmatic letter to Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, was read, all the bishops cried out, "That is the faith of the Fathers; that is the faith of the Apostles. Peter has spoken by Leo." And the appeal of the Eastern bishops themselves to the Pope as the head of the Church in order to secure the ratification of their 28th Canon, leaves no doubt as to their convictions concerning the Roman Primacy. In his book on "Church Unity," Dr. C. A. Briggs, a Presbyterian professor of theology, writes as follows: "We have to admit that the Christian Church from the earliest times recognized the primacy of the Roman Bishop, and that all other great Sees at times recognized the supreme jurisdiction of Rome in matters of doctrine, government, and discipline. It can easily be shown that the assumptions of the Bishops of Rome were often resented; their intrusions into the rights of other Patriarchates, provinces, and dioceses, were often resisted; their decisions were often refused; but when the whole case has been carefully examined and all the evidences sifted, the statement of Irenaeus stands firm." Irenaeus stated that "it is a matter of necessity for every Church to agree with the great, ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, on account of its pre-eminent authority."

**364. Was Pope Gregory I. in error when he protested against the title of "Universal Bishop," saying that it was sacrilegious for any man to so call himself?**

In so protesting Gregory exercised his universal jurisdiction as Bishop of Bishops, not hesitating to condemn John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople.

**365. Was he unaware of his own universal jurisdiction?**

He could not have been, since he exercised it. In many of his letters, also, he insists that the Bishop of Rome holds the place of Peter, that he is the head of the "Faith," and "of all the Churches." And he declares that all the bishops are subject to the Apostolic See. To understand the sense in which Pope Gregory condemned the expression "universal Bishop," you must understand the sense in which John the Faster intended it. It has always been Catholic teaching that the bishops are not mere agents of the Pope, but true

successors of the Apostles. The supreme authority of Peter is perpetuated in the Popes; but the power and authority of the other Apostles is perpetuated in the other bishops in the true sense of the word. The Pope is not the "only" Bishop; and, although his power is supreme, his is not the "only" power. But John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople, wanted to be bishop even of the dioceses of subordinate bishops, reducing them to mere agents, and making himself the universal or only real bishop. Pope Gregory condemned this intention, and wrote to John the Faster telling him that he had no right to claim to be universal bishop or "sole" bishop in his Patriarchate.

#### Temporal Power

**366. The absolute supremacy of the Pope raises the question as to why Catholics of America or Australia should be subject to a foreign bishop of a foreign city.**

From the national point of view we are not subject to the Pope. From the spiritual point of view the word "foreign" is without meaning. All Catholics are equally members of the one great family of the children of God.

**367. Throughout the world Roman Catholics accept as their final authority neither the Word of God, nor the law of the land; but the will of a foreign potentate.**

The authority of the Word of God does not enter into this matter. Protestants themselves would restrict the authority of the Bible to religious matters, even did they still accept it at all. Multitudes of them no longer accept it as having any real authority, and where they do, they read into it whatever they want it to mean. It is the Catholic Church today which stands for the authority of the Bible against rationalists and unbelievers. The statement that Catholics do not accept the laws of the land as supreme in their own sphere is an inexcusable calumny. Their very religion insists upon obedience to the law of the land in which they happen to dwell. It forbids them to do the will of a "foreign potentate" in opposition to the laws of their own country. And the Pope, as their supreme Bishop and leader in religious matters, never tires of urging his subjects wherever they may be to fulfill the duties of good citizenship.

**368. Still, since the Pope is a temporal ruler in his own right, it follows that the organization of Roman Catholicism is in part a Church, and in part a political State.**

That does not follow. In no way whatever can the Catholic Church be called partly a political State. If it were, then I, as a Catholic priest, would owe political allegiance to my country, and also a political allegiance to the Catholic Church. But I acknowledge only one political allegiance—that to my country, Australia. Surely as a Catholic priest I ought to know what claims the Catholic religion makes upon me. I in no way acknowledge the Catholic Church as being in part a political State. The Pope is the spiritual head of the Catholic Church, and I acknowledge spiritual allegiance to him as to my supreme Bishop. He happens also to be temporal ruler of the territory known as Vatican City, in order to be independent of Italian civil authority. But I am not a citizen dwelling in that territory, and have no political affiliations with it.

**369. The temporal interests of the Pope's political State might easily conflict with the real interests of the Commonwealth.**

If the political interests of Vatican City ever really menaced the political interests of our Commonwealth, Catholics would be obliged in conscience to defend our country against Papal aggression. If the Pope sent two Cardinals and an altar boy in a rowing boat to annex Australia as a further temporal possession of the Holy See, it would be the duty of Catholics in Australia to enlist at once in the Army, Navy, and Air-force, and to concentrate on the task of repelling the invader even at the cost of their own lives.

**370. A Protestant bishop has recently declared that Roman Catholicism is an extra-national institution functioning within the State in defiance of the sovereignty of the State.**

That is absurd. If the Catholic Church in this country is an extra-national institution functioning in Australia, how would he rank his own Church? It is a religious institution; and not being a national institution, since Australia professes no national religion, it, too, must be classed as an extra-national institution.

**371. He said that the Roman Church could not help moulding citizens to an Italian conception of citizenship rather than British.**

That is not true. On her own principles the Catholic Church is obliged to inculcate in this country an Australian conception of citizenship of the loftiest character, even as she teaches her children fidelity to their conscience and religion. As a professor of theology, in a recent lecture to our own students preparing for the priesthood, I spoke as follows; and I leave it to my listeners to judge for themselves as to whether my words could be branded as propaganda for Italian ideals. These were my words: "Love of country is an integral part of human nature. Patriotism awakens deep feelings within us, and it stands for love of the place, of the actual soil, the scenery, the history of the land of our origin. Now divine grace perfects nature. There is not a single natural virtue which our Lord is not prepared to consecrate and render divine and supernatural. Our loyalty to country is caught up and blended through Jesus Christ with our loyalty to God. So the Catholic Church has ever respected national characteristics. She unites people in the same faith and worship without in the least asking them to renounce their national differences. We are not only allowed to love our country, we are obliged before God to do so. It would be a sin not to do so. But we must ever remember that love of our own country does not warrant our blaming other people for loving theirs. They, too, have a duty of patriotism. And we must rejoice to see Frenchmen loving France; Irishmen loving Ireland; Americans loving America; Englishmen loving England; Germans loving Germany. If I were working in Japan, I would teach Japanese children that it was their duty to love Japan, even as Australian children must be taught to love Australia."

**372. In times of national crisis Catholics are liable to be influenced, directly or indirectly, by their Church, which is primarily controlled outside the British Empire.**

The spiritual control to which Catholics are subject does not vary with national ups and downs, nor does it ever interfere with genuine national duties. In times of political crisis, it would not conflict in any way with genuine obligations of loyalty to the country, whether directly or indirectly. It would urge the fulfillment of those duties. But, of course, that does not mean that Catholics, any more than other citizens, are obliged to agree with what any would-be fanatical patriot chooses to declare to be the demands of loyalty. There are many people who think that what they advocate is the only true form of loyalty to their country. But others have the right to differ with them. With the genuine obligations of loyalty Catholicism can never conflict.

#### Infalibility

**373. When one looks at the Catholic Church as she is in herself, one is amazed at the apparent self-righteous and supreme egotism of her teachings.**

The Catholic Church certainly claims to be infallible; but she cannot be accused of self-righteousness when she declares that the rightness of her doctrines is due, not to herself, but to the fact that they have been revealed by Almighty God. Nor can she be accused of egotism when she explains that she is not free to compromise God's rights by admitting that human thoughts contradicting His teachings are equally correct. You yourself may not agree that the Catholic Church has such certainty that her teachings are revealed by God; but, granted that the Catholic Church believes it, she cannot be accused of adopting a self-righteous and egotistical attitude.

**374. I cannot agree that your Church has a monopoly of the eternal truths.**

We do not make that claim. People can know many eternal truths quite independently of the Catholic Church. It is not necessary to be a Catholic, for example, to know that there is a God, or that there is a moral law obliging us to do what is right and avoid what is wrong. What we do maintain is that the Catholic Church has a monopoly of divine authority and certainty in teaching the eternal truths in their fullness as revealed by God. As you do not admit that any other body in this world possesses such a divine teaching authority, you will not resent the denial of the Catholic Church that any other possesses it. The only thing that you could resent would be the fact that the Catholic Church claims it. All I can suggest is that you study the grounds on which she bases that claim.

**375. If the Pope is infallible, you make him God.**

Since we deny vehemently that he is God, you cannot say that we make him God. But, of course, you mean that our doctrine seems impossible to you save on the hypothesis that the Pope is accepted as God. But that is not necessary. A violin giving out beautiful music is not a musician. You may say that the violin doesn't think the music, but that the Pope thinks the dogmas. Yet insofar as the Pope thinks, he is not infallible, and we have not got to believe his thought but his official declaration of the traditional teaching of Christ. Popes have committed their thoughts to writing, yet their books have much less authority in the Church than the works of a simple monk like St. Thomas Aquinas. It is not the Pope's thoughts, but the Pope's office which counts. To him in his official capacity as successor of St. Peter, our Lord's words apply, "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not; and do thou confirm thy brethren." God can certainly preserve the Pope from making a wrong definition of doctrine, and He has promised to do so.

**376. You have to admit that infallibility is superhuman, and that if the Pope has the duty of a superman, he is a superman.**

I will not admit anything of the kind. He is not a superman. The personal powers of the Pope do not enter into the matter. Christ has prayed for him. Christ preserves him from mistakes when, in his official capacity, he defines a doctrine for the universal Church. That is enough. Before a definition, the Pope has no greater personal certainty than any other theologian. After a definition, the Pope is as bound to believe it as any other Catholic. And he believes it as a thing above him, of which he has been the humble instrument.

**377. Upon what precisely is the Catholic claim based?**

Upon the will of Christ who established the Catholic Church and declared that she would be infallible as the guardian of the Faith.

**378. The Christian religion does not need to be guarded. It is from God, and that is sufficient guard.**

The New Testament itself does not sanction that idea. St. Paul wrote to Timothy: "I charge thee before God and Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead . . . preach the word. Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine, for there shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine; but according to their desires they will heap up to themselves teachers, and will turn away their hearing from the truth." 2 Tim. IV., 1-4. And again he wrote to Titus that a bishop must embrace "that faithful word which is according to doctrine, that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many disobedient who must be reprov'd, who subvert whole houses, teaching things they ought not. Wherefore rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in faith." Tit. I., 9-13. St. Paul knew that God had entrusted His religion to the guardianship of the Catholic Church which he calls the "pillar and ground of truth." I Tim. III., 15.

**379. I presume that, before a definition is given, the matter is thoroughly discussed in order to eliminate the danger of a faulty verdict, and the definition based on a majority decision?**

You seem to suppose, quite wrongly, that the infallibility of the Church depends ultimately upon human prudence. It does not. It depends ultimately upon the assistance of the Holy Ghost. It is to be noted that we

say "assistance," and not "inspiration." The Holy Spirit does not necessarily inspire the Pope in such matters. Before a pronouncement is made, the matter is thoroughly discussed, theologians studying the whole question deeply in the light of Scripture, Apostolic tradition, the writings of the Fathers, and doctrinal analogies. If they decide that the proposed definition is in conformity with the revelation given by Christ, they so inform the Pope. He personally then weighs the question, pondering over it and praying for light. So far no definition has been made. Now what if, after all care has been taken, the proposed doctrine is false? Then, in virtue of the gift of infallibility, the Pope would be prevented from defining the doctrine by the Holy Spirit. How? By some special illumination of mind, or by some external miraculous sign, if necessary; or, if despite these things, the Pope were to determine to define the error, he would drop dead before he would be allowed to use his supreme authority to impose an heretical definition upon the whole Church. Whatever means might be used by God to prevent the Pope from defining error, he would certainly not be permitted to issue an erroneous definition.

**380. What if, in previous discussions, the minority of Cardinals and theologians were right, and the majority wrong?**

In discussions prior to a Papal definition, if the minority were right, the majority would be wrong; and if a majority were right, the minority would be wrong. But there could be no infallible knowledge as to which group was right and which wrong, unless the Pope decided to define the issue. Should he do so, we would know infallibly that the group which had previously maintained the defined doctrine was right—whether it was the majority or the minority. We must keep in mind that discussions prior to an infallible definition do not contribute to the infallibility of that decision. Infallibility is due to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

**381. If at any time the whole hierarchy of the Catholic Church were to become vicious, would not that suggest a withdrawal of Christ's protection - and, therefore, a loss of infallibility?**

Infallibility consists in certainty as regards the defined teachings of the Church, not in the impeccability of her officials. At the same time, if the whole hierarchy were to fall into moral corruption, one could possibly challenge the doctrine of Christ's protection of the Church on the score that one of her essential notes is holiness even in the lives of her members in general. But no stage of the history of the Catholic Church could justify the grotesque charge that the whole of the Catholic hierarchy was utterly corrupt.

**382. As the Church relies for her doctrines on St. Jerome's Version of the Bible, must we believe that St. Jerome was infallible?**

St. Jerome was definitely not infallible. The original writers of Sacred Scripture were infallible, not subsequent translators or transcribers. St. Jerome's translation derives its real value from the fact that the Catholic Church has approved it; but even that approval is disciplinary rather than doctrinal. The Church does not say that no error ever occurred in St. Jerome's Version. But your difficulty arises from your erroneous notion as to the source of the infallibility of the Church. It is not derived from any human sources. If it were, that would be the end of infallibility, for merely human sources are necessarily fallible. If the Pope is asked to define infallibly the sense of some teaching of Scripture, theologians and Scripture scholars are appointed to study the matter in question. They study both text and context in the Vulgate of St. Jerome, compare it with other Versions and Manuscripts, search out the unanimous teaching of the Fathers if such unanimity is to be had, watch carefully the analogy of Catholic dogma, and present their conclusions to the Pope. The Pope may decide not to define the question, and the conclusion of scholars will then remain a probable or perhaps a certain conclusion of theologians without its becoming an infallible decision binding as a matter of strict faith. But if the Pope does give a decision *ex cathedra* as head of the whole Church, the Holy Spirit will safeguard him from defining any error. The definition then derives its value, not from the previous researches of theologians, nor from any personal thought bestowed upon the subject by the Pope himself, but from the protection and assistance of the Holy Ghost. From all this you can see that natural efforts at the translation of Scripture, whether by St. Jerome or anybody else, are not the foundation for the infallibility of the Catholic Church.

**383. Is it not strange that scientists, and not the infallible Church, have revealed those momentous Divine Laws of nature which have resulted in man's progress?**

It is not in the least strange that purely natural forces should be discovered and made known to man as a result of human study rather than by the infallible Church. For the Catholic Church does not exist for the purpose of making known the natural secrets of the universe. She exists to safeguard and teach the supernatural revelation of man's eternal and supernatural destiny made known by God through the Prophets and His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. You may think that the teaching of science should have been included in the scope of the mission of the Church. But our own speculations must give way before facts. And the fact is that Christ commissioned His Church to teach all nations all things whatsoever He had taught in the name of His Father.

**384. Is not the material progress of mankind important?**

It is worthy of his attention. But so far as natural development is concerned, God has left that to man himself. He does not make civilization, but wills that man should. However, He has not willed to reveal in advance the natural knowledge which can and should be the fruit of man's own initiative and the progressive exercise of his natural powers. The Church encourages men in their efforts at material and cultural progress; but her specific duty is to see that they do not neglect their spiritual welfare, nor the claims of God upon them. She must keep reiterating from age to age what God has said of Himself and of man's supreme destiny beyond the confines of this life. She must warn men of what they are in constant danger of forgetting—that they must serve God and save their souls, rather than allow themselves to be hypnotized by the transitory things of this life.

**385. Scientific inventions, such as radio transmission, have a great influence for good and evil.**

Of themselves they have no moral influence either for good or for evil. Such influence is due to the moral goodness or to the wickedness of the men who make use of them; and it is the duty of the Church to induce men to be morally good. To equip the Church for this work the religion of Christ was entrusted to her keeping.

**386. Did not the Pope become infallible only in 1870?**

No. All through the ages the Popes have been infallible. In 1870, the fact that he is infallible was defined as an article of faith, whilst a more precise decision was given concerning the matters concerning which his infallibility could be exercised and under what conditions.

**387. When was the first claim made for papal infallibility?**

Implicitly the infallibility of the Pope was admitted from the very beginning, for it was a necessary accompaniment of the Primacy over the whole Church against which Christ promised that the forces of error and evil would never prevail. All the declarations of the Fathers from the earliest times insisting that the Roman Church was the standard, especially in matters of faith, to which all Christians must conform, contain the principles and formulas summed up in the term infallibility. I do not give you a long list of quotations from Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, and the other Fathers; nor of various early documents issued by the Popes themselves. All I do say is that, as men got clearer and clearer notions of the teaching authority of the whole Church and of the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome, so they secured clearer notions of the infallibility of the Pope. In 433 A. D., we find Pope Sixtus III. declaring that all know that to assent to his decision is to assent to St. Peter who lives in his successors, and whose faith



fails not. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 A. D., on receiving the dogmatic letters of Pope Leo the Great, said, "Peter has spoken by Leo." In the year 1270, 600 years before the definition of the doctrine by the Vatican Council, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote as follows: "Renewed statements of doctrine are necessary to avoid new errors. Therefore, he has authority to issue definitions of faith who has authority to determine what is of faith, and to be held by all who profess the faith. But this belongs to the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, to whom matters more difficult and of more serious moment are referred. Therefore, our Lord said to Peter, whom He constituted Supreme Pontiff: "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not." In 1870, the Vatican Council officially defined this infallibility of the Pope, thus making explicit what had been contained implicitly in Christian revelation from the beginning.

**388. Why was the infallibility of the Pope defined only in 1870? Did the Popes before then know that they were infallible?**

Before the definition of infallibility in 1870, the Popes did not know that they were infallible with the same full certainty of faith as that possessed by later Popes. But they were infallible in fact. The gift of papal infallibility was essential to the Church, not the definition of the gift. You wonder why it was defined only in 1870. But definitions are not given unnecessarily. If no discussion arises on a given point, and no one disputes it, there is no need of a definition. But in the seventeenth century the question of the Pope's doctrinal authority came more and more to the front, until in 1870, the Vatican Council was asked to settle the question once and for all. The time had come for the Church to know herself fully on this point, so she looked herself in the face, and defined this particular aspect of her teaching authority. If you ask why such a definition only after nearly 2,000 years, I ask why is a man fully developed only after some thirty years? The vitality of the Church supposes growth ever retaining stability of type. And remember that the Catholic Church is very young yet. A thousand years are as a day to her; and she will last till the end of the world.

**389. Did the Church in 1870 take new stock of herself?**

The Church must ever be taking new stock of herself, even to the extent of discovering new things about herself concerning which she was not so clear before. But notice that this acquiring of new knowledge concerning herself does not imply a denial of anything already known.

**390. In other words, was the definition of infallibility revisional in its effects?**

That question cannot be called an alternative rendering of your previous question. For the Church can take new stock of herself without repudiating former estimates. Treating this, therefore, as a separate question, I reply definitely that the definition of infallibility was not revisional in its effects. The Church defined in 1870 that the Pope is infallible when he solemnly decides matters of faith or moral teaching, speaking in virtue of his supreme office and intending to declare an article of faith binding upon all the faithful throughout the world. That definition did away with no previous definition to the contrary. If some individual Catholics thought, prior to 1870, that the Pope was not infallible under these conditions, then they, of course, had to revise their opinions after 1870. But their opinions prior to 1870 did not reflect the official teaching of the Church.

**391. Before 1870 would it be difficult to distinguish ex cathedra pronouncements from others less distinguished?**

No. That is evident from the fact that from the earliest ages the Church has defined the truth against heretics, all Catholics acknowledging the definitions given by the various Councils once the Pope had authorized them ex Cathedra in his official capacity as head of the Church.

**392. Does infallibility belong to the Pope only?**

Infallibility belongs to the teaching Church, and, therefore, to all Catholic bishops throughout the world, taken as a collective episcopate. The Catholic bishops, of whom the Pope is one, of course, have

infallibility in their collective unity. But, as the Pope is the supreme bishop in the Church, this unity is procured by and derived from him. A council of bishops not confirmed by the Pope would lack infallibility. The Pope without a general Council of bishops enjoys infallibility; a Council of bishops without the Pope does not. In other words, the body of bishops, when in union with the Pope, has a confirmed infallibility. But the Pope alone has the infallibility which confirms. This is the logical application of our Lord's words to St. Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and do thou confirm thy brethren."

**393. Is it not true that before the Vatican Council, the doctrine of papal infallibility was strongly maintained by one party in the Church, tolerated by another, and utterly rejected by a third?**

It is true that a division of opinion existed; and that is precisely why it was deemed advisable to settle the problem. Over 400 bishops had presented a petition in the Vatican Council that the matter should be settled once and for all. The vote at the Council was overwhelmingly in favor of defining the question. And accordingly the definition was given on July 18th, 1870, giving us, not a new doctrine, but a new statement in definite terms of the teaching contained in the original revelation of Christ.

**394. Did not many prelates and theologians of the Roman Church express opposition to the decree?**

It is quite normal that there should have been a division of opinion on the subject prior to the definition. It is precisely when men are divided on the question as to whether some major doctrine is part of divine revelation or not that a definition is necessary. At the Vatican Council, therefore, those who were for the definition, and those who were against it, were given freedom to express their views.

**395. Historians tell us that the most unseemly brawling took place at the Council,**

The Council was not characterized by unseemly brawling. The greatest possible freedom of discussion was granted, and on a question of such magnitude and importance, it would be surprising if opinions were not strong, and voiced with earnestness and even tenacity.

**396. Newman, apparently, was altogether against the decree.**

He declared that he personally believed the Pope to be infallible, but that he did not think it opportune to define the doctrine at that particular time. He was quite at liberty to be of that opinion. When the definition was given, he accepted it without hesitation.

**397. Most of the Irish bishops were against it.**

They enjoyed the same freedom as Newman and all the others prior to the definition. The opinions held by those opposed to the definition did not constitute an infallible indication that the definition was wrong.

**398. In the Council at first the opposition represented one-fourth of the total attendance, and a great many withdrew by way of protest.**

Against 430 bishops, about 100 bishops, chiefly from France, Austria, and Germany, said that they disapproved of the definition being given. When they saw that the overwhelming majority was against them, 44 of these 100 bishops at once accepted the inevitable. Fifty-six said that they personally disapproved of the definition being given then, but that they would faithfully and with true devotion to the Church accept the definition if indeed it were pronounced. Meantime, they withdrew from Rome quietly and privately, leaving a written declaration that they did not do so by way of protest against the decree, but simply because they did not wish to appear lacking in reverence towards the Pope by expressing in his presence their belief that the contemplated action was inopportune. Two bishops from amongst the

inopportunist who remained did express their disapproval personally of the proposed definition; but the moment it was given, accepted at once, acknowledging the teaching authority of the Church, just as the 56 had guaranteed to do who had withdrawn.

**399. Although in the end all the bishops gave their adhesion, still there was a strong body of influential men in Europe who refused consent despite the yielding of the recalcitrant bishops.**

The term "recalcitrant bishops" is not justified. A man is recalcitrant when he refuses to do what he is obliged to do. Prior to the definition, any bishop was quite free to express his reluctance to have the matter defined. After the definition, he was not free to refuse his assent. If he refused then, he would indeed be recalcitrant. But no bishop refused. It is true that some influential men - not a strong body of them - did refuse consent. These could truly be called recalcitrant Catholics; and they found themselves outside the Church as heretics.

**400. Amongst these was the famous Professor Dollinger, who protested against the definition as "a Christian, an historian, a theologian, and a citizen."**

His capacity as a citizen, of course, had no bearing on the subject, so we can eliminate that. As a Christian, historian, and theologian he was quite free to express his adverse opinion before the definition. But afterwards, his duty as a Christian, historian, and theologian, was to accept the verdict of the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. He had not the humility to do so, and his pride in his own proficiency led him into the obstinacy of heresy.

**401. For this he was excommunicated.**

That is true. I would expect to be excommunicated if I rejected it also. You see, once a doctrine has been defined by the Church as a dogma, no Catholic can deny it without being guilty of heresy. A man who denies a dogma of the Catholic Church renounces his belief in that Church, and cannot still belong to it. The Catholic Church was sent by Christ to teach all nations. If, in the course of her duty, she teaches us solemnly and with her supreme authority that this doctrine is undoubtedly part of the teaching given by Christ, then any man who rejects her teaching denies her essential authority, and a truth revealed by Christ. Dollinger had no excuse for refusing to follow the example of others by accepting the definition. Nor does his denial prove the doctrine wrong. The definition of the dogma absolutely proves that Dr. Dollinger was wrong.

**402. In September, 1871, Dr. Dollinger's followers held a Congress, and formed the "Old Catholic" Church for those who could not conscientiously accept the definition of papal infallibility.**

Those who refused to accept the dogma were no longer Catholics. Though they called themselves the "Old Catholics," they were in reality the "New Protestants." It is to be remarked that Dr. Dollinger himself protested strongly against the new organization his admirers desired to establish. He declared that he would have nothing to do with the formation of a new schism. At the very Congress of September, 1871, he protested against the motion that an independent Church opposed to Rome should be formed. The attitude of these "Old Catholics" was a constant source of irritation to him. When he heard, in 1878, that they had abolished the celibacy of their clergy, he despaired altogether of their future. On Oct. 12th, 1887, he wrote, "I have no wish to be a member of a schismatic Church. I am alone." But the defection of Dr. Dollinger and of his adherents has not affected the Catholic Church. The "Old Catholics," few at any time, are disintegrating. The Catholic Church is more solid than ever, and her 400 million of adherents have no doubts whatever on the subject. We all believe in the infallibility of the Pope as firmly as we believe in the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God. The doctrine is a dogma of our faith.

**403. If the Popes were always infallible, how does Pope Liberius measure up to the doctrine?**

In every necessary way. In their efforts to refute the Catholic doctrine, enemies of the Church have ransacked history in the hope of finding a Pope who has taught heretical ideas. They thought they had found such a Pope in Liberius, urging that he subscribed to the Arian heresy condemned by the Council of Nicea in 325 A. D. But let us take the facts. Liberius became Pope in the year 352. From the outset he fought against the continued efforts of the Arians to corrupt the faith. The Emperor Constantius, himself an Arian, seized Pope Liberius by force and exiled him to Berea, in Thrace. It is said that, to escape this exile, and induced by fraud and threats, Pope Liberius signed a formula drawn up by the Arians. But historical research has shown that it is doubtful whether he signed the document at all. If he did sign, he was not a sufficiently free agent for a lawful exercise of his duty. And in any case, the document he is supposed to have signed was not directly heretical, but ambiguous, admitting of an orthodox as well as a heterodox interpretation according to the viewpoint taken by the reader. St. Athanasius and St. Hilary, who thought he did sign, insist that no charge of heresy could be made against Liberius, on the score that the document was not necessarily heretical. Moreover, the absolute orthodoxy of Liberius is so well known from other sources that it is impossible to say that he ever entertained heretical Arian views, and so erred in matters of faith. On his return from exile he defended the Nicene decisions against Arianism, and remained a most uncompromising defender of the orthodox doctrine until his death in 366 A. D. To all this you can add one point. Even if Liberius signed the document, and even if that document were heretical, and even if Liberius personally held and believed heretical doctrine, no argument even then could be drawn from the case against the Catholic doctrine of papal infallibility. For the Catholic Church has never defined that the Popes are always infallible in all that they personally believe. The Catholic Church declares that the Pope is infallible when he gives an official definition of doctrine concerning faith or morals, it being required that he acts freely, that he declares himself to be acting in his capacity as head of the whole Church, and that he intends his definition to be binding upon all the faithful throughout the world. Not one of these last requirements was verified in the case of Liberius, and whatever view one takes of the case historically, it is invalid as a test of infallibility.

#### **404. How does Pope Honorius measure up to infallibility?**

Nothing that Pope Honorius ever said or did in his life conflicts in any way with the Catholic doctrine of infallibility. He has been accused of having taught the Monothelite heresy in two letters to Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Sergius favored the Monothelite heresy, or the doctrine that there was only one will in Christ, not two wills, the one Divine, and the other human. He wrote a very deceptive letter to Pope Honorius begging him not to condemn the doctrine, since such a condemnation would greatly disturb the peace of the Church. Honorius wrote to Sergius, praising him for his good intentions, and sanctioning his explanations, though interpreting them in a perfectly orthodox way which Sergius did not accept for a moment. But Sergius had got all he wanted, staving off papal condemnation. If there is one thing clear, it is that Honorius neither taught heresy in either of his letters to Sergius (nor anywhere else), and that he gave no dogmatic definition on the subject. This case, also, therefore, is beside the point where infallibility is concerned.

#### **405. Honorius was condemned as a heretic by subsequent Councils, a condemnation ratified by Pope Leo II.**

After the death of Honorius in 638 A. D. the Monothelites continued their heretical teachings, and in 680, the Sixth General Council was convoked to deal with them. The assembled bishops condemned the heresy together with Sergius and his supporters, including the name of Pope Honorius with them. They sent their decisions to Pope Agathon saying, "We leave it to you to decide what is to be done in your capacity as Bishop of the First See in the Universal Church." But Pope Agathon died before he could ratify the decrees, and was succeeded by Pope Leo II. Pope Leo approved and ratified the decisions. Later, writing to the bishops in Spain, he said that he had no intention of condemning Honorius for any heretical teaching, but because he was negligent in dealing with the Monothelites, fostering their heresy by his very inactivity. Even when he saw that the bishops of the Council had condemned Honorius for supporting the teachings of Sergius, Pope Leo II corrected their decree by saying that he unbecomingly permitted them to flourish. Far from being condemned as a heretic, then, Pope Honorius was condemned for not using his supreme and infallible authority to settle the dispute.

**406. Why was the anathema repeated till 1590, and then dropped?**

The statement that the Sixth General Council had condemned the Monothelite heresy together with Sergius, Cyrus, Honorius, Pyrrhus, and others who supported it, used to appear in the ancient Roman Breviaries. No one paid much attention to it until the sixteenth century, when a new impetus was given to historical research. The discovery of the special qualifications Pope Leo II. had made when approving the decisions of the Sixth General Council made it clear that the name of Honorius was unjustly bracketed with that of Sergius, and those of the others; and his name was rightly deleted in future editions of the Breviary.

**407. Is papal infallibility still possible?**

It is a fact. But here once more I must point out that, even if Pope Honorius had been guilty of heresy in his writings (as he was not) papal infallibility would not be affected. For he was not pronouncing an official definition in virtue of his supreme office in the Church and with the intention of obliging the whole Church to accept his teaching under pain of heresy. But where these historical cases are concerned, surely you do not think that the bishops of the world assembled at the Vatican Council would be so foolish as to define the doctrine without deeply considering the facts of history? You can be quite sure that they knew all the facts about Pope Honorius, even as they knew that those facts were available to the world. Do you think that they would have defined infallibility, knowing that hostile critics had only to quote Honorius to prove them utterly wrong?

**408. Pope John XXII. declared that the doctrine of the poverty of Christ was heretical. But his predecessor, Nicholas III had declared that the doctrine of the poverty of Christ was the true doctrine, and that to deny it was heresy. Therefore, if one Pope was infallible, the other was not.**

Another "therefore" suggests itself: and that is that you have not correctly grasped the facts. Surely you should suspect that Pope John XXII. was quite aware of the decision given by Nicholas III and would never have dreamed of defining the exact opposite! As a matter of fact, Pope John XXII. was not even dealing with the same subject as Pope Nicholas III. The question submitted to Pope John XXII. was this: Was the poverty of Christ so absolute that He retained no personal possessions whatever? The Pope replied: No; for it would be quite against Scripture and heretical to maintain such poverty in Christ. But now, what was the question submitted to Pope Nicholas III.? It was this: Is it in keeping with the ideals of poverty taught by Christ that members of Religious Orders should vow absolute poverty and possess nothing? This Pope said: Yes; and to deny that would be heretical. Pope John XXII., therefore, said that it would be heretical to assert the absolute personal poverty of Christ. Pope Nicholas III. said that it would be heretical to assert that members of Religious Orders may not vow absolute poverty, despite the fact that Christ Himself did not personally practice such absolute poverty. There is no trace of contradiction between those two definitions.

Unity of the Church

**409. In speaking of infallibility, you said that it was necessary to the unity of the Church. But is unity necessary to the Church?**

Yes. Christ predicted that His Church would be characterized by unity. The Catholic Church is one throughout the world under the one supreme head on earth, the Pope as successor of St. Peter. Our Lord said, "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd." That prediction is verified in the Catholic Church." She is one in teaching, worship, and authority wherever she may extend her activities.

**410. In the very first century there were two factions known as the Peterites and the Paulites.**

That cannot rightly be said. There was a natural tendency amongst some of the first Christians to manifest an exaggerated loyalty towards particular Apostles and teachers; and St. Paul himself corrected this tendency from the very beginning. Thus he wrote to the Corinthians, "One saith, I indeed am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollo. But what is Apollo, and what is Paul? The ministers of Him whom you have received ... I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase . . . Let no man therefore glory in men. Whether it be Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas ... all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 4-6, 22-23. Thus St. Paul forbade from the very beginning any development of two distinct and rival Pauline and Petrine factions. St. Peter also excludes any possibility of a rival Pauline faction, urging Christians of the first century to be diligent in the sanctifying of their lives, and adding, "As our dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you." 2 Pet. III., 15.

**411. Scholars admit that in early Rome there were two sections amongst the Christians, a Jewish section adhering to Peter, and a Gentile section adhering to Paul.**

That is a probability. But these sections were not rival factions. For example, one section of the Catholic Church consists of Catholics in Southwark diocese in London under Archbishop Amigo; another section in Westminster diocese under Cardinal Hinsley. But these sections in the same city are not rival factions. It is certain that both St. Peter and St. Paul labored in Rome, and that both enjoyed Apostolic jurisdiction. Each would retain the particular loyalty of his own converts, Gentiles predominating among the converts of St. Paul, and Jews among those of St. Peter. But in no way can this be construed as evidence for rival factions of "Peterites" and "Paulites."

**412. History says that the two factions were united under the gentle and orthodox Clement.**

St. Peter and St. Paul were not less orthodox, nor less gentle for that matter, than St. Clement. And all were quite united in the one Church. Under Clement it was not so much the union of two sections as the union of the two jurisdictions in the one man Clement, which both sections automatically accepted, as they would not have done had they not been united in the one faith.

**413. For a confused term, much longer than the then expectancy of human life, the Church, however much it did owe, certainly did not owe allegiance to a single Pope. How, then, can any subsequent endorsement of a particular line prove an unbroken descent?**

I could be content with asking you simply to what period of the history of the Church you refer. However, as the longest period during which there was confusion as to which of three claimants was the true Pope, occurred at the time of the Great Western Schism, I will deal with that case. Although there were three rival claimants to the office of Pope at that time, each with his own following, it is clear that, as a matter of fact, Catholics were not subject to one single Pope. But, as a matter of law, they were. And that makes all the difference. No Catholic said that there ought to be three Popes. All admitted that there should be only one, and that only one of the three could be the lawful Pope. There was, then a lawful Pope, however confused people may have been as to which one was the lawful Pope. The office for which the claimants were contending was the office of St. Peter. And it was to this office that the authority of St. Peter was annexed. In the civil order, no one will admit that the authority attached to the throne in some given kingdom is lost because some pretender wins the allegiance of a certain number of subjects. And when the pretender dies, or renounces his claim, and the subjects revert to a single king whom all acknowledge as lawful ruler, no one holds that his authority is due to the return of the subjects who were deceived. The authority all along was inherent in his office. So the authority annexed to the office of the Pope persisted continuously and in unbroken descent from St. Peter. Subsequent endorsement of that authority by parties who had been led astray did not confer that authority, but merely acknowledged it as possessed by one particular Pope to the exclusion of all pretenders.

**414. The Catholic religion may be all right in itself; but I could not join it, because it is not carried out as Christ intended.**

If you believe the Catholic religion to be right, the infidelity of some who profess it does not justify your infidelity in refusing to join it and live up to it.

**415. Most believing Catholics seem to me as worldly as anyone else.**

Were your judgment right, the question of the truth of the Church would not be affected. A right belief does not necessarily mean right behavior in all who possess it. Nor does wrong behavior necessarily mean a wrong belief. If a Catholic did wrong, and the Catholic Church told him that it was right, there would be a case for consideration. But the Catholic Church will never say that what is wrong is right. For the rest, things are not always as they seem; and most Catholics are not so worldly in outlook as you imagine.

**416. We have the right to demand fruits. "By their fruits ye shall know them."**

You have not the right to demand the fruit of holiness in every single member of the Catholic Church. For, as I have said, such fruit depends on the free cooperation of each soul with the grace of God. But whilst each has the power to check the influence of grace, the Catholic Church herself is holy and sanctifying. However, whilst you have not the right to demand holiness in every Catholic, holiness will, as a matter of fact, be manifest in a large number of Catholics. Not all men are evil and negligent. There will always be great souls of genuine good will; and these will exhibit visible fruits of holiness as a result of living up to their faith. The Catholic Church has always had Saints. In fact, all the great Saints of history have belonged to her, and have never dreamed of leaving her.

**417. There was only one Christian, and He was crucified.**

If you believe that, it is your duty to be the other. Instead of that, so long as you refuse to fulfill your own obligations, you take your place amongst the crucifiers.

**418. Why do you pretend that everything is well with the Catholic Church?**

Because everything is well with the Catholic Church. But I do not say that everything is well with all the members of the Church. Repeatedly I have quoted our Lord's words that His Church is like a net holding good and bad fish. It is wrong to have eyes only for the bad fish, and to make that an excuse for remaining a bad fish oneself. It is necessary to see the good fish as well as the bad fish, and to insist on the necessity of turning the bad fish into good ones.

**419. You talk about an ideal spiritual Church as it should be. But I face the actual Church as she really is.**

You wrongly interpret both my attitude and your own. It is I who sees the actual Church in the world, with all her beauty and all her defects. You see only defects, and concentrate on those as if there were no other aspects to be considered. There is a human element in the Church, and that human element is ever liable to fail. But there is also a Divine element which can never fail. But whilst admitting the human element, I do not intend to admit every single charge evil people choose to make against the members of the Church. There are types of people who cannot see any good in Catholicism. They see any amount of evil where there is none; or if they do see some, they persuade themselves that all are evil, and that no good exists in the Catholic Church.

**420. It is a pity that the Catholic Church does not retain only those possessing quality, and not concentrate on quantity as at present.**

The Catholic Church has the identical mission of Christ who said, "I come to call, not the just who need not repentance, but sinners." Also He said that He came to save that which was lost. How could the Church cry, "Come to me, all ye holy people of good quality-no sinners need apply?" Then, too, the Church was sent to teach all nations, seeking as many souls as possible. There is a touch of hardness and pride in your very question. Hardness upon the frailties of others almost to the point of denying to them the mercy of Christ is foreign to the spirit of Christ. And it is pride that suggests the notion that you would perhaps become a Catholic if only she would concentrate on souls of quality. Is it that you are a soul of quality? That mere thought could be an obstacle to your salvation. Our Lord knew this, and He insisted upon humility as being absolutely fundamental. He was vehement about it. "Unless you become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." "He that will be the greatest, let him be as the least." He condemned the proud Pharisee and praised the Publican who was a sinner. I am sure you will not mind my recommending to you the humility and gentle charity Christ so insisted upon.

**421. I always judge an organization, religious or otherwise, by the people who belong to it.**

That is unreasonable. For, firstly, unless you meet every single person who belongs to some given Church, you will be judging all by some. In the second place, if you did meet some bad Catholic, he would not be living up to his belief; and the fault would be in himself, not in the Church whose teachings he neglected. Thirdly, we are forbidden to judge people, and, therefore, to base further judgments on our judgement of them. "Judge not, and you shall not be judged" is the law. And again, "Charity thinketh no evil." We must abstract from the faults of individuals, and study a religion in itself and on its own merits. In other words, we take the official teachings of a religion and ask, "Would these teachings of their very nature tend to make one who observed them good or bad?"

**422. I see nothing in Roman Catholics that I would care to emulate.**

Have you ever looked for anything in them that you would care to emulate? In every one of your fellow men you will find good and bad, virtues and faults. But people usually see only what they want to see. Sympathies and antipathies have an extraordinary effect upon one's judgment. We easily blind ourselves to faults in those we happen to like, whilst we refuse to understand those whom we dislike, putting an evil construction upon all that they do. Now you intensely dislike the Catholic Church. You do not know why, but you do. And that dislike affects your outlook upon all who profess the Catholic religion. I do not say that all Catholics are without their faults. But I do say that a good deal of your trouble finds its source within yourself.

**423. History cannot lie. And history tells us that certain Popes were immoral, had illegitimate children, and honored them with titles and property as bribes for silence.**

Genuine history does not lie. But those who claim the name of historians certainly can falsify their accounts; and they have often done so. It is true, however, that a few Popes have been unworthy of their office, had illegitimate children, and endowed them with titles and property. But there was no question of bribing them to secrecy. Secrecy was not necessary in the ages when these things occurred. Public opinion was at so low a stage that moral laxity was condoned in an extraordinary way. Illegitimate children were not held in less honor than legitimate offspring. The Popes who provided for their children did so through paternal interest, not in order to secure secrecy. The matter was public knowledge. The evils, of course, have been magnified by legend, idle gossip, and calumny; but the historical foundation for charges against these Popes exists. And these internal disorders in the Church were far more dangerous to her welfare than any external forces. But, under the protection of Christ, the Church survived, and has been purified of such abuses in the Papacy.



**424. I am surprised that you did not deny the charge, and try to convince me that I was wrong.**

Defense of the Church does not demand a denial for everything we do not like. The Church has nothing whatever to fear from the simple truth. If a thing is historical, it is historical. We must, of course, sift what is legendary from what is said to be history. But once a thing is proved to be history, it must be admitted. It does not follow, however, that every interpretation based upon it is necessarily true. I have no desire to convince you that any facts are not facts. But I do say that you would be wrong if you regarded the disgraceful conduct of any individual Pope in his personal life as an argument against the truth of the Catholic Church. Meantime, if you turn your attention to those good Popes who have been canonized by the Catholic Church as Saints, and who really did exhibit an example of all that the Church expects a Pope to be, you will find that there is nothing whatever wrong with the Catholic ideal.

**425. You still insist that bad Popes are no argument against the truth of the Catholic Church?**

I do. They afford a condemnation, not of the Catholic Church, but of themselves. A criminal who breaks the laws of his country does not brand his country as a land whose legislation makes criminals. If he had observed the laws he would have been a good citizen. In the same way, if a man breaks the laws of God, that is no argument against God. Then why should a man who breaks the laws of the Catholic Church be an argument against the Catholic Church? It is not just, of course, to continue pointing to a small minority of bad Popes, whilst ignoring the majority of good ones. But as regards their official duties the personal wickedness even of bad Popes will not necessarily make them bad administrators. Just as a judge could be guilty of much evil in his personal life, yet give excellent decisions in his official capacity, so a bad Pope in his private life could quite well fulfill his public duties well.

**426. They could not but do harm to the Church.**

Christ promised to be with His Church all days, and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Those forces of evil can be external or internal; that is, there can be persecution of the Church by open enemies, or internal evils by the sinful lives of its very officials. It was in virtue of Christ's promise that not even the personal wickedness of an Alexander VI. could do any lasting harm to the Catholic Church.

**427. It is incredible that you should know the facts, as you seem to do, yet that you do not see their significance!**

The Catholic Church is not afraid of facts; nor that any facts will ever afford any valid argument against her historical foundation by Christ and His protection of her as a Church, whatever individuals may or may not do. If it be a fact that an Alexander VI. was a wicked man, the Church says, "Well, then, he was wicked; such conduct was reprehensible; I only hope he repented before he died. If not, he is in hell." As you say, I am quite familiar with all these things, and my faith in the Catholic Church, far from being shaken, is but strengthened. A Church which could survive such internal enemies as Alexander VI. has the protection of God. And the teaching of the Catholic Church not only does not bid me imitate the conduct of Alexander VI.; it forbids me absolutely to do so.

**428. I have no desire to defend Martin Luther, but why should his evil character be an argument against the Protestant Church, yet bad Popes be no argument against the Catholic Church?**

Because bad Popes did not pretend to be the founders of new religions, as did Luther. The one Founder of the Catholic Church remained, and He was undoubtedly holy, for He was Jesus Christ Himself. But the Protestantism founded by Luther is not holy in its founder. Again, no bad Pope ever pretended that his sins were in accordance with the teachings of Christ and of the Catholic Church; nor did any Pope teach officially that the members of the Church were free to behave in such a way. But Luther corrupted the very doctrines of Christ, and gave permission to others to sin. Finally, the Popes who did not live good private

lives did possess Apostolic authority for their official legislation in the name of the Church- legislation which in itself was quite all right. But Luther had no Apostolic authority for his heretical and schismatical innovations.

**429. Leaving the question of the Popes, do you believe that the clergy of today are as good as the clergy in the early Christian Church?**

There were good and bad priests even then. Some of the present-day priests are as good as the best of them then; some are not.

**430. Will you agree that there has been a steady downgrade through the centuries?**

No.

**431. Do you agree that "as you live, so you shall die"?**

If one perseveres in a good life, he will die a good death. If one lives an evil life, it is always possible that he will meet with an evil fate in eternity. I say that it is always possible, because allowance must always be made for the mercy of God.

**432. Then would it not be fair to assume that hell is filled with priests as trophies of Satan's collection?**

No. It would be absurd to assume that men who believe sufficiently in the necessity of salvation to devote their lives to the eternal welfare of their fellow men would be so foolish as not to live in such a way as to secure their own salvation. I oppose that to your wholesale suggestion. I do not deny the possibility that a priest who began well could end badly, forgetting his ideals and disgracing his vocation. But such a case is exceptional, and would not warrant your generalization.

**433. Considering all the charges against priests, you cannot pretend that there is nothing in them.**

At times there may be something in some particular charge against some particular priest. But all know that a bad priest is the exception. There are bad doctors, judges, and lawyers. But you have not the same prejudice against others who fail to live up to their ideals. There is a certain dishonesty in the attitude of critics towards priests. Men blame them for being what they ought to be, and blame them for not being what they ought to be. If a priest violates his obligations, some Protestants will praise and defend him; others will blame him merely in order to attack all priests, even good ones. But apart from individual cases, when I consider all the charges against priests, I do deny that there is anything in them. Everywhere charges are made according to popular prejudices, and they perpetually change from age to age. It is because they are false that it is necessary to abandon old charges and find new ones. Present prejudices will provoke smiles in future generations, but they will be replaced by others. The chief value of these charges as a weapon against Catholicism is not their truth, but their novelty.

**434. Is not the Vatican stored with riches which could be sold and given to the poor?**

It is true that the Vatican, besides containing offices for various departments of ecclesiastical administration, does contain great libraries, museums, and art galleries-these in turn containing a wealth of valuable books, manuscripts, sculptures, paintings, and other treasures, historical and artistic. And the Catholic Church has rendered a distinct service to culture and civilization, and consequently to the welfare and progress of the human race by, thus preserving through centuries such masterpieces. She has gathered them and kept them, where otherwise they would have been dispersed and lost. Christ would no more object to the Vatican Library and Museum than He would object to the public libraries of England and the British Museum. Would you argue that, since the state should exist for the welfare of its people, England is

not doing her duty so long as she preserves all those treasures in the British Museum and Art Gallery, instead of selling them and scattering them in order to feed the poor? "Not by bread alone does man live," said Christ. Food is not the only thing which contributes to the welfare of humanity. If the Catholic Church suddenly did sell and dissipate her great library and museum and art gallery at the Vatican, losing all these evidences of progressive culture, the charge would at once come that she was as ever the enemy of learning, history, art, and culture, and opposed to the true welfare of man.

**435. Meantime the poor in every country cry out for enough to eat!**

Were the Vatican to sell all its treasures, and distribute their value to the poor, no appreciable difference of a lasting character would be made to the poor of "every country." After their one meal each, if they got that much, their poverty would still be there-and the Church without its most necessary administrative buildings. And Catholics throughout the world would be called upon to make provision in one generation for headquarters which have grown up gradually with the growth of the Church during 1900 years. What you suggest would be no cure for the poverty of the world. Christ Himself said, "The poor you will always have with you."

**436. Christ chose poverty.**

And the Pope, too, must be poor in spirit. However vast the Vatican, which has been built during generations and to last for generations, the Pope must live a simple, humble, and Christ-like life within its walls. And he does so. Not for a moment does he regard the Vatican as his own personal property; and he will make no attempt to will it away to people of his choice when he comes to die. When Pope Pius X. died in 1914, he was able to write, "I was born poor; I have lived poor; and I wish to die poor. I ask the Holy See to grant a monthly allowance-not to exceed 300 lire-to my sisters Anna and Mary." He had nothing to leave directly to them himself. One anti-Catholic paper grudgingly admitted, "The sum which Pius X. asked for his sisters is barely sufficient for food and clothing-less than five dollars a week; and even so, is subject to the approval of his successor. He regards all as belonging to the Church, nothing to himself personally."

**437. Christ was humble, whilst the Pope sits in majesty and comfort expecting everyone to reverence him.**

The humility of Christ did not prevent Him from accepting the tribute of reverence and respect paid Him by the woman who lavished precious ointment upon Him, nor His acceptance of the adoration due to His Divinity and offered by St. Thomas with the words, "My Lord and my God." The Pope is personally a very humble man, and not for a moment does he attribute to himself the reverence and respect the faithful show towards his office as supreme head of the Church. He knows that, were he not Pope, none of it would be his; and that it is a tribute to the authority of Christ vested in the office as such. Would you quarrel with Christ for telling St. John to write to the Bishop of Philadelphia, "Behold I will make them come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee"? You will find that in Rev. III. 9. Meantime, the Pope does not sit in majesty and comfort. His office is majestic, if you wish. But that is not his fault. Would you accuse a lawfully constituted judge of arrogance because, in virtue of his office, he speaks with authority? In person, that judge could be the most unassuming of men. As for comfort, the Pope has the most uncomfortable of positions. I have lived in Rome and I know. I would not be Pope for anything this world could offer me.

**438. I was shocked when I recently read in a book a lady traveler's account of her visit to the Vatican and the Pope.**

That is merely because you are unfamiliar with the proceedings, and because your outlook does not allow for a ceremonial proper to Catholicism. Unfamiliar things usually astonish us; and if they be not in accordance with our own ideas of what is fitting and proper, they may even jar upon us. Thus an Englishman traveling abroad for the first time is apt to experience a shock when he finds Frenchmen eating frog's legs. Within his limited experience of English ways such a thing is not done. And he probably takes it

for granted that, because he does not do it, it ought not to be done. In your own case you must realize that a thing is not necessarily wrong because unfamiliar to you. The meeting with the unfamiliar merely broadens one's education. Nor is a thing necessarily wrong because it does not fit in with our own ideas of what is fitting and proper. We must ask ourselves whether our own ideas be right. In religious matters, if I am a Protestant, I know that my ideas reflect the Protestant outlook. I should not be surprised that things dictated by the Catholic outlook are foreign to me. But before I pass judgment, my duty is to ask myself whether my Protestant outlook can be justified. Only provided I satisfy myself on this point can I condemn Catholic ways on the score that they do not appeal to me.

**439. Even the dress she had to wear was prescribed. Why should the Pope mind how one is dressed, so long as it is simple and refined?**

There is a regulation dress which ladies are expected to wear when visiting the Pope. It demands a black or dark colored dress of full length, and the wearing of a black lace veil for the covering of the head. The article you send mentions that one woman was turned away because her dress was cut too low at the neck. That was her own fault. On the very invitation cards a sketch is printed indicating the attire to be worn. If she desired the privilege of a Papal audience, she should have had the courtesy to comply with the regulations. You are surprised that the Pope should prescribe the dress to be worn, and suggest that he should be content provided the dress were simple and refined. But ideas of what is simple and refined differ amongst women to an incredible extent; and when women come from every possible nation, things are still more complicated. The only procedure possible is to prescribe a uniform standard of modest attire for such audiences. At least you will appreciate the Pope's anxiety for Christian modesty in the dress of such women as desire to meet him. If he were so evil a being as so many non-Catholics like to believe, he would not be concerned about any traditions of modesty.

**440. Also, as I read on, I thought the Pope would not be bothered with so much pomp and ceremony.**

Your choice of the word "bothered" is excellent. There is nothing new and entertaining for the Pope in his daily duty of interviews with the thousands who desire audiences throughout the year. Were he not a man of duty, he would not be bothered with the ever-recurring ceremonial routine his office demands. If he forfeits his own leisure to give happiness to thousands of people according to the time-honored ceremonial of the Vatican, there must be something more in it than any merely personal interest on the part of the Pope. For him it must be most irksome at times. I certainly would not like to be Pope. Happily I need not entertain the least fear that the Cardinals will want to elect me.

**441. Our Lord was so poor and simple.**

Now we arrive at the crux of the whole problem. Our Lord was poor and simple, although so great in virtue of His Divinity. Yet He loved the beauty of His Father's house, the glorious temple at Jerusalem. He loved ceremony. He constantly made use of ceremony in His personal actions. When men rebuked those who met Him with waving palms, and who cast their garments down as a carpet in His way, Christ defended those celebrating His approach, and said that if they did not do so, the very stones would cry out.

Our Lord, then, sanctioned the principle of ceremony as an expression of religion. And the Catholic Church is justified in principle. But, on the principle that nothing is too good for God, the Church says that, if we are going to have ceremony, let it be as dignified and beautiful as possible.

If a Protestant tourist in Rome sees only the pomp and ceremony without perceiving the significance and the spirit of these things, then all might seem vain and empty show. And the average non-Catholic tourist does perceive only the external proceedings, not discerning the significance and the spirit. The significance of the wonderful pageantry is that Christ and His religion constitute the most wonderful thing in the world-greater than all earthly courts and kings and politics in existence. It is all very well to say that Christ humbled Himself. But it is not for us to humble Him. God humbled Himself in becoming man, but it is for man to glorify Him as being God. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. We exalt Christ our Lord. If

we so honor the Pope, it is not for what he is in himself, but for what he is in his office as head of Christ's Church and representative of Christ. The Pope knows this, and takes none of it to himself personally. There is pomp, if you like, but no pomposity. And the Catholic Church, so rich in expression for the glory of God's house, is poor in spirit where the humility of her members is concerned. The more we magnify God, the less we magnify self. The more a man magnifies himself, the less he magnifies God. Remember that it took the magnificent Catholic Church to inspire the simplicity of a St. Francis of Assisi. There may be less pomp, but there is far more pride in Protestantism than in Catholicism. It is Protestantism which is ever speaking of man's independence and self-sufficiency. Yet even Protestants do not really object to ceremony. They protest against the ceremonies of the Catholic Church not because they are ceremonies, but because they are Catholic. They have invented ceremonies of their own, but ceremonies which are merely not so inspiring. If Catholics violate Christian principles, so do Protestants. If Protestants do not, neither do Catholics. And in this latter case, Catholics exhibit a far greater appreciation of the dignity and majesty of God's worship than do all Protestants put together.

**442. The bishops at least seem to have a luxurious time whilst their fellow creatures starve.**

The luxurious time is a product of your own imagination. Bishops have a very heavy responsibility, great anxieties, and little rest. It is a full-time occupation to be a bishop of the Catholic Church, and few indeed are anxious to attain to episcopal rank. Our Catholic people certainly wish their bishops to live in a state in keeping with the dignity of their office. But that state does not mean personal luxury. Again, you let your imagination run away with you when you say sweepingly that their "fellow creatures starve," as if all men except bishops had nothing to eat. If that were the case, nothing would be gained by the few bishops starving also. That would not feed the multitudes. Those who are too poor to do so are not asked to contribute towards the support of the bishop; and the bishops of the Catholic Church give far more away in charity than you suspect.

**443. Every priest has his own personal revenue.**

The temporal needs of priests have to be provided for, as well as their future, should sickness or old age compel their retirement. They are entitled to their support. And certainly, if a man devotes his whole life to the welfare of his parishioners, those parishioners between them should share the burden of keeping him alive, and providing for all his lawful needs.

**444. Why should they amass thousands of dollars, as one often notices when their wills appear in the press?**

Such wills do not often appear. The vast majority of those devoted to the cause of the Church leave so little that the press finds no interest in their wills. For the rest, priests should not amass thousands of dollars accumulated during their work for the cause of religion. And if a few do so, they themselves are to blame for so dishonoring their obligations in this matter.

**445. What is your opinion of avarice?**

It is a contemptible vice, and one of the most dangerous of sins. Men given up to this vice insult God by practically making a god of the money they possess or hope to get. They are led into many other sins against their fellow men, often violating not only charity but justice also. And they ruin their own characters, which become hard and dry, strangers to generosity, mercy, and remorse. If we take Judas as an example, we see how avarice undermines even fidelity to one's best friends. And that this sin as few others will endanger a man's salvation is evident from our Lord's words, "Woe to you rich"; and, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." That is why Christ advised those who do possess wealth to use it in charity towards the poor for the sake of their own very salvation. Thus you have my opinion of avarice. But it is another question altogether as to who are or who are not avaricious. Of that I am not the judge.

**446. Why should priests have big rectories?**

Rectories are built in proportion to the needs of the respective parishes. And priests don't have them. Apart from the fact that many rectories are small, even the larger rectories in big city parishes do not belong to the priests. They are parochial property. If the priest is removed elsewhere, he cannot sell the buildings to whom he pleases. If he dies, he cannot will them away. Priests come and go, but the parochial buildings remain. Both buildings and priests are the provision made by the parishioners for their own religious needs.

**447. It is the poor working man who has to pay for these huge rectories.**

Imagination, of course, could make the rectories bigger and bigger, and the working men poorer and poorer. Not all rectories are large. In densely populated parishes, where several priests are required, they are larger than in small parishes where but one priest suffices. But in the densely populated parishes, the expense is more widely distributed. Nor are "poor working people" the only people in the world. Not all the parishioners are working men, nor are all working men poor. Those of the parishioners who are "poor working men" may or may not contribute their modest offerings towards parochial buildings; but that does not mean that they pay for them. The debt is distributed, and falls proportionately on all classes. And those who give, do not mind giving. They are happy to do what they can for their religion.

**448. Priests have no care for any save the rich, however evil they may be.**

There are multitudes of the poor who will deny that on my behalf. But if you regard the rich as evil and in danger of eternal damnation, you ought to blame the priest if he neglected to do his utmost for such unfortunate people. If you say that the rich support the priest well, I can but say that that is news to me. But even were it true, you should be glad that the priest who serves both rich and poor should be supported mainly by the rich.

**449. Why do priests take so little interest in the common people?**

I deny the distinction between the rich and poor as if money means nobility, and poverty creates the common herd. But if you love the poor, why do you do so? You will say that you have a heart. But have not priests hearts as well as you? And are they not children of the people as well as you? And does not religion give them a greater obligation to love the people than you possess? Priests do not stifle their natural sympathies. They fulfill their religious obligations towards the poor.

**450. I am a Wesleyan, but I realize the hollowness of preachings which are not practiced by the teachers thereof.**

You allot the blame in the wrong place, and it is a mistake. If some given preacher does not practice what he preaches, you should conclude, not to the hollowness of what is taught, but to the hollowness of the individual who is teaching it. For example, Christ certainly practiced what He taught. And if some man preaches exactly what Christ taught, he is preaching a good doctrine however badly he personally behaves. His bad behavior makes him bad, but it does not make the doctrine of Christ bad. If that doctrine was good when preached by Jesus Himself, it is still good, no matter by whom it is preached.

**451. You insist, on that principle, that the Catholic Church should not bear the odium connected with individuals who err.**

I say that it is no argument against the truth of the Catholic religion that Catholics, and even officials at times, have failed to observe its precepts. Judas was no argument against the truth preached by the Apostles.

**452. I cannot accept the analogy of Judas. He did not continue preaching, and his fellow Apostles did not condone his act.**

Your last two points do not affect the value of the analogy. The whole point of the analogy lies in the fact that the bad behavior of Judas was a violation of the teachings of Christ, and, therefore, no indication that those teachings were evil. Had Judas gone on preaching Christ's doctrine, that would have been no argument against Christ's doctrine. Truth is not less truth because preached by a bad man who makes no effort to live up to it. Nor would it be an argument against Christ's doctrine had the other Apostles condoned the treachery of Judas in betraying Christ. For Christ's doctrine would not have bidden them to sanction evil. It would be they who would also have failed to be true to the principles of Christ. So, too, the Catholic religion is true. Nothing in its teachings can be used to sanction evil. If those professing the Catholic religion do wrong, they are to be blamed.

**453. If the Church is not to share the odium, why were not erring individuals disciplined by higher authorities? And above all in the middle ages, when the Church had full power.**

In the middle ages means of communication were not nearly so advanced as nowadays. Many abuses remained undenounced to Rome. On the other hand, when abuses were denounced, many of the individuals were disciplined. If abuses were known and higher officials took no notice, it was either because those higher officials wished to avoid still greater evils which their interference would provoke, or because they too were guilty of a neglect of duty. But whatever the possibilities, the blame must rest with unfaithful officials of the Church, not with the religion they served so badly.

**454. I have followed your discussion of the holiness of the Church with great interest; and I would like to ask you some personal questions.**

I will be only too happy to express my own mind on the subject.

**455. When you joined the Roman Church you knew nothing of the scandals in her history. Catholicism was put before you in its brightest colors, and only the highest spiritual ideals.**

The priest who instructed me in the Catholic religion instructed me in the Catholic religion. And scandals are not part of the Catholic religion. They are the result of infidelity to its teachings. A priest must explain what the Catholic Church does teach, not what bad Catholics do not do. The bright colors were the true colors; and the high spiritual ideals were the only ones sanctioned by the Catholic Church.

**456. Your course of study to become a priest made you familiar with the scandals of history. Considering your idealization of Catholicism, did they not shock you?**

They did. The ideals put before me filled me with reverence for all things Catholic; and I too easily took it for granted that what all Catholics ought to be could be taken as a sure indication of what all Catholics were in reality. I overlooked the fact that God will compel no man to be good, and I had not the knowledge of human frailty later experience gave.

**457. Do you think all scandals amongst Catholics are a thing of the past; that there are none today; and likely to be none in the future?**

I certainly do not think that. There are individual Catholics today giving scandal in various parts of the world; and probably this will always be the case. Christ Himself said: "It must needs be that scandals will come." He knew the lack of good will in men, and their capacity for evil if they neglect vigilance and prayer. But He added: "Nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh." And He very much meant those words, for He knew that, not the Church, but such people themselves would be responsible for their own evil conduct.

**458. Did you not know of good and holy Protestant people before you joined Rome?**

I did. But their goodness is due to the elements of truth contained in their religion—elements of truth drawn from the Catholic Church, and retained side by side with the errors of the various Protestant reformers. But, instead of the partial truth, the full truth is to be found in the Catholic Church.

**459. Did you ever compare these good Protestants with bad Catholics?**

No. Nor would it be logical to do so. One can compare the good with the good, or the bad with the bad. But it is wrong to select good Protestants as if there were no bad Protestants; and bad Catholics as if there were no good Catholics. In reality, however, we must take the Catholic system of religion, and the Protestant systems as our terms of comparison, and see which is the better religion in itself. But if you do compare Protestants with Catholics you must do so en masse. And if you do this, you will find at least that irreligion is far more prevalent amongst Protestants than amongst Catholics. It is quite a normal thing for Protestant clergymen to urge the fidelity of Catholics to their religion as an example to Protestants, whose empty churches are a byword.

**460. In a word, have you ever felt insincere in advising other people to become Catholics?**

Never. I know absolutely that it is for their good, provided they do their best to live up to their new-found faith. Granted generous good will, the convert to the Catholic Church will find himself better, holier, and happier from every possible point of view in the spiritual order. Cardinal Newman wrote, "From the time I became a Catholic, I have been at perfect peace and contentment. It was like coming into port after a rough sea." Robert Hugh Benson, the convert son of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote, "The Church promises a great deal, but my experience is that she gives ten times more. The Catholic Church is supremely what she promises to be. She is the priceless pearl for which the greatest sacrifice is not too great." Those two quotations express exactly my own frame of mind; and I leave it to you to ponder over them. And at least you will credit me with the determination to give candid replies to all inquirers.

Catholicity of the Church

**461. Did Christ say that His Church would bear the name "Catholic" Church?**

He said that His Church would differ from the Synagogue chiefly by the fact that it would be for all nations, and not for one chosen nation only. By this He meant that His Church would be universal, a word which is rendered in Greek as *Katholikos*. The word "Catholic," therefore, rightly describes the Church Christ established. It is the thing that matters, not the mere term used to describe it. Catholicity was declared by Christ to be a main characteristic of His one true Church.

And there is but one Church today truly Catholic, the Church of which the Bishop of Rome is the head in this world.

**462. You have no right to say that other Churches do not belong to Christ.**

If there are a hundred conflicting Churches, it is certain that if one is right, the others are wrong. Every other Church save the Catholic Church has been commenced by some merely earthly founder in ages subsequent to Christ. Cardinal Newman rightly said, "I became a Catholic because, if the Catholic Church be not the Church of Christ, there never was a Church established by Him." The Catholic Church alone can prove that she is right. And the duty of charity will not permit the Catholic Church to allow non-Catholics to continue in error on so important a matter whilst she just keeps silent about it.

**463. On what grounds do you call all other denominations non-Catholic?**



On the grounds of Scripture, history, and logic. Scripture tells us that Christ's Church would go to all nations, yet be one fold under one shepherd. Other Churches have separated from the Catholic Church and refused to be under the one shepherd appointed by Christ. Therefore they ceased to belong to the Catholic Church, and became non-Catholics. Historically, of course, those other Churches have not existed as such through all the centuries since Christ. And logically, since Catholic means universal, no Church except the one to which I belong is really supra-national, found as one and the same in all nations, whether France, Italy, Germany, England, America, Ireland, Australia, etc.

**464. Then what do Protestants mean when they say the Apostles' Creed, repeating the words, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church?"**

There are multitudes of Protestants who neither know the Apostles' Creed, nor say it. Of those who do say it, many have no idea of what they mean when they use the words you quote. Others, realizing at least the meaning of the words, say them uneasily and with quite a sense of guilt. They hurry over them, and dismiss them quickly, as if they should not be there; or, at any rate, as if they should not be saying them. Others, again, say them and mean them, but mean them in a peculiar sense. In order to believe that they do belong to the Holy Catholic Church, they persuade themselves that all the different Christian Churches in the world really constitute one holy Catholic Church. It is all very confusing. I but state the truth when I say that, although many Protestants think they believe in the Holy Catholic Church, they do not do so in reality. And they cannot do so whilst they continue to believe in any form of Protestantism.

**465. Let us take it this way. What does the word "Catholic" mean?**

It means universal. Applied to the Church it means one and the same Church found everywhere in the world, teaching men of all nations exactly the same religion, and uniting them under one and the same religious authority.

**466. What does the word "Roman" mean?**

It is the adjective derived from the city of Rome, which is the capital of Italy. But its religious significance lies in the fact that the Pope, who is supreme head of the Catholic Church on earth, happens to be the bishop of that city.

**467. Then your Church must be the "Roman Catholic Church."**

Such a description is as inappropriate as would be the description of the British Empire as the "London British Empire" because the king lives in London.

**468. Then where does Rome come in?**

It is simply the locality in which the head of the universal Church resides, The Church must be linked with the center of unity in the Apostolic group-Peter.

And Peter died in Rome, his office being transmitted to his successors in the Bishopric of Rome. To say that the Church is "Roman" is to say that it is the Apostolic Church. Rome stands for concentrated Apostolicity.

**469. How do you make that out?**

It was by God's providence that the Church transferred her own headquarters to Rome. Rome in the time of the Apostles was for the world what Peter himself was for the Church-the head and center. The Church had

to go to the world, and the roads were already prepared for her by the secular power. The Church therefore used the pulsating heart and blood streams of organized society. As in individuals grace cooperates with nature, so the very society established for the diffusion of grace cooperated with the natural social framework of the Roman Empire. And as St. Peter died in Rome, the successive Bishops of Rome necessarily remain the head and center of the Christian Church.

**470. I have heard your own people call themselves "Roman Catholics."**

The use of the phrase by Catholics is no more than an unthinking concession to prevailing custom in a non-Catholic social environment. But always Catholics have in mind the correct sense of the Catholic Church whose head is the Bishop of Rome. It is from the Protestant viewpoint that the expression is ambiguous, since they wish to imply that there are other kinds of Churches entitled to be called Catholic. This is a ridiculous theory which they do not dream of applying in practice; for if you were to ask any Protestant in the street: "Could you tell me where the Catholic Church is in this district?", he would not dream of directing you to his own Church, or to any Protestant Church. It is owing to this theoretical ambiguity that it is better to describe ourselves simply as Catholics, and avoid the expression "Roman Catholics."

**471. Since "Catholic" means universal, it embraces all faiths. You are not interpreting it correctly.**

Surely you can see that the Catholic Faith cannot be any or all faiths! Will you include Shintoism, Buddhism, or Mahometanism? Or, if you want to restrict it to professing Christians, can you say that one and the same Catholic Faith denies the necessity of bishops with Congregationalists, and affirms it with Anglicans? Or that it is equally of Catholic Faith that Christ is really present in the Eucharist, and yet really absent? The Catholic Faith must be one and the same Faith universally diffused-as it is in that Catholic Church which alone has a genuine claim to the title.

**472. We Protestants are Catholics, but you are Roman Catholics.**

You do not say what type of Protestantism you profess. But no single type of Protestantism can possibly be Catholic. The Catholic Faith is one Faith believed universally. The Catholic Church means one world-wide united body. Protestantism as a whole is a conglomerate of conflicting bodies. And no single form of Protestantism is world-wide in any sense of the word. You must face the difficulties of your position. Let us suppose that you are an Anglican. What are you going to do with the Greek Orthodox, Wesleyans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and others? Are they "Catholics"? Or will you call them Greek Catholics, Wesleyan Catholics, Presbyterian Catholics, etc? Are Anglicans alone to be straight-out Catholics? Or are each and all of these conflicting religions Catholic-Roman Catholics alone not being Catholics? Also, turn to history. It is said by Anglicans that the Pope had falsely usurped jurisdiction over the whole Church. England had to leave the Pope, but intended to remain Catholic. But if that were so, on its own principles it should have joined the Greek Church which had already renounced the Pope. Yet it did not. England separated from any kind of union with all other bishops in the world! Again, no Anglican will deny that the Church in England prior to the Reformation was the Catholic Church. If the present Church of England is the same why was the Mass abolished, and a new Prayer Book and Communion Service unheard of till then in Christendom introduced? Edward VI. abolished the Mass; Mary the Catholic restored the Mass; Elizabeth the Protestant abolished the Mass. The Church of England adopted the word Protestant; and the king has to swear that he is a faithful Protestant as opposed to the Catholic religion. James II. could have remained king had he ceased to be a Catholic. He was deposed and William of Orange was brought in to secure the Protestant succession. How can Anglicans turn round now and say that they are Catholics? You yourself now wish to remain a Protestant, yet be a Catholic. We are Roman Catholics. No one in Spain is a Catholic-all there are Spanish Roman Catholics. No one in France is a Catholic. They are French Roman Catholics. The "Catholics" in the United States are not Catholics. They are American Roman Catholics. Pure and undefiled Catholics are to be found only in Anglicanism. If you want to find a genuine Catholic, you must look for him in an English Protestant! No sane man in the world would admit this. But I have said

enough. Those only are Catholics who belong to that Catholic Church which is discerned from the fact of its union with the Bishop of Rome.

**473. Why should the Italians always have their own Pope?**

He is our Pope as much as he is theirs. Nor do the Italians regard the Pope as an Italian. On the occasion of the election of Pope Pius XII. Signor Farinacci wrote an article in his paper, the "Regime Fascista." Farinacci was a violent Fascist, who wrote strongly against Pope Pius XI's condemnation of the Fascist attitude to the Jews and to Catholic Action. Yet he wrote as follows: "We have no candidate to the Papacy, because we are quite sure that if some are found amongst the Cardinals whose opinions are too favorable to democratic ideas, there are others, the great majority, who give their thoughts to nothing but the religious problem, and whose lives are made of Christian charity, without other care or preoccupation. God will not fail to give His faithful, the real Catholics, their Pastor, a real Pope. Will he be Italian? Portuguese? Swiss? It matters nothing to us. To our way of thinking, religion has no frontiers; and 'politics' are our exclusive business. We are making them our exclusive business."

Catholic Attitude Toward Converts

**474. Does the Catholic Church, and its members generally, appreciate the introduction of converts even in civilized countries?**

They appreciate all converts who come with sincere conviction, and who are determined to live up to their Catholic obligations. No one expects all converts to be saints, of course. They will have their human faults. But the Church will help them to overcome their faults; and with good will on their part, converts will gradually grow out of those faults. All Catholics, however, who retain a trace of their own faith, will be genuinely happy in the thought that some convert has received the same great gift of the Catholic Faith. People who think of becoming Catholics from any motive other than sincere conviction, and who will not attempt to live up to the requirements of the Catholic religion, are definitely not welcome. They will only give disedification to others, and bring contempt on the Faith which is dearer to all sincere Catholics than anything else in this world.

**475. Do Catholics show converts that they are welcome?**

Good Catholics do. Even some careless Catholics, who believe in their religion but do not practice it often show converts in a most remarkable- way genuine joy and happiness in the great grace the new comers have received. Some bad Catholics do not manifest any appreciation. A few bad Catholics even go so far as to manifest displeasure, and speak only with discouragement and contempt.

**476. How do Catholics show converts that they are welcome?**

Not in any extraordinary and demonstrative way; nor by conducting an intensive search for converts in order to fling their arms round their necks and embrace them. Should a Catholic happen to discover that another is a convert, he should treat him exactly as he would treat any other Catholic, making him feel that he is accepted as just as much a Catholic as others who have never been anything else. If the circumstances warrant it, a few words of appreciation and congratulation may be expressed, and some additional signs of kindness and friendship exhibited, in order to make the convert feel quite at home with fellow Catholics.

**477. What is the value of conversions to the Catholic Church for the sake of marriage?**

A conversion to the Catholic Church merely for the sake of marriage is of very little value, and can even be sinful. If a person were still convinced that the Catholic Church is wrong, yet became a Catholic and embraced what he believed to be a wrong religion, that person would be guilty of a grave violation of conscience before God. Religion is between a man's soul and his God. And no one is justified in embracing

this or that religion for any merely human considerations. Yet if a Protestant cannot become a Catholic for the sake of the one he wants to marry, he can at least study the Catholic religion, and receive instructions in that religion for the sake of the one he loves. At the end of his instructions he can become a Catholic if he believes in the Catholic Church; he cannot, if he does not. Sincere conversions to the Catholic Church after instructions undertaken in the first place for the sake of marrying a Catholic are as valuable as any others. God has various ways of bringing souls into contact with the Catholic Church, and many a non-Catholic has blessed God that he ever met his future partner, and far more for the gift of the Faith than for the gift of the partner. Needless to say, I advise very thorough instruction, and a sincere testing of motives. Often when, at the end of their instructions, prospective converts have told me that they are willing to become Catholics, I have swung round on them and said, "That is not enough. You must want to become a Catholic. If the girl broke off the engagement tomorrow, would you still be determined to become a Catholic?" Such questions steady them into a realization of the step they are taking. The Catholic Church is not out to lasso people and rake them in against their will. People have to beg of her the privilege of becoming members of her fold. And those to whom God's grace has given the sincere and earnest desire to be Catholics make good converts, whatever the occasion which, in His providence, first started them on their way towards the Faith.

#### Indefectible Apostolicity

#### **478. You Catholics have a strange confidence in the indefectibility of your Church.**

It is not so strange for one who perceives all the facts. What would be strange would be the failure of a universal Church in which millions drawn from all nations are united in a doctrine, worship, and discipline of two thousand years' standing- in a Church ever accompanied by a most remarkable spiritual power and fruitfulness in works of charity. Writing in the 12th century, Richard of St. Victor rightly said that a Catholic could say to God at his judgment, "If I was wrong, then O my God You Yourself are responsible. For my religion was accompanied by signs and characteristics which could only come from You." That judgment, written nearly 800 years ago, is valid today.

#### **479. God was with the Jewish religion, but the Jews failed God; could not this happen in the Catholic Church?**

The Jewish religion as a religion was quite all right, and so too is the Catholic Church as the Church of Christ. Not all the Jews rejected Christ, even though the majority did. But keep in mind that the Jewish religion as a religion did not fail. It was essentially a preparatory religion, meant of its very nature to merge into its perfect fulfilment when the Messiah should come. Christ was that Messiah, and He rightly said, "I have come, not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it." He gave us the perfect religion which the Jewish religion foreshadowed, and declared that His religion was not a preparation for a further and more perfect revelation, but that it would last, just as He had given it, till the end of the world. It has lasted in the Catholic Church which alone has existed all days since His time and which alone gives signs of perpetuity.

#### **480. Perverse human nature has usually forsaken the way prepared by God.**

It is true that perverse individuals have forsaken the ways of God. But if God wants to keep His religion in this world, it is absurd to say that He cannot manage to do so. Even if a man be evil, God can see to it that at least he teaches others the truth. False prophets wishing to curse have been constrained by Him to bless. And in the New Testament we find Christ defending the orthodoxy of the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees even whilst He condemned their personal conduct. In St. Matthew, XXIII., 2-3, Christ says, "The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works, do ye not; for they say and do not."

#### **481. Is it not strange that your indefectible Church should have fallen away to become Babylon and the organ of Satan?**

To say that is but to repeat the remnant of a Protestant tradition which was dying in mid-Victorian days, and is dead today amongst all thinking men. I will quote here only the "Cambridge Bible," with introduction and notes by the Rev. W. H. Simcox, M.A., an Anglican scholar. In the Introduction, p. 41, he says that the presumptuous confidence with which controversialists interpreted the Book of Revelations has now produced a reaction. On p. 57 he says, "It is most unjust and unreasonable, in fact hardly less than blasphemy, to treat the Papacy as the champion and representative of Antichrist. In fact the identification of the Papacy with Antichrist admits of direct refutation. 'He is Antichrist,' says St. John, 'who denieth the Father and the Son.' He defines the spirit of Antichrist as the 'spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.' Now, whatever the errors of the Papacy and of the Roman Church, it is certain that no Pope has ever denied the truth of the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation." That quotation from a Cambridge scholar who obviously has no leanings towards Rome, yet who rejects absolutely charges prompted by ignorance and prejudice should suffice for any thinking man.

**482. Protestants are not blind, and must have grounds for their conviction that Rome has failed.**

Protestants are rapidly forsaking that conviction. The attack on the Catholic Church is not now that she is false, but that she is not the "only" true Church. As an offset to the Eucharistic Congress in Sydney in 1928 the Rev. Dr. Burgess, a Presbyterian, published a book entitled "The Protestant Faith." In it he disputed the exclusive claims of the Catholic Church. On p. 149 he wrote, "The Church of Rome is not 'the' Catholic Church; it is only a branch of the Catholic Church. In the Creed the expression 'the Holy Catholic Church' is explained by the phrase 'the communion of saints.'" So, for him, the Roman Church is a branch of the communion of saints. He could scarcely admit her to be Antichrist after that! If the Roman branch of the Church be the "Beast," a Protestant saying "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" would include in his profession of faith, "I believe in the Beast." And that would not do.

**483. You refuse to grant that, even though Christ founded your Church, she could fail later on?**

No man who believes that Christ founded the Catholic Church, and that Christ is God, could grant what you suggest. Christ promised that the gates of hell would never prevail against His Church. If the Church He founded ever did become the organization of Satan, the forces of evil would have prevailed against her. In that case we would have to say that Christ could neither preserve His Church intact, nor could keep His promise to be with her all days till the end of the world. And that implies a complete denial of His divinity. If Christ could not do what He said He would do, He was not God at all. And if not God, then He was either an imposter or mad. We are forced either to be Catholics or else to give up professing to be Christians altogether. That is, if we are going to be logical. However, Christ did prove His claims to divinity; and the only conclusion that fits in with the facts is the admission that the Catholic Church is the one true Church, possessing the right to teach all nations, and the power to last till the end of time.

**484. I have heard Catholics refer to the continued preservation of their Church in this world as a miracle.**

One has to be blind not to see that it is a miracle. When we think of the frailty of human nature, the striking establishment of the Catholic Church, her expansion and preservation by such apparently useless means and despite such obstacles, her succession through the ages with such unity and fruitfulness, we see an incomparable argument in favor of her divine mission. No merely human society, under the same conditions, would last for 2000 years, and spread throughout the world with the same results.

**485. History reveals natural causes behind every institution in this world; and Rome has not lacked natural geniuses and influence.**

Natural causes have certainly contributed towards the welfare of the Catholic Church. But they do not account for the facts we perceive. History notes certain causes, but it cannot explain how the causes are

ready to hand at the opportune moment-and always at hand when wanted, always successful in keeping the Church going where other institutions fail, always surviving the work of other causes which would tend to destroy the Church. You must not lose sight of the adverse causes-long and terrible persecutions, heresies, schisms, political opposition, the frailties and crimes of Catholics themselves, even of bishops and priests, barbarian invasions of Christendom, the Protestant Reformation, various revolutions and wars, suppression of Catholic countries, scientific and philosophical propaganda against her. These are only the principal headings. Yet the Catholic Church survives with extraordinary vitality, and the world cannot ignore her. How is it to be explained? You attempt a solution by saying that natural genius and power have been at her disposal. But natural genius and power have been available to other organizations. Why do they die whilst the Catholic Church still lives?

**486. The very rigidity of Roman Catholicism accounts for her resistance to the causes of dissolution.**

You have to account for the very rigidity and fidelity. But also note this. If the civil state wants to perish, it has only to decide to be rigid and immutable. If it wants to live, it has to be perpetually adjusting itself to changing conditions. Civil society preserves itself by constant yielding to necessity. But the Catholic Church lives inflexibly. She is certainly more than merely natural and human. She is a divine society.

Necessity of Becoming Catholic

**487. Will all those in heaven be Catholics only?**

Good non-Catholics who, through no fault of their own, have never known the Catholic Church to be the true Church, and who die sincerely repentant of such sins as they have committed will save their souls. But once they leave this life they will see the truth and gladly admit their mistake. They will then realize that the Catholic Church is indeed the true Church. In that sense all in heaven will profess the truth of the Catholic religion, whatever form of religion they mistakenly professed in this life. They will also, as is clear, admit that it would have been far better for them to have known the full truth whilst on earth, and to have had the use of so many more means of grace than they knew. Anyone who does realize the truth of the Catholic Church whilst he is in this life is obliged of course to become a Catholic even now.

**488. That still means that non-Catholics are excluded from heaven.**

It means that non-Catholics who attain heaven will cease to be non-Catholics once they are there. The Catholic Church teaches that non-Catholics in this world are mistaken in their religious views in so far as they diverge from Catholic teaching. She could not believe herself right without believing other and opposed Churches wrong. But though Protestants are mistaken, it does not follow that they realize this. If their lack of full knowledge be no fault of their own, their sincerity may save them. And in heaven they will see the full truth as they did not see it on earth. But it is surely better to be saved by doing the right thing, than to have to be excused from it on the plea of ignorance.

**489. What do you mean by the clause, "If their ignorance be not their own fault"?**

I mean that a man forfeits his right to salvation if his ignorance of his obligations be really through guilty neglect on his part. For example, a man might suspect that the Catholic Church is the true Church, yet deliberately put the thought aside and refuse to inquire further into the matter for fear lest he should become convinced of its truth. That man would, to say the least, be running a great risk, for he has not the will to find out God's will, let alone do it, in a serious matter.

**490. Read the enclosed statement by Cardinal Manning in 1864.**

Speaking in the name of the Pope as supreme head of the Church and the instrument of Christ's authority over men in spiritual things, Cardinal Manning said, "I acknowledge no civil power. I am the subject of no prince. And I claim more than this. I claim to be supreme judge and director of the consciences of men; of the peasants that till the fields, and the prince that sits upon the throne; of the household that lives in the shade of privacy, and the legislator that makes laws for kingdoms. I am the sole, last, and supreme judge of what is right and wrong. Moreover, we declare, affirm, define, and pronounce it to be necessary to salvation to every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." Such are the words you send, and I subscribe to every one of them. They are but the logical application of Christ's decree, "If a man will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen." Once one grants that the Catholic Church is the true Church, and that the Pope is the supreme court of appeal in that Church, the conviction embodied in the words you quote at once follows.

**491. Do you not contradict that when you say that non-Catholics can get to heaven?**

No. Cardinal Manning fully agreed that, if non-Catholics did not perceive an obligation to become Catholics, they would not be condemned for that for which they were not responsible; and that if they die repenting of such sins as they did consciously commit, they would save their souls.

**492. How do you account for Proposition 17 in the Syllabus of Errors published by Pope Pius IX.?**

In Proposition 17, Pope Pius IX. condemned this doctrine: "At least there is a well-founded hope for the salvation of all those who have never belonged to the true Church." By condemning that proposition the Pope says that there is not a well-founded hope for the salvation of all those who have never been Catholics. But that does not mean that all non-Catholics are necessarily lost, and that none can be saved. The statement condemned' by the Pope practically said, "Anyway, there is no real obligation to join the Catholic Church. One can be saved without that." The Pope replies, "That won't do. We cannot hold out hope of salvation to all who have refused to join the Catholic Church. If a man has never realized the obligation; God may overlook his mistake, and grant him salvation. But if a man has realized the obligation, and willfully refuses to join the Catholic Church, there is certainly no well-founded hope for the salvation of that man."

**493. That is merely your interpretation of the mind of Pope Pius IX.**

Let me quote his own words from his Encyclical Letter on Indifferentism, Aug. 10th, 1863. "The Catholic dogma that no one can be saved outside the Catholic Church is well known. Those who obstinately and knowingly reject the authority and definitions of the Church, and persist willfully in remaining separated from the unity of the Church and from the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter to whom the charge of the vineyard was committed by Christ, those cannot be saved." Yet in the same letter he says, "We know that those who are invincibly ignorant of our holy religion, and who are prepared to obey God, earnestly observing the natural moral law engraven in the hearts of all men by God, can be saved by living an honest and just life with the help of divine light and grace. For God, who clearly discerns the minds and souls, thoughts and habits of all men, will not, in His goodness and mercy, permit anyone to be punished eternally who is not guilty of voluntary sin." The Pope himself, therefore, clearly distinguishes between those who knowingly and willfully refuse to join the Catholic Church, and those who do not do so merely because they are not aware of the obligation to do so. And he admits that these latter can be saved.

**494. Anyway, I regard myself as a Christian, and find all I want in the Gospels.**

Only for the Catholic Church you would not have the Gospels; and without the Catholic Church you cannot prove that they ought to be accepted as divinely inspired. The Gospels were written after the Church had commenced preaching the truth; and before they were written, Christians got along well enough without them. Jesus Himself commanded no Gospels to be written. He established the Catholic Church and sent that Church to teach all nations. Later on, the Church had the Gospels written, to preserve a record of our Lord's life and teachings. And they belong to her. Those who left the Catholic Church took the Gospels

with them, and claimed the "family documents" as their own. And they have made those Gospels mean just what they have wanted them to mean, opposing them to the very Church from which they took them!

**495. Christianity is simplicity itself. Ella Wheeler Wilcox rightly says: "So many gods; so many creeds; so many paths that wind and wind. Whilst just the art of being kind is all the sad world needs."**

That is certainly not Christianity. If just the art of being kind is all the sad world needs, there is no need of Christ at all. Men would be their own saviors. The world would, of course, be happier if people were kinder to one another. But human kindness is not the be-all and end-all of Christianity. The Christian religion cannot be defined as a mere relationship between man and man. First and foremost, it is a relationship between man and God, implying faith in the complete teaching given by God, and obedience to the Church established by God. One effect of the Christian religion is that, for the love of God, we shall be kind to our fellow men. But to mistake the effect for the Christian religion itself is inexcusable in one who professes to know what Christianity is.

**496. I don't believe one can be spiritually saved from outside oneself by any Church.**

That the Catholic Church saves her members does not mean that they are saved from without. Society is never outside its members. They are the constituent elements of the society they form. Then, too, the Holy Spirit who works in the Church is the same Author of the work in individual souls. What the Catholic Church says to our ears, God says to our hearts by the Spirit of Truth and of Love. It is the same wind which fills the sails of the great ship, the Bark of Peter, and provides for the breathing of the passengers.

**497. Religion is an individual matter. No organization can come between the soul and God.**

Religion is not an individual matter. Man is a social being, and in religion more than in anything else. If, humanly, we need completing by others, much more so do we need it in divine things. The most fundamental thing of all is that which unites us most, and best prevents our division from one another. And Christ employed this greatest social force by establishing a Church which He commanded to remain undivided forever, and to gather all men to itself. Religion should not be an individual drop of water to be evaporated. It must express itself in a Church as a vast ocean which resists opposing forces by its very mass. Socially we live in groups, finding both utility and safety in numbers. Spiritually also we Catholics form a group in unbreakable unity. Our religion is not a mere theory or vague sentiment. It is a life - a family life - with Jesus at the head. And as the one true family, so it forms the one true Church or assembly of the faithful. In fact, the Church is but the association of souls united to God. It is impossible for the organization to come between the soul and God. For the very social grace brings the soul to God. The Church is commissioned to communicate the divine life to men. That is her ministry in the name of Christ. She is but the luminous atmosphere bringing us the light and warmth from the Sun of Truth, Jesus Christ Himself.

**498. You will tell us next that not only Christ, but the Church itself is divine.**

It is. For she gives every sign of divine authority and protection. Christianity is a divine religion, and Christ put the whole of Christianity into the Catholic Church. She is divine in her proofs, supreme by her authority, infallible in her religious teaching, venerable in her centuried history, one in her universality. The Pope has no legions at his disposal to make men obey the sound of his voice. A sheet of parchment with the seal of the fisherman is enough to make the whole Church obey. Such is the power of divine faith. If you can believe yourself and make others believe you can sway millions. The Pope believes, and commands belief in others; and he rules millions. He would be entirely unable to do so were the Church not divine. The Catholic Church teaches and rules in the name of God; and in believing and obeying the Catholic Church, we believe and obey God, whose mouthpiece she is.

**499. You insist on the necessity of obeying the Church?**



Yes. It is in vain to talk of obeying Christ but not the Church. The Catholic Church has an absolute authority without appeal. She declares her own authority under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus supports it. "Tell the Church," He says, "and if a man will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen." He shows that the last appeal is to the Church. If she condemns, there is no appeal to God. Jesus does not say, "If a man offends me, treat him as a pagan-as none of mine." Such a person is simply a sinner, to be forgiven on repentance. So long as he does not rebel openly against the Church there is hope. But if he rebels against the Church all is broken, and Christ tells us to treat him as a stranger to Christianity. It is not that rebellion against the Church is worse than revolt against God. It is disobedience to God in a supreme degree. Christ entrusted His Church to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to ignore or despise the Church is to sin against the Holy Spirit.

**500. As a Protestant I cannot see with you.**

One with Protestant ideas necessarily finds it difficult to understand the Catholic outlook. There are many differences between Protestantism and Catholicism. But the most fundamental of all is precisely the one we are dealing with when treating of the nature of the Church. Protestantism is really religious individualism. It gives to each the right of private judgment and self-management. Its groupings or Churches, therefore, are only of secondary importance; and they are limited by national considerations. Catholicism regards the religious society or assembly as basic; a society which, through Christ and under His protection, gives and regulates divine gifts. Again, by its very principles, Protestantism ends in diversity, and an infinite number of varying doctrines according to the individual outlook. But Catholicism is an agent of unity, rigid as life in its eternal laws, yet as adjustable as life to growth and development within the bounds of one and the same type.

**501. To my mind, any Church worshipping in the name of Christ is the true Church.**

That leads to an insoluble difficulty. For example, good Seventh Day Adventists are perfectly convinced that they are meeting and worshipping in the name of Christ. But we Catholics have the same conviction concerning our own religion. On your principles, both Churches would be the "true Church." But Seventh Day Adventists teach that the Pope is the "Beast" and "Antichrist," whilst Catholics believe him to be the Vicar of Christ on earth. If both are equally the true Church, Christ is teaching through His Church contradictory doctrines. The same thing applies all around. The Salvation Army says that baptism is not necessary; the Baptists say that it is necessary, but only for adults; the Anglican Church says that it is necessary, even for infants also. Are all these equally giving the truth to mankind in the name of Christ? It is impossible.

**502. Whom am I to believe, an educated Protestant minister, or an educated Catholic priest?**

You have no need to believe either of them, taking them merely as educated men. There are educated atheists! Were someone to ask you whether he should believe an educated Protestant minister or an educated atheist, you would advise him to believe the Protestant minister. And you would be influenced by the thought, not of their education, but of the teaching they represented. Knowing Christianity to be true, you would prefer it to atheism. The same principle must be applied in the case you give. Apart from their relative education, you must consider the religions represented by the Protestant minister and the Catholic priest. But I must warn you that the Protestant minister really represents only his own views. No Protestant Church has any official body of doctrines which it can impose even upon its own ministers. But the Catholic priest does not give merely his own views. He speaks in the name of that vast international Catholic Church which alone can trace herself back to Christ, and which alone speaks as conscious of a divine commission to teach all mankind.

**503. For some time I have realised the truth of the Catholic Church, and I have become dissatisfied with my own religion.**

Your realization that the Catholic Church is the true Church is due to God's enlightening grace; and as a natural consequence any non-Catholic form of religion must seem inadequate and unable to satisfy the needs of your soul.

**504. The Catholic Church, however, seems such a hard one to live up to, and I don't think I have the courage required.**

I admit that the Catholic Church imposes many obligations ignored by other Churches. But how can the true religion of a crucified Master be a comfortable one from a natural point of view? If human nature has to be sanctified, many of its natural inclinations must be mortified. So our Lord said, "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." You see, He does not deny that it means a cross. Yet, knowing the power of the grace He gives us, He says, "My yoke is sweet, and My burden light." It is a yoke, and it is a burden; but the one who courageously accepts the obligations of a Catholic will find such peace of soul and patience that it is more than worth while. Thus our Lord says, "My peace I give unto you - not as the world gives peace do I give peace." The world offers us the peace of earthly comfort. The peace of Christ is not that, but it is something far loftier and far more precious. You do not think that you have the courage to take up the cross of becoming a Catholic. Of yourself you have not. But God will supply for your lack of courage if you sincerely ask for additional strength. St. Paul says, "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me." That is true for all of us. So I advise prayer, earnest, fervent, confident, and persevering. And God will give you the graces you need.

**505. Should I decide to become a Catholic, what must I do?**

You should go to the nearest Catholic rectory and ask the priest to instruct and prepare you for your reception into the Church, or at least to arrange for your instruction. He will do so gladly.

## CHAPTER NINE

### **The Church and the Bible**

#### Catholic Belief in the Bible

**506. Does the Catholic Church accept the Bible absolutely as the very Word of God?**

Yes, as the various Books left the hands of the original writers. Various texts in the Bible itself say that they are spoken or written with the authority and under the influence of God Himself. Moreover, the supernatural character of the Bible stands out in vivid contrast when compared with the teachings of other religious documents. The fact also that the Jews always accepted the Old Testament as the Word of God, and that Christians have also accepted both Old and New Testaments for so many centuries argues to the truth of their divine inspiration. For such a conviction cannot be due to any merely human influence. Nor must we appeal only to the fact of belief in the Bible by so many diverse peoples, including men of the greatest intelligence. The Bible has had the most extraordinary effect upon the lives of men, giving rise to spiritual experiences such as no other books have occasioned. It is not that the Bible has produced a fleeting condition of religious exaltation only. It has produced permanent transformations of character which are facts to be accounted for just as the facts of chemistry or geology or of any other science. That the Bible should have such an extraordinary effect as compared with other books is intelligible if it is the Word of God; not otherwise. Finally, the Catholic Church, with her infallible teaching authority, teaches that the Bible is inspired and that it is indeed the Word of God. And she also tells us what Books comprise the Bible.

**507. Is it true that Catholics must not read Protestant translations of the Bible?**

It is true that Catholics are forbidden to read Protestant Versions of the Bible. Sacred Scripture is so important, and is entitled to such reverence that the Catholic Church permits to her subjects only such translations as she herself is able to guarantee to be substantially correct. English-speaking Catholics have their own Douay Version provided for their use. The Protestant scholar Scrivener said of the Douay Version, "Its scrupulous fidelity and exactness are its best recommendation. It is an act of justice to recognize that none of us has ever been able to reproach its translators with any willful alteration of the Scriptures." Catholics are obliged in conscience, therefore, to use the Catholic, and not the Protestant Version. This is a disciplinary law of the Church to which they owe obedience; and violation of that law is, of course, sinful.

**508. Many good Roman Catholics have confessed to me that they have never read or heard a line of Scripture.**

That is not true. No Catholic can attend Mass on Sundays without hearing the appointed sections of Scripture. Private reading of Scripture is not of obligation with Catholics, though it is recommended as a devotional practice, and fulfilled by many.

**509. I think it is appalling that people should not read the Word of God for themselves.**

How then did multitudes of Christians manage through so many centuries before the invention of the printing press, when it was impossible for them all to secure copies? They were not the worse Christians for that. They were taught by the Catholic Church. And the Catholic Church still teaches the Christian religion to her subjects with such success that Catholics have much clearer, more definite, and more accurate notions of Christianity than any of those who rely only on their own reading of the Bible.

**510. How can one know all that is necessary if one does not read Scripture day by day?**

We can know all that is necessary to believe and to do by being taught by that Catholic Church which Christ sent to teach all nations. It is not necessary to read Scripture in order to obtain this knowledge; and those who do read Scripture, making it the sole source of their knowledge, more often than not do not succeed in learning the essentials of Christianity. Those who maintain the necessity of reading the Bible limit the efficacy of Christianity in an impossible way. For thus millions and millions of Christians could not have known the essentials of Christianity before the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century; and the illiterate could never have a chance of knowing the truths necessary for salvation, owing to their inability to read! The reading of Scripture is not, and never was intended by Christ to be man's guide in the great affair of salvation. He intended man's guide to be the teaching Church He founded and commissioned to teach all men in His name. And men have ever been able to turn to the Catholic Church for the necessary information in all ages.

**511. We Protestants believe that each man should read the Bible for himself and accept the truth he discovers in its pages.**

That is an unsound principle. Many men fail to understand the true meaning of the Bible, and still more read wrong meanings into it. Thus St. Peter says that there are many things in Scripture hard to be understood which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction. The very fruits of such private interpretation should be sufficient proof that God could never have intended such a method. For men have made the Bible support the most opposite doctrines and have established hundreds of distinct and irreconcilable sects, each claiming to represent the true religion of Christ. God could never have intended a principle which would lead to such chaos.

**512. In Acts XVII, 11, St. Paul commends the Bereans because they eagerly searched the Scriptures to see whether the things preached to them were so.**

The passage excludes the very conclusion you wish to draw from it. The Berean Jews are commended as opposed to the Thessalonian Jews because the Berean Jews at least listened to the Gospel and examined references to the Scriptures where the Thessalonians would not give any attention, but persecuted the preachers of the Gospel of Christ. But the passage you quote commends their eager interest, not their searching of the Scriptures as such. Nor can the passage possibly be interpreted as favoring private interpretation as a guide to truth. The Berean Jews turned to the Scriptures to see if what was said of Christ as the Messiah was true. Yet with what result? The very next verse after the one you quote tells us that "many indeed believed." Many, not all, of those who so eagerly scanned the Scriptures, discovered the truth and received the grace of the Christian faith. Those who failed to believe did not profit much by their reliance on private interpretation. Their decision for themselves was erroneous! No. Private interpretation is not a sure guide to the truth, and Christ wisely established an infallible Church to be the guide of men in matters of religion. The Jews of Berea who were converted accepted wholeheartedly and persevered in the teaching of the Apostles.

**513. If other students of the Bible differ from you in their interpretations, they have a right to their own views.**

Neither they nor I have any right to adopt any interpretation of the Bible which is opposed to that officially taught by the Catholic Church. The Bible itself says that no Scripture is of private interpretation, and also that the Church is the "pillar and ground of truth." The idea that each man has a right to his own private interpretations of Scripture is anti-Scriptural.

**514. Peter says that "no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation," but he adds, "for the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. I., 20-21. You leave out those last words which show that he refers to the prophets, not to ordinary readers.**

The last words you quote do not qualify the preceding verse as you think. There is no doubt whatever that St. Peter warns against private interpretation in verse 20, giving the reason in verse 21. The sense is as follows: "Do not presume to think you may privately interpret Scripture for yourself. If Scripture were merely the result of natural human thought, it would be different. But it is not the result of merely human thought. The holy writers were inspired by God-and it is the Spirit of God, not your own reasoning, which can dictate the true sense." That Spirit of God operates through the Catholic Church, the appointed and authentic religious guide of men. In the same Epistle, III., 16, St. Peter obviously shows that he was opposed to private interpretation when he says that there are many things in Scripture hard to be understood, and which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction.

**515. When we read Scripture we have only to be led by the Holy Spirit.**

By what test do you decide that it is really the Holy Spirit leading you? How do you know that you do not just think what you want to think, and then persuade yourself that it must be right because you think it, and that your opinion must be the voice of the Holy Spirit? Other people, just as sincere, arrive at other conclusions. Why would it be wiser to accept your verdict rather than theirs? All kinds of strange religions have been given to the world by men who have declared with the utmost confidence that the Holy Spirit is responsible for their ideas. St. John warns us: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, if they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into this world." And he adds, "He that heareth not us, is not of God. By this we know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error." 1 Jn. IV., 6. St. John appeals to the teaching of the Apostles as constituting the teaching Church - that Catholic Church of which Christ said, "If a man will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen." That Church we Catholics hear and obey.

**516. Has the ordinary reader no chance whatever of arriving at the correct sense of Scripture?**

In very many isolated passages of Scripture he could certainly do so. In a great many passages he would scarcely be able to do so. In many others he would have no chance at all. There is no doubt whatever that the Bible is one of the most difficult books to understand. One needs a vast knowledge of ancient languages, history, and customs; and must be quite at home with Hebrew and Greek allegorical, metaphorical, and typical expressions, quite apart from the spiritual insight required to penetrate the loftiest mysteries. How many individuals are thus qualified? The untrained lack the historical and philological formation necessary to appreciate the true sense of what is written, and therefore make isolated texts mean what they wish, without adverting to either context or parallel passages. In the "Merchant of Venice" Shakespeare puts upon the lips of Bassanio the famous words, "In religion, what damned error, but some sober brow will bless it, and approve it with a text."

**517. Even though he were to fail here and there, could not the average reader gain a knowledge from the Bible of the whole body of Christian doctrine in general?**

That would not be possible, for Christian doctrine in its totality is not to be found in Scripture. Much of Christian doctrine is contained not in Scripture but in tradition; and a clear understanding of Christian doctrine requires in many cases the precise definitions of the Catholic Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Value of Tradition and the "Fathers"

**518. Tell me this. Are all Roman Catholic doctrines founded upon the Scriptures?**

Not all Catholic doctrines are to be found in the Bible. But none of them is opposed to any teaching of Scripture. Some Catholic doctrines are found directly recorded in Scripture; others are logically derived from teachings recorded there; others are founded upon divine tradition. Scripture itself guarantees divine tradition to be a sound source of doctrine. Thus St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle." 2 Thess. II., 14. The traditions which the early Christians learned by word, and which were not included in the New Testament writings, have been preserved in the Catholic Church.

**519. It seems to me that Catholics are guided by their Church, and not by the Bible.**

You cannot separate the two like that. It is true that Catholics are guided by what their Church teaches. It would not be true to say or imagine that they are not guided by the Bible; for all that is taught in the Bible is included in the teaching of the Catholic Church. Any notion that there is opposition between the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Bible is due to either a wrong idea of Catholic teaching, or of the meaning of Sacred Scripture.

**520. To my mind the Bible is a sufficient guide, without the need of anything else.**

You would not have the Bible save for the Catholic Church. Also, not all that God has revealed is contained in the Bible. And yet more, the Bible cannot be a sufficient guide when it requires another guide to explain its meaning. Remember that the first Christians owed their faith, not to the Gospels, but to the Church. The divine authority of the Church was the first fact as far as men were concerned in the order of proof. Before a line of the New Testament was written it was the Church that preached Christ to the first converts. Jesus commanded no writings, but told the Apostles to preach the truth, saying, "Teach all nations." And He promised them, "He who hears you, hears Me." The Apostles had to win belief in themselves and in their mission before they could win belief in their Master. It was on their testimony that the first converts

believed in Christ. Had you lived then, and had you gone to one of the Apostles demanding proof from the written Word, he would have been quite unable to provide proof from Gospels which had not yet been written! He would have said to you, "Such is the unanimous teaching of the Apostles as we have received it from Christ." And either you would have accepted the teaching authority of the Church represented by the Apostles, or you would have been without the Christian faith.

**521. But we do possess the Gospels now, and we cannot go against them.**

Of course, granted our possession now of the New Testament, we must accept all that is written there in the sense intended by God, and nothing which contradicts that sense. But the New Testament contains only part of the Christian message to the world. There are doctrines over and above those contained in the written fragmentary Books of the New Testament. And for such doctrines we must rely upon the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church - traditions preserved from the very beginning.

**522. Are words of Christ extant other than found in the New Testament?**

No. We have no other records of the exact words of Christ save those contained in the New Testament.

**523. Does the Catholic Church recognize any instruments not found within its Bible, with the degree of solemnity as if they were?**

Besides the Bible, the Catholic Church recognizes the divinely safeguarded tradition which has been preserved and transmitted in the Church. You must remember that Christ Himself established tradition as the main vehicle by which His teachings would be preserved in the Church and communicated to men. He did not expressly order any Gospels to be written. He demanded faith in His doctrines as they were preached by word of mouth. Before the New Testament was written, the only rule of faith was the oral teaching of the Apostles. Later on, part of the knowledge possessed by the Apostles was committed to writing, but part only. Not all revealed truth was written down. The divine teaching has been preserved and handed down completely in the Catholic Church, both by that section written in the New Testament, and by that section of revealed truth which was not committed to writing, but which is declared by the living voice of the Church. For example, which Books of Scripture are canonical, the very inspiration of those Books, the teachings on infant baptism, or on the matter and form of the Sacraments, and many other things, are known to us by the traditional and living voice of the Church only. But, as I have pointed out, Christ intended that, for He did not order anything to be written, but established His Church and sent it to teach all nations what He had revealed, and its applications in practice.

**524. Why do you rely so much on the testimony of those whom you call the "Early Fathers"?**

Because they were men of undoubted learning and holiness, and lived in times much nearer to the days of the Apostles than ourselves. Being men of learning, they knew the truly Christian outlook prevailing during the years immediately prior to their own age, and throughout the whole Church during their own lifetime. Being men of great holiness, their integrity in setting down the truth is above suspicion. And being in close proximity to the days of the Apostles themselves, they were ever so much better fitted than ourselves to judge the nature of Christianity as first given to humanity. Above all are the early Fathers worthy of credence when their independent writings are unanimous in declaring the teachings and practices of early Christianity. Any later teachings which will not harmonize with their verdict would obviously be a corruption of the Christian religion.

**525. If the New Testament is not the supreme authority for Catholics, why do you use it alone on many occasions to prove your contentions?**

When I say that the New Testament is not the supreme authority, I am referring to it, not in itself, but as a source of doctrine to various individuals. As the Word of God, it possesses supreme authority in its right sense. But as individual readers are quite liable to get the wrong sense, they must be guided by the authority

of the teaching Church if they desire certainty as to what the New Testament means. The authority of the Church is not; above that of Scripture; but it is above that of the individual judgment as to what Scripture means. Since the New Testament is of supreme authority in itself and in its right sense, I am justified in using it as proof. Then, too, when I am talking to people who profess to accept Scripture only, I am quite justified in showing that what they think to be in Scripture is not there; and also in showing them that many things are there to which they have never adverted. There is a difference between admitting that Scripture is the only authority; and making use of the only authority other people will accept.

#### Guidance of the Church is Necessary

#### **526. Do you ask us to believe in a Church which will perish rather than in the Word of God which will endure forever?**

No. We ask you to continue to believe in the Word of God, but completely; and therefore to believe in a Church that will not perish. For, according to the Word of God, Christ said, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." You must therefore believe in that imperishable Church; and the Catholic Church alone can be that Church.

#### **527. Do you imagine that the Catholic Church only has arrived at a true understanding of the Gospels?**

That is not a correct presentation of the Catholic position. There is no question of the Catholic Church "arriving at" a true understanding of the Gospels. Before a line of them was written, Christ had established His Church, taught her His essential doctrines, sent the Spirit of Truth upon her at Pentecost, and commissioned her to go and to teach all nations orally and with authority, just as He had taught orally and with authority. Later on, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, the Books of the New Testament were written. Now, as one and the same Holy Spirit could not contradict Himself, it is certain that nothing in the Gospels will contradict the official teachings of the Catholic Church. If independent people arrive at an interpretation of the Bible which conflicts with the official teaching of the Catholic Church, then they are mistaken, and have arrived at a wrong meaning.

#### **528. Why can't Catholics be trusted to read the Bible for themselves?**

They can be, and they are. But they are warned that their interpretation of what they read will be wrong unless it be in harmony with the teachings of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is the one safe guide as to what Scripture means.

#### **529. Are not Catholics mentally intelligent enough to decide for themselves?**

No degree of merely natural mental fitness is a guarantee that one will be able to discern for himself the correct sense of all that is contained in the Bible. That should be evident from the conflicting conclusions at which even highly educated men arrive concerning its meaning. St. Paul says clearly, "We speak, not in the learned words of human wisdom, but in the doctrine of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man perceiveth not these things which are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined." 1 Cor. II., 14. Natural intelligence is not capable of comprehending supernatural truth. And the teaching of the Catholic Church is the only real safeguard as to the meaning of Sacred Scripture. Ever we must come back to that in the end.

#### **530. You can no more interpret Scripture for me than you can eat my dinner for me.**

It is true that I can no more make you assimilate mentally and spiritually the true doctrine contained in Scripture than I can make food nourish you when you yourself do not eat that food. But, as a qualified cook could prepare food for you better than you could prepare it for yourself, so I am able to put the truth of

Scripture before you as you could never discover it for yourself. I at least have given years to the study of Scripture, both privately and under qualified professors, after a long training in cognate subjects. And I have the authentic decisions of the Catholic Church always at hand for constant reference. Would you say to a trained attorney, "You can no more interpret the law for me than eat my dinner for me"? Yet the interpretation of the revealed Law of God is more difficult than the interpretation of civil law. You must remember, too, that even though it is my duty to know the authoritative teachings of the Catholic Church, I am as subject to the authority of that Church as anyone else. I do not speak in my own name, but in that of the Catholic Church; nor do I ask others to do that which I am not obliged to do myself. It is not really a question of your being taught by me. We must both be taught by the Catholic Church.

## CHAPTER TEN

### **The Dogmas of the Catholic Church**

#### Dogmatic Certainty

**531. Can you dogmatically assert that the Catholic Church teaches truth any more than I can disprove it?**

You certainly cannot disprove it; and your own principles compel you to admit that you cannot. I can and do assert with absolute certainty that the Catholic Church teaches the truth.

**532. Do you assert this because of superior intelligence, better reasoning powers, or faith?**

I would not say because of superior intelligence or more accurate reasoning powers. Had you studied the same data, and had the same years of training as have been my lot, you might manifest much greater ability in dealing with the subject. Therefore, I base my assertion on better acquaintance with philosophy, history, Scripture, and theology—a knowledge I willingly restrict to the religious field. In addition to that, the light of faith, a faith justified by a solid rational groundwork, is of immense assistance. For it is a power of comprehension given by God, who can enlighten the mind interiorly to perceive the truth even as a human teacher can communicate intelligible light to his pupils.

#### Credal Statements

**533. Christianity is a way of life, not a dogmatic statement of faith.**

It is difficult to follow your line of thought. Do you imagine that the moment a man makes a statement of his Christian Faith he must abandon a Christian way of life? Or that, if one attempts a Christian way of life, he is at once forbidden to make any statement of his Christian Faith? Christianity is a religion revealed by God to teach us the full truth about our eternal and supernatural destiny, and to give us the means of attaining that destiny through Christ who is the heart and soul of that religion. The effect of that religion, if we accept it, try to put its precepts into practice, and use its means of grace is a spiritual and Christian way of life midst our present circumstances and duties. And part of that way of life is our obligation to believe all that God has revealed because He has revealed it.

**534. Essential Christianity cannot be the acceptance of a creed drawn up by fallible men.**

The Catholic Church agrees. We must not accept from fallible men what we are to believe; nor can the mere acceptance of any creed be essential Christianity. Yet, whilst essential Christianity is not the mere



acceptance of a creed, the acceptance of a creed is essential to Christianity. For we must accept teachings essential to Christianity, and that means the acceptance of a creed. The creed to be accepted, of course, must not be one drawn up by fallible men. It must be presented to us by an infallible Church, acting in virtue of the power and protection of the Holy Ghost, as were the Apostles when they said of their decision, "It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

**535. We must not rob Christianity of its vitality and dynamic.**

That is true. But the acceptance of a creed will not do that provided one lives up to the teachings of Christianity, fulfills its duties of worship, and obeys its laws. One who does this will find his religion full of vitality and dynamic. It is a mistake, however, to think that, because the mere acceptance of a creed is not enough, therefore, the acceptance of a creed is not necessary.

**536. Christianity is for all times.**

That is true; but it must remain Christianity. There are those who want to change its teachings who really want Christianity to be for a past age, and who desire to provide a new religion for this age. It is rather a mystery why they wish to retain the name of Christianity for their new set of teachings. Meantime, their very modernism robs Christianity of its vitality and dynamic. William Force Stead, a Protestant, has recently written in his book, "In the Shadow of Mt. Carmel," as follows: "While other Christian Communion have been sedulously bowing to the spirit of the age, with the studied politeness of a courtier, and with something of a courtier's eye to obtaining favors, the Roman Church stands erect and bows to no man." At its beginning Christianity was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. So it has remained. This modern world is full of Jews and Greeks. The modernist theologian turns to the Jew and says, "Look, we have removed the stumbling block"; and to the Greek, "Behold, we have removed the foolishness." But, somehow or other, in response to all this tampering with creeds and dogmas, Mr. Stead remarks that "the Jews and the Greeks are not very interested."

**537. Creeds are of value only insofar as they help men to think clearly, honestly, and comprehensively.**

No one can object to any man thinking clearly, honestly, and comprehensively. But the one point you overlook is the propensity of men to think wrongly, either because they do not advert to all the relevant facts when they commence thinking, or because they wrongly imagine certain things to be facts which are not facts, or because they fail in logic during their process of thought. The real value of the creeds lies in their power to preserve men from falling into error through one or all of these causes.

**538. Creeds are a drag on progress when they become tests of orthodoxy.**

They hinder one's progressing along wrong lines; and they exist precisely for that. But no sensible person wants to progress along wrong lines.

**539. They may help a man in his approach to reality; but they set out the truth about Jesus as it was seen by fallible men of other days.**

If one is free to believe the creeds mistaken, and does so, how could he be of any help in the approach to truth and reality? One does not help others towards the truth by giving them wrong explanations. And certainly Christ did not establish His Church for that perverse purpose. If the Catholic Creeds merely give what fallible men thought to be the truth about Jesus in other days, then they may not have represented the truth about Jesus at all. Such a statement is a denial of the infallible teaching authority of the Catholic Church; and no one who believes in the Church in the Catholic sense of the word could possibly accept such views.

**540. We must believe in Christ, not in any statement about Him.**

Do you mean that we are to believe in a Christ about whom no definite statements can be made with any certainty at all? And why should we do even that much? Truly, modernism ends in a morass.

**541. What is the origin of the Apostles' Creed?**

The Apostles' Creed is a summary statement of the main teachings of the Apostles. The Apostles themselves did not compose it. It was drawn up after their death, in order to embody in a brief rule of faith the substance of their teaching. The first and earliest forms of this Creed appear in the second century. But it went through various arrangements and reconstructions in order to exclude new errors and heresies, until it finally assumed the present form in the fifth century. There is no doubt as to its value and authority, nor as to the fact that its contents are derived from the preaching of the Apostles themselves.

Faith and Reason

**542. Are not many eternal truths the fruit of development of human thinking from the dawn of recorded history?**

I would not deny that human reason is capable of arriving at many natural aspects of eternal truth. Nor would I deny that the findings of previous generations provide a starting point for further discussions and discoveries by subsequent generations. But, in addition to aspects of eternal truth discoverable by reason, there are other aspects not discoverable by reason, and certainly not the fruit of natural mental development on the part of mankind. If they are known to men today, it is only because God Himself stepped in at a given moment in history and revealed them. Such, for example, is our knowledge of the Trinity of Persons in God, and of the fact that the Second Divine Person became man, appearing in our midst as Jesus Christ.

**543. What puzzles me is how anyone can believe at all in creeds and dogmas which are against reason.**

That is not surprising. I would be puzzled too. No sane and well-informed man could believe in dogmas or creeds opposed to what is really reasonable. But what is really reasonable is not to be identified with what ill-informed and unreasonable people may think to be reasonable.

**544. Do you consider the religion of the Bible to be compatible with reason?**

The religion which is based upon the correct sense of the Bible is entirely compatible with sound reason. I hold no brief for the various forms of non-Catholic religion which men mistakenly believe to be in accordance with Scripture. Nor do I hold that even the right interpretation of the Bible will be in accord with what every man chooses to call the dictates of reason. Unreasonable propositions are often thought to be reasonable by the illogical and the untrained. Then, too, many people confuse the imagination with reason. But reason often demands the admission of things we cannot imagine. I have heard many a man commence a sentence with the words, "It stands to reason," and then go on to talk utter nonsense in the name of the reason he first invoked. The revelation of the Bible rightly understood will never conflict with reason rightly used.

**545. To Catholics who are not allowed to think for themselves your doctrines may seem all right.**

Whoever put the idea into your head that Catholics are not allowed to think for themselves? Of course, they are allowed to think for themselves! God expects them to use the intelligence He gave them, and the Catholic Church expects it also. We priests are constantly urging our own people, "For the love of God,

think!" On religious matters, however, when people begin to think wrongly, the Catholic Church says, "You must not think that, for what I teach on such subjects is the truth." Whilst people are free to think for themselves, they are not always free to think whatever they like. Christ certainly did not leave people free to think whatever they liked. He spoke with authority, saying, "You have heard it said . . . but I say unto you." He demanded that His listeners accept His teachings, whatever their own ideas might otherwise be. Christian faith is not faith in what one thinks out for oneself, but faith in what God has revealed through Christ and what is taught in the name of Christ by the Catholic Church.

**546. It strikes me that unbelief is the domain reserved for thinking people, whilst Catholicism is for people who delight in fairy tales.**

Every man, who has not ceased to be human, "delights" in fairy tales, if they do credit to a creative imagination, and are well told. But to delight in fairy tales is not necessarily to believe them to be real descriptions of actual events. Nor have fairy tales anything to do with Catholicism as such. If ever a religion fitted in with common sense, it is Catholicism; and it is the only religion which does fit in with common sense. At the same time, it surpasses common sense insofar as the God with whom it is concerned surpasses finite and created man. A God on our own level, and able to do no more than we could do, would be no God at all. Meantime, unbelief is a domain reserved for people who think wrongly, or for those who, if they do think rightly, select unimportant affairs which have little bearing on religion and on the graver issues of life. The domain of unbelief is also reserved for people who do not think at all, as well as for minerals, vegetables, and animals. It includes all who cannot believe, and all who will not believe.

**547. If you analyze yourself correctly, you will find that you ceased to think from the day you became a Catholic!**

I do not know that these talks indicate a man who has ceased to think. But if you wish to speak of a fairy-tale mentality, what is the mentality of one who takes it for granted that a man who became a Catholic some twenty-five years ago ceased to think from that moment? You have no evidence whatever for that judgment. You believe it because you want to believe it, just as a child believes a toad to be a princess in disguise. Your interest in trying to explain away my becoming a Catholic, and your method of doing so, I quite understand. If the Catholic Church be true, it is most uncomfortable for those who do not accept it. Therefore, converts to that Church must be explained away. The easiest way to do this is to accuse them of utter brainlessness. And it is a consoling idea, because it contains an implicit compliment to your own superior powers of thought. But it doesn't work with the impartial, even though they themselves do not subscribe to Catholicism.

**548. Leaving out factors of ignorance and worldly advantages, could a Catholic study theology so well as to prefer another faith to his own?**

No man could study theology so well as to be led to abandon the Catholic Church. He would have studied it very badly, did he arrive at such a decision. But we can ask whether a Catholic has ever studied theology so deeply as to doubt and finally abandon the Catholic Church. As the question stands I say no. Deep study of theology as such could never lead from the Catholic Church. But other factors could enter into the case. A man could plunge into the deep study of theology, yet fail in piety and prayer, thus depriving himself of the influence of grace. That could be followed by a failure in humility and a tendency to isolated thinking with no allowance for the guidance of the Church. More and more such a man could consciously abandon himself to the dangers of self-sufficiency, until his eccentric subjectivism sapped his clear appreciation of essential obligations. It is easy to see that it would be possible for him to arrive at the wrong conviction that he should abandon the Catholic Church. And I believe that some men have been led by a badly regulated study of theology, coupled with neglect of grace and a failure in humility, to abandon the Catholic Church. They have got themselves into such a mental tangle that they no longer discern the true sense of Scripture,

the verdict of history, and the demands of logic. But, even for them, the ultimate cause of their defection would lie, not in the intellectual, but in the moral sphere. And their loss of faith would not be free from sin.

**549. By using his reason he is merely using a power given him by God.**

By using his hands to throttle his victim the murderer is merely using a power given him by God. Reason can be used badly just as any other power. Human reason is not infallible. Every thought that comes into a man's head is not necessarily correct. It is absurd to believe that just because a man thinks a thing, it must necessarily be so. Though reason is a gift of God, it is no more exempt from submission to God's law than any other gift of God. And it is God's law that the human mind must accept what He declares to be true on the simple ground that He who is Truth itself has made the declaration. Man guiltily forgets his place, and proudly denies the obvious limitations of his finite intelligence, if he tells God that he doesn't think it true, and, therefore, will not believe it.

**550. Will you not admit that it is much easier to believe all that one is told?**

Not for thinking men. And if we restrict "all that one is told" to matters of religion, it is much easier to drop one's religious beliefs than to keep them; and having dropped them for want of thought, it is much easier to stay without them than to get them back. There is a mental laziness as well as bodily fatigue. And it takes no effort to take stones, vegetables, and animals for granted, and see nothing at all beyond them. You have but to hold your eyes open in order to see chalk-marks, but you have to be mentally alert to discern the sense of the writing on the wall. Again, it is easier to follow the lines of least resistance, obeying strong but blind instincts, than to adopt the Catholic program of self-control. Flippant and soft views of life are easier than serious and severer estimates.

The Voice of Science

**551. Do you even know the difficulties which reasoning and scientific men have proposed against the Catholic Church?**

I know the difficulties urged by all and sundry as motives for the refusal of submission to the Catholic Church. For the most part they are not proposed by reasonable and scientific men. The majority of the difficulties urged are based on guesswork, gratuitous assertions, contradictions in terms, errors in fact, and absurdities by the score. In nearly every case the objector has not even bothered to get right notions of the doctrine he wishes to assail. When he does get right notions, his objection falls to pieces.

**552. You have spoken of "sane reasons." Pope Pius XI. spoke of the "diabolical reasoning" of Communists. What is the difference between reason, sane reason, and diabolical reason?**

Reason is the intellectual power possessed by men enabling them to distinguish between the true and the false, the good and the bad. But man can use his reason to good or bad purpose. So we have a sane use of reason, or a warped use of reason. Sane reason makes sure of its facts and the validity of its logic in its deductions from those facts. Warped reason jumps at conclusions that are convenient, without bothering to make sure of things taken for granted, or that it is observing the laws of logic. That concerns the true and the false. But reason also enables a man to distinguish between the good and the bad; and it can therefore be used on behalf of the good or the bad. For example, the doctor uses his reason to discover what will benefit his patient. That is a good use of reason. A murderer uses his reason to plan his crime, and to discover means of avoiding detection. That is a diabolical use of reason. Now the Pope applied the term "diabolical reasoning" to that use of the intelligence which is calculated to destroy faith and love of God, to destroy man's hope of eternal happiness, to set itself up as the supreme and self-sufficient guide, to offer men a materialistic destiny on this earth only, to deny the right of man to possess property sanctioned by God's commandment. "Thou shalt not steal." This use of reason to repudiate dependence on God and the obligation of His law is diabolical; for it is based on the very cry of Satan, "I will not serve."

**553. Science has never yet accepted such a thing as a soul.**

Multitudes of scientific men are firmly convinced of the existence of the soul. They may not accept the fact as having been demonstrated by experimental science, though some do. But no really scientific men hold that "experimental science" is the only available means of discovering the truth. Sir Oliver Lodge claims to have experimental proof of the existence of the soul, not only in the living human body, but in a state of separation from it. Yet even if you do not accept his verdict, "experimental science" can give not a vestige of proof that there is no soul. True scientists accept as proved all that experimental science has demonstrated. But they accept also many other things as certain both on the grounds of history and of reason. It is scientific to demand a proportionate cause in order to account for effects already known. And both physiologically and psychologically we have abundant evidence proving the existence of the soul.

**554. If there was any chance of uncovering proof of a future life science would have interested itself long before this.**

Science has interested itself in psychical research based upon the sensibly manifested phenomena of spiritism in its various phases. Of these phenomena Lord Rayleigh, President of the British Association, said: "I find it difficult to believe the folly and fraud theory of these occurrences; but failing that one must admit the possibility of much that contrasts strongly with ordinary experience." Having a truly scientific temperament, he is a little more modest than those who know so much less.

**555. How you people can accept subdivisions of the better world is beyond all comprehension.**

The "other" world is not necessarily the "better" world. But we can let that go. It is certainly true that we do seriously accept different states in the next life, despite your inability to comprehend our doing so. You admit the fact that we do so, and also that it is beyond your comprehension. That is something. And as there is at least one thing certain despite your not being able to comprehend it, you will find, if you progress, that there are yet other things beyond your comprehension which are similarly true.

**556. Science has not established these different subdivisions; therefore they do not exist. They are but myths.**

In order to prove by science that these subdivisions are myths, it is not enough to say that science has not established them. There was a time when science had not established the existence of Neptune. But that planet was not a myth. To gain your point you must show that science has positively proved that there is no other world, and no different phases of it. Until that is done you act in a very unscientific way when you deny them. At most you could say that they may or may not be.

**557. For that matter, science has never proved the existence of God. Experimental science has neither proved nor disproved the existence of God.**

But it is most unscientific to restrict all evidence to evidence of a particular kind, and to entertain a blind and credulous faith that nothing exists unless it can be discovered with a telescope or by chemical analysis. Speaking of this subject, Lord Rayleigh said, "Surely it is a proposition which I need not pause to refute that the lifelong beliefs of Newton, Faraday, and of Maxwell are inconsistent with the scientific habit of mind." Lord Kelvin said, "Science positively affirms creative power, which it compels us to accept as an article of faith."

**558. Science scorns belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary.**

It does not. And it cannot really deal with the question. Do you know what the Immaculate Conception means? It means that Mary the Mother of Christ was never contaminated by the stigma of original sin inherited from our first parents. You don't believe in original sin at all, nor in its derivation to mankind. Whilst, therefore, I believe in the Immaculate Conception of Mary, you believe in the immaculate conception of everybody; for you believe that nobody is contaminated by original sin.

#### Fate of Rationalists

**559. Are we fatally in error in rejecting statements on religion which do not meet with our approval?**

Not always. But very often it is so. Reason has both extensive and intensive limits. It is limited as to the number of things it can know, and in the power of penetration it can bring to bear upon them. The specialist is a man who has had to abandon many avenues of knowledge in order to concentrate on a few things. And on his death-bed he himself would gladly admit that he does not know all about even the few things in which he specialized. Still the average man would not dispute the findings of the specialist. He would be indignant if any other average man disputed the views of the specialist. But in the field of religion he himself would feel free to air his views to all and sundry, though never had he specialized in either philosophy or theology. Instinctively he mistrusts his own knowledge and reasoning capacity in other matters, but not in religion. It is a peculiar phenomenon of the human being.

**560. We rationalists object to your branding us as guilty because of our unbelief. That in itself proves your religion unreasonable.**

In what way?

**561. Contrast a good rationalist with a bad Catholic. If the Catholic commits every possible crime you say that he is saved if he repents at the last.**

If he repents at last there is one possible crime that he has not committed. For he has not died unrepentant. However we can let that go. It is a fact that, no matter what his crimes, a Catholic who dies repentant, and with the Sacraments of the Church, will save his soul. He will, of course, expiate his multiplied sins in purgatory; and will thus find that, though he has attained salvation, the multiplication of his sins was not a thing that did not matter. You may say, "But all the same, he is saved." But remember the conditions. I have said, "If he repents, and receives the Sacraments." That little "if" forbids presumption, and checks any tendency to throw oneself into a life of continued sin. For what man can say that he will have time to repent; or that he will suddenly develop the good dispositions necessary to correspond with such graces as God does offer him; or that his plan to receive the Sacraments at the last will be realized? All these considerations tend to make a man think. However if all the conditions are realized, a man will save his soul through God's mercy, no matter how many or great his crimes.

**562. On the other hand a rationalist is condemned to everlasting torment.**

Apart from other factors his fate would depend on his degree of responsibility before God for his unbelief. If he had had no opportunity for sufficient study to discern the truth of the Catholic religion, or was so dense that through no fault of his own he could not perceive its truth despite an effort at impartial consideration, then he would not be held responsible for his unbelief by God. He would be judged on other factors.

**563. I suppose, of course, a rationalist who has led an honest life.**

It is difficult to believe that an intelligent man could regard himself as honest because he acknowledges his debts to his fellow men whilst he refuses to acknowledge any debt to God. However you suppose that he has led what he really believes to be an honest life. If by that you mean that he has never violated his conscience during the whole of his life in any serious matter, there is no need to believe that he is condemned to eternal torment. And, even if he has violated his conscience in such a way, he would be saved did he repent sincerely before death with the help of such graces as God would offer him. Where he would undoubtedly lose his soul would be in the case where he would persist in rejecting the Christian religion despite a conviction that it was indeed from God.

**564. If a believing bad Catholic can be saved whilst an unbelieving good rationalist is lost, then belief is more important than conduct.**

We do not for a moment believe that a believing bad Catholic can be saved. All we maintain is that a believing Catholic who has been bad can be saved provided he becomes good by repentance of his wickedness, and by reception of the grace of Christ before he dies. And that is a very different proposition. Nor do we say that an unbelieving good rationalist is lost. For if he is indeed good, then his unbelief is not his own fault; and we hold that God will not blame him for what is not really his own fault. Your conclusion that belief is more important than conduct is really meaningless. Belief is conduct. Belief and unbelief are merely ways of conducting oneself in the presence of a proposition offered for our consideration. If God declares a thing to be true, then it is most improper conduct to refuse to believe it. On the other hand, belief is correct conduct in such a case. This foolish division between belief and conduct seems to be based on the idea that kind conduct towards our fellow men in other matters justifies the outrageous conduct towards God of not caring in the least whether He has revealed any doctrines, or whether they are true or not.

**565. Did Thomas Paine, on his death-bed, renounce his infidel views?**

Thomas Paine cannot strictly be called an infidel. He professed always a firm belief in God, and in the immortality of the human soul. On the very first page of his book attacking all revealed religion he declares that he believes in God, and hopes for eternal happiness. An infidel does not talk like that. His very writings, however, show that he never had any real understanding of the Christian religion, and that he never attained to the gift of faith in that religion as revealed by God. And he died without doing so, insofar as men can judge. He certainly expressed no recantation of his writings against Christianity, and probably died still under the delusion that he had good grounds both in fact and in reason for rejecting that form of religion. Men who mistake fallacies for sound reasoning are little likely to detect their own fallacies. But the chief trouble with Thomas Paine was his colossal ignorance of subjects upon which he took it for granted that he was well-informed. How responsible he was for this attitude before God must be left to God; as also the question of his ultimate fate.

**566. Did Voltaire die screaming for a priest?**

There is no need to bring in the screams. Shortly before his death he asked for a priest, and sought reconciliation with the Catholic Church. The interpretation of his action is very difficult. Much exaggerated nonsense has been given out about Voltaire's dying dispositions by both supporters and opponents of the Christian religion. In one thing certainly Voltaire was sincere. He did not want to be refused Christian burial. But whether he was sincere in complying with the conditions required by the Church is hotly disputed. He never made a full and clear retraction of his blasphemous attacks on Christianity. And it is hard to believe that he really meant such professions of faith as he did make. A man who has indulged for years the habit of malicious mockery of religion does not change his mentality in a moment, unless by a miracle such as Voltaire certainly did not deserve. And it is quite possible that the fruit of a lifetime of deceptions was a last grim and tragic self-deception. But none of these cases proves opposition between reason and revelation, or that there is any conflict between science and the Catholic Faith.

## The Dogma of the Trinity

### **567. When was the doctrine of the Trinity given to man?**

It was given to man explicitly when God sent His Eternal and Only-begotten Son in human form as the Christ in order to give that more perfect revelation of Himself and of His plans for which the Old Testament manifestations were but a preparation.

### **568. It is a vicious circle to prove the Divinity of Christ by quoting the doctrine of the Trinity, and to prove the Trinity by quoting Christ.**

There is no vicious circle. The proof of Christ's Divinity is drawn from quite other sources, independent of the doctrine of the Trinity.

### **569. Prior to the coming of Christ, was anything revealed to the Jews that would justify a belief in the Holy Trinity?**

God had no intention of revealing the doctrine of the Trinity in its fullness to the Jews generally prior to the coming of Christ. However, in the Old Testament, there are many veiled references to the Word of God and to the Spirit of God which could serve as a preparation to men of good will for the full teaching of the New Testament. But actually, although the possibility of the full truth could be inferred, nothing approaching proof could be adduced from the Old Testament without the additional light of the New Testament and Catholic teaching. The Jews, therefore, could not have attained to the knowledge of the Trinity we possess prior to the coming of Christ.

### **570. Before the coming of Christ did not men, seeing the male, female, and offspring principle throughout nature, quite reasonably ascribe these same characteristics to the Author of nature?**

It would be a great mistake to imagine that to be the explanation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Men are, of course, incurably religious. And those without the true religion revealed by God almost of necessity invented religious theories which could not really transcend the human level. So we find male gods, female gods, and their progeny as part of the ancient pagan mythologies. I deny that this introduction of sex-life into the divinity was reasonable. But still it is intelligible. Yet these notions have nothing whatever in common with the Christian Trinity which is purely spiritual, and abstracts from sexual elements altogether. The notions of masculine and feminine cannot be applied to the First and Second Persons; and the Holy Spirit who proceeds from them both is not generated as a result of any "marital" union between them. The ideas you suggest have nothing in common with the Christian doctrine except the number three, and that certainly does not warrant the conclusion that the Trinity is nothing but a variant of the man, woman, and child principle.

### **571. Other men, with equal vehemence, declared the consistent unitarian nature of God.**

I must reject your implication that, whilst the unitarian view is consistent, the trinitarian concept is inconsistent. Again, I must point out that there is no question here of pitting the personal thoughts of unitarians against the personal thoughts of trinitarians. The whole question must be one of objective fact. Did God reveal His trinitarian character to mankind? If so, then the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is right, to whatever other conclusions men's own thoughts may lead them.

### **572. Can a believer in the Trinity on the male, female, and offspring principle claim to be surely right despite the equally reasonable thought of God as one?**



The idea that the Trinity is a development of the male, female, and offspring principle is false. Nor can you contrast believers in the Trinity with those who think of God as one. Trinitarians believe absolutely in God as one. The three Divine Persons possess but one Divine Nature, and our doctrine of the Trinity insists most emphatically on the unity of the Godhead. Here precisely it differs from the pagan myths which, whatever their triad might be, absolutely denied the unity of God. If, however, you wish to contrast the trinitarian belief in three Divine Personalities in the one God with the unitarian denial of those three Personalities, then the trinitarians can surely claim to be right and that unitarianism is wrong.

**573. Osiris, Isis, and Horus are probably as right or as wrong as Jehovah.**

That cannot be admitted. According to Egyptian mythology, Osiris is treacherously slain by a rival god, Set, and descends to the netherworld to become god of the dead. Isis, his sister-wife, posthumously gives birth to a child, Horus, who is the triumphant sun in the heavens avenging his father. Possibly the Egyptians used the male, female, and offspring idea in a primitive dramatization of the sun being slain at night by darkness and rising triumphantly to a new life in the morning. But again there is no resemblance to the Trinity save in the number three. The Christian doctrine was not the slow fruit of speculations based on existing Jewish or pagan ideas. It was the direct revelation of Christ. And to depict Him as a theorizer with other people's opinions is not to write history, but to indulge in fancies opposed to all available evidence.

**574. What precisely is the sense of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity? How is it explained?**

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity means that there are three Divine Personalities possessing the one Divine Nature. The word itself, of course, is but the blending of the two words, "tri-unity." The idea of a unity containing within itself a multiplicity is not very difficult. A single human being is very complex if you begin to analyze him. Now just as you have a human nature, God has a Divine Nature. But, where there are many men, there is but one God; and there can be only one Divine Nature. Yet God is the living God. There is a life in Him who is the Author of life; and life means activity. As you, for example, though silent and still, can be intensely active within yourself, able to be thinking of yourself, and forming an estimate of yourself, so God must be able to know Himself within Himself, and must be capable of a great love following His knowledge of the infinitely Beautiful and Good and True. But this knowledge and love within God must be identified with Him, yet in some way distinct from the source from which they proceed. His knowledge must be the child of Infinite Intelligence, and it must give rise to a Spirit of Infinite Love. And we are told by Christ that in the one God there is a Fatherhood, a Sonship, and a Holy Spirit of Love. And these make three personal relationships within the one Divine Nature.

So we are bidden to baptize in the one name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

**575. Was the Son due to the Primal Will of the Father, or did He have a primordial right to His derived existence?**

Neither of your ideas can be applied to God. You are thinking in human terms which have only analogical application to God, and according to notions of successive priority which are excluded by the eternal simultaneity of God. Also you are attributing to the Divine Persons notions of will and of rights which are proper to one and the same Divine Nature possessed equally by all three Divine Persons, and which cannot be unequally distributed amongst those Persons. You must keep in mind that, if the Son is begotten by the Father, it is not by subsequent communication of being, but by an immanent eternal relationship of Nature. The successive idea that the Father exercised a Primal Will which led to the later origin of the Son is impossible in relation to God. So, too, is any talk of primordial rights in the Son to account for His derivation. The only reason for the Holy Trinity as revealed to us is to be found in the fact that the Divine Nature is what it is. God is the reason for His own existence and for all the conditions of that existence.

**576. If there are gradations of perfection in the spiritual nature of angels and of human souls, surely there is room for gradations of perfection amongst the Persons in the Divine Nature.**

The idea that the Eternal Son could possibly be less perfect than the Eternal Father is absolutely opposed to Christian doctrine. Gradations of perfection are possible only amongst created natures in which limitations are possible. God is not a finite, limited, created Being. He is uncreated, and uniformly perfect in an infinite degree. There is no room for gradation of perfection amongst the uncreated Persons subsisting in the one uncreated Divine Nature.

**577. How can the Trinity be defended against the age-old charge of contradiction?**

You are right in calling it an age-old charge. And you can be quite sure that all the great minds of the ages have met the charge, and have discovered that there was nothing in it. Unity and multiplicity under the same aspects of comparison would, of course, involve contradiction. But not when they are not under the same aspects of comparison. I do not undertake to explain fully the mystery of the Trinity. Could I do so, it would no longer be a mystery. But the absence of contradiction can be shown. For the doctrine does not say that there are three Gods and yet one God; nor does it say that there are three Persons yet one only Person. It says that there is but one God and three Persons. Unity in plurality is not a contradiction. One tree with three branches makes but one tree. But we do not say that the one and the multiple in God are even equally absolute, as is the case with the tree and its branches. The Divine Nature is Absolute; the multiplicity is constituted by pure relations. The absolute exists in itself; the relative does not, but only in dependence upon the absolute. The charge of contradiction does not allow for these divergent aspects, and is, therefore, invalid. A man may or may not believe in the Trinity. But he speaks foolishly when he accuses those who do believe of an absurdity.

Creation and Evolution

**578. Has the Catholic Church any objections to the theories of evolution?**

The Catholic Church does not exclude belief in a moderate and restricted material evolution. Things do evolve. But they have to "be" in order to evolve, and they secured their being by creation. We cannot, therefore, admit any form of the evolutionary theory which excludes God, or which denies dependence on God. In a well-understood system of evolution nature has two means by which it fulfills its work. It can use its initial resources received from the Creator, employing its own innate powers. And again, where its acquired capital does not suffice, it can have recourse to the ever-present God who interferes with His creative power for great changes only, as in the production of life, or of intelligence, and of individual souls. But these questions do not affect religion in practice. Even though a man did know how all things have come into existence, the why of all things would still remain; and God's rights would still have to be maintained. Reason cannot get away from the fact that all is the execution of a plan traced by God's Will; nor can reason get away from the fact that God has intervened in a special way to reveal to mankind its religious obligations.

**579. Scientists like Sir James Jeans say that the earth has evolved slowly through 2000 million years to its present state. May Catholics accept this as a possible or probable theory?**

Catholics are quite free to accept that opinion as an opinion.

**580. If so, how does it square with the Genesis story?**

No difficulty arises in this matter. For whilst Genesis teaches that God created all things out of nothing, it does not say that He created every individual thing in the universe like that. Even if God created a vast original nebula which gradually contracted at certain centers-such as the sun-from which smaller fragments separated, God would still be the Creator of all things, the evolution taking millions of years. The account in Genesis of the origin of all things in no way hinders an explanation allowing for an indefinite expansion of time.

**581. How will you harmonize Genesis with geological records?**

You raise a problem which really does not exist. Three elements enter into the account of creation given by Genesis—the revelation of facts given by God; the expression of those facts in human terms intelligible to the people of the time for whom they were intended; and the arrangement of the matter according to a plan based upon religious motives, i. e., in order to inculcate religious obligations. The sequence is logical, not chronological. The Mosaic account does not pretend to give the exact scientific and objective order.

**582. Can you accept the further theory of many men that human beings evolved from lower forms of life some 300,000 years ago, and for thousands of years were little different from brute beasts?**

Greater difficulties occur when it is a question of the formation of man. That the earth as such took millions of years for its gradual formation can be regarded as scientifically certain. But that man evolved from lower forms of life is pure hypothesis or conjecture, without any real evidence in its favor. Even for man's body, intermediate forms are missing, and strict proof is entirely wanting. The Catholic Church teaches that each man's soul, which is spiritual, is immediately created by God. No Catholic, therefore, can hold that the soul of man is evolved from lower beings. What about man's body? The Catholic Church has not defined as an article of faith that we must believe that God immediately formed the body of the first man. But she says that the whole tenor of Biblical teaching is against its evolution and in favor of immediate creation. It would be rash, therefore, to assert as a fact that man's body evolved until fit for the reception of a rational soul. If, however, the hypothetical guess concerning man's body having evolved were ever proved true—as it probably never will be—such a doctrine, restricted to the body of the first man only, would not necessarily conflict with the Bible. For even then it would have been formed out of the slime of the earth through successive intermediate forms. However, there are weightier reasons against this theory than for it; and the Catholic Church, without defining the question, has given an interim decision of a disciplinary character forbidding Catholics to deny the actual creation of the first man, even bodily. Until the Church gives a further decision in the matter Catholics should hold that both the body and the soul of the first man were due to the special creative activity of God.

**583. Then belief in man's evolution is not incompatible with any dogma of the Catholic Church?**

Belief in man's bodily evolution would not be incompatible with Catholic dogma. But it would be incompatible with science. It is because the really scientific men do not know what to believe as regards man's origin that they propose the theory of evolution as a probable guess which seems to fit in with the few very isolated fragments of apparent evidence they have perceived. More and more, these really scientific men are tending to regard what is termed major evolution as less and less probable, and to confine themselves to a very minor or mitigated evolution.

**584. According to my reading on the subject, the derivation of all forms of life by modification of earlier and simpler forms is accepted by practically the whole scientific world.**

I am afraid you have not read widely and deeply enough. No first-class scientist will admit the derivation of all forms of life from simpler earlier forms to be a fact. They insist that it is no more than a probable guess. Wassmann rightly says, "The doctrine of evolution is not experimental. Man is too late on the scene for that. But there is a probability of a restricted evolution or of a mitigated transformism. To assert, however, that all vegetable forms are from one primitive type, or that all animals are from one primitive type is a delightful dream." Sir Bertram Windle says, "Transformism, however probable, is not proved. Perhaps it never will nor can be."

**585. Darwin's "Descent of Man" proves, to my satisfaction at least, that man and anthropomorphous apes had a common ancestor.**

If so, you must be very easily satisfied. But firstly, you have not quite understood even Darwin. Darwin maintains lineal, not collateral descent. He would not say that man and anthropomorphous apes had a

common ancestor, but rather that man is a direct descendant from anthropomorphous apes. In his book he writes, "The Simiadae then branched off into two great stems, the New World and the Old World monkeys; and from the latter, at a remote period of time, man, the wonder and the glory of the universe, proceeded." Secondly, whilst Darwin's theory appeals to many people as a theory, his attempts to justify it, attempts which have impressed you, have been utterly discredited. That statement is bound to seem extravagant to you, so let me justify it. Professor Bateson, of the British Association, recorded in 1914, "We biologists have come to the conviction that the principle of natural selection cannot have been the chief factor in determining species." Driesch, one of the greatest of German biologists, says, "For men of clear intellect, Darwinism has long been dead." Dwight, Professor of Comparative Anatomy at Harvard University, writes, "We have now the remarkable spectacle that just when many scientific men are all agreed that there is no part of the Darwinian system that is of any great influence, and that as a whole the theory is not only unproved, but impossible, the ignorant, half-educated masses have acquired the idea that it is to be accepted as a fundamental fact." Bumuller, the German scientist, writes, "The testimony of comparative anatomy is decidedly against the theory of man's descent from an ape." In addition to the names I have mentioned, the following men, all first-class scientists, and subsequent to Darwin, reject not only his methods of argument, but also his theory: Ranke, Wundt, Kohlbrugge, Vogt, Caullery, Carazzi, Du Bois-Reymond, Clark-Wissler, Branco, Karl von Zittel, Joseph le Conte, Virchow, Sir William Dawson, Vialleton, T. H. Morgan. Admitting more or less the theory, but rejecting Darwin's proofs, are: Le Dantec, Delage, Cope, Korchinsky, Von Baer, Hartmann, Packard, Jeckel, Haberlandt, Goette, Von Sachs, Kassowitz, Eimer, most of these being Professors of Zoology, Botany, Biology, Palaeontology, Pathology, etc., at their respective Universities of Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Strasbourg, Tubingen, Amsterdam, Stanford, etc.

**586. Are you aware that the human embryo shows that man's ancestors were once water-breathers, and later on hairy quadrupeds?**

Are you aware that Dr. de Beer, in his great work, "Embryology and Evolution," published from Oxford University, has declared that a study of the human embryo, far from showing anything about our ancestry, is really useless for the purpose? Dr. de Beer is not a Catholic. That should be one credential in his favor for you. Also he is an ardent supporter of the evolutionary hypothesis. But he is too scientific to rank a plausible guess as a demonstrated fact. Listen to his words, "There is no logical justification," he writes, "in regarding any embryological stage as evidence of the former existence of such a stage representing an adult ancestor. Equally well might a present adult stage represent an embryological stage of an ancestor. Embryology, therefore, is no guide to philosophy."

**587. Are you aware that man has upwards of one hundred vestigial traces in his body of its undoubted animal origin?**

I am quite aware of vestigial resemblances to features discernible in other animals. But resemblances and similarities are not proof of derivation. To regard them as traces proving undoubted animal origin is simply fantastic. It is interesting to contrast the dogmatism of the man in the street with the tentative caution of the real scientist. Professor J. B. S. Haldane, a quite irreligious man, at least refuses to outstrip the available evidence. And he says that he regards the evolution of man from lower animals as rather more probable than the existence of Cedric the Saxon, but less probable than the existence of Queen Anne." The really great scientist, Reincke, speaks even more strongly. "The only statement consistent with her dignity that science can make," he writes, "is that she knows nothing about the origin of man."

**588. If you were once a germ cell, what difficulty have you in admitting your animal ancestry?**

I would have none, were my animal ancestry a proven fact, as is the origin of the human body in a germ cell. But it is not; and I object to fancies being represented as facts.

**589. You appear to speak somewhat scathingly of the theory of organic evolution.**

I speak scathingly of those who want to make such evolution appear to be more than a mere theory. Many people who pretend to a scientific outlook, have built up a mythology equal to any that has ever been foisted on a credulous humanity. And they get worried when one refuses to profess belief in their dreams. But organic evolution, involving the transformation of species, does not warrant belief. The well-known scientist, Yves Delage, made it his opinion that such evolution probably occurred. Yet he wrote as follows: "If there existed some other scientific hypothesis besides that of descent to explain the origin of species, many transformists would abandon their present opinion as not being sufficiently demonstrated. If one takes one's stand upon the exclusive ground of the facts, it must be acknowledged that the formation of one species from another species has not been demonstrated at all."

## The Existence of Angels

### **590. What place have angels in creation?**

Thought itself indicates the probability of angelic creatures. God has manifested in creation a most extraordinary gradation of perfections. We see a mineral world; a vegetable world; a sensitive world. Then we find man, who sums up all three worlds, and surpasses them by his possession of a spiritual and intelligent soul. But why should intelligence stop at the feeble triumphs of man? Is it not natural that there should be higher created spiritual beings, intermediary between the Supreme Spirit and the created spirits immersed in the material bodies of men? There is a purely material world. There is a blend of the material and spiritual worlds in man. It is quite reasonable to expect a created and purely spiritual world. Our human intelligence stammers in speech and discourse, arriving slowly and with difficulty at its conclusions, and often making grave mistakes. The natural act of our intelligence is intuition, the vision or sight of truth, even as the natural act of bodily eyes is the sight of material objects. Yet we fail so often to attain truth. God could be better represented in His creation. Where is perfect intelligence acting according to laws proper to itself and unfettered by matter? Is it absent from the universe? No one who really believes in God would think so. Spiritual being is normal being. It is much nearer to the Author of all being than matter. And it is not unreasonable to believe in a class of created beings more perfect than men.

### **591. Are not the angels spoken of in the Bible as "messages" or "influences" emanating from God rather than created spiritual beings?**

That cannot be maintained. For that would be to deny them personality. But both Old and New Testaments insist upon the spiritual and personal character of angels. Isaiah VI., 3, declares that the angels worship God crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts." Christ said, "Despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." Matt. XVIII., 10. Messages and influences don't see! Again, Christ said that there is joy amongst the angels in heaven when a sinner repents. Can one attribute rejoicing to messages and influences? When Christ said that in the resurrection men shall be as the angels who neither marry nor are given in marriage, did He mean that men would be like messages and influences? St. Peter says that God spared not the angels who sinned. Did impersonal messages and influences sin?

### **592. Are the angels in any way related to us?**

Yes. I have already quoted Christ's reference to the guardian angels of children. We must remember that all phases of being are in communication. There is a mutual penetration of the various kingdoms, and mutual service. All less than man contributes to the welfare of man. And if I can plead with God for you in prayer there is no reason why angels could not plead for us all in a similar way. If I can communicate ideas to you, there is no reason why God should not employ angels for that same purpose; although angels would act in a way proper to themselves, and not subject to our limitations.

## Evil Spirits or Devils

**593. I am interested in the bad angels or devils, who are, of course, a little more out of date than good angels.**

Neither is out of date. People are more ignorant of revelation and of the truth. And as they are more prone to deny the things they don't like rather than things they do like, they deny devils a little more vehemently than they deny angels. They deny both, of course. But this also results from the fact that men dislike being taught by anybody, even by God; and because they do not like to think that there are any beings higher than themselves. So you find unbelievers asserting that man is the highest and culminating point of evolution so far, and that he must push on to still greater perfection. But human pride has never permitted the suggestion that man will so evolve that he will cease to be man, and become another creature altogether. All is ordained to the glorification of man; and that leaves no room for angels. Therefore, angels do not exist. And if not angels, then no devils. For devils are simply angels who fell into sin, rejecting good and choosing evil in the inevitable trial given to all created beings endowed with free will.

**594. Does the name devil refer to the fallen angels collectively, or to a single personality?**

The fallen angels may be called devils collectively. At the same time, their leader is a single personality, and is at times called the devil as the chief representative of the class of beings to which he belongs.

**595. Who is Lucifer?**

Lucifer, meaning "Light-bearer," was the name of the leader of the rebellious angels before their fall into sin. After the fall he received the name of Satan, or Adversary. Scripture also refers to him as the "Beast" and the "Dragon." Thus St. John says that Michael the Archangel fought with the Dragon and his angels, and the great Dragon was cast out of heaven. (Apoc. or Rev. XII., 7-9.) Christ referred to this when He said, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven." Lk. X., 18. And He depicted the fate of Satan when He described the sentence of the wicked, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. XXV., 41.

**596. It is hard to think of an angelic intelligence so weakened as to think it could dethrone God.**

It is. But the rebellious angels never thought to destroy or dethrone God. They simply abstracted from the consideration of God, and sought to enthrone themselves in their own proud estimation as sufficient for themselves without due relationship to God and submission to Him.

**597. Can we associate the very human failing of pride with angelic spirits?**

That is almost the only vice found in human beings which could be associated with angelic natures. Pride is the inordinate love of one's own excellence, and is a sin which can be common to human beings and to purely spiritual beings. Proper to men are those sins which arise through the association of the soul with a material body of a sensitive and passionate nature. And these are the very human failings, not pride. St. Bernard expressed this idea when he said, "Sin by sensuality, and you sin as a beast; sin by dishonesty, and you sin as a man; sin by pride, and you sin as the angels."

**598. With all the Divine attractions before them, and despite the intoxication of His Presence, we are to believe that the angels sinned!**

Not quite. Even the angels had not the beatific vision of God in all His glory and infinitely beautiful reality. Had they had that vision they could not have sinned. It must be remembered that God is in the order of infinite being and perfection. But the angels, as finite creatures with necessarily limited intelligences were in a lower order altogether. The vision of God as He is in Himself would be impossible to them by their

own natural powers. They, as well as human souls, would need a supernatural elevation by grace, and by the intensification of their powers before they could have an immediate sight of God. Just as we know of God's existence without possessing that vision, so was it also with the angels. The fallen angels, therefore, never have seen God as He really is. Those angels who did not sin received the supernatural vision of God as their inheritance; and for them, therefore, sin is no longer possible.

**599. The heaven in which Lucifer existed, then, is not the same as the future home of the elect?**

No. Such human souls as are saved are elevated by grace to the supernatural order, and received on their entrance into heaven an additional capacity to see God in all His beauty and splendor as Lucifer never saw Him. Once any creature, angelic or human, has received that vision, sin becomes an impossibility; and heaven is, therefore, eternal.

**600. Of one thing I am certain. No devil tempts me.**

You are not certain of that at all. You have no experimental proof that no devil tempts you. How do you know that the devil has not tempted you to adopt that conclusion? How do you know that he is not confusing his activities with your own mental processes in such a way that you cannot distinguish his activity from your own? I am not saying that he is doing so. I merely say that you do not know for certain that he is not doing so. And I maintain that he could do so, and that he is never so well served as by those who deny him. The devil is not likely to inform you just when he is at work, and how many of your inclinations are due to his influence.

**601. Is his influence confined to the effects of original sin?**

Original sin has left a certain disorder in man's nature, warping his mind and disturbing the balance which should prevail between his will and his passions. Yet, although original sin was due to Satan's treachery in the first place, his influence now is not confined to these transmitted deficiencies. Over and above inherited evils, he is still able to tempt men within such limits as God permits.

**602. Why should a man be condemned if he falls a victim to the super-intelligence of the devil?**

The devil has a keener intelligence than man, but the scope of his knowledge is not without limits. He cannot read man's secret thoughts and intentions. He can conjecture from our conduct what is most likely to prove our downfall, and tempt us accordingly. Even so, he has no direct power whatever over our will. Again, God has promised to supply by His grace for our deficiencies. "My grace is sufficient for thee," He said to St. Paul. And we are told, too, that God permits no man to be tempted beyond that which he is able. God expects us to resist temptation, but He also expects us to ask for the necessary graces by prayer. Christ constantly urged such prayer. If a man, therefore, is condemned for yielding to the temptations of the devil, it is not because he could not resist them, but because he would not, and refused to ask the necessary help of God.

**603. If God wills all men to be saved, why does He ever allow Satan, to defeat that end?**

God does not will all men to be saved in spite of themselves. He intends that those who choose to die in a state of grace and in His friendship should be saved. And to every man He gives sufficient grace for that. In no single case has Satan been able to defeat this purpose of God so that souls through no fault of their own have been lost. God respects man's freedom. But if He will not compel men to be good, neither can Satan compel men to be evil. If a man wants to be good, he can be good; and Satan cannot prevent him. If a man wants to be evil, he can be evil, and God will not prevent him even though He forbids evil by the moral law. Men choose for themselves to take their stand either under the banner of God, or under that of Satan.

**604. Since the devil has some success in persuading men to choose evil, why doesn't God do away with him to prevent further harm?**

Firstly, God will not do away with the devil because the devil is an essentially spiritual being whose nature is immortal of its very nature. And God does not create a being endowed with immortality only to destroy it. Secondly, God knows that human souls, with the help of His grace, can themselves prevent the devil from doing them any moral harm by refusing consent to his evil suggestions. Thirdly, since there is no particular merit in being good if never tempted to do evil, God knows that the temptations of the devil are the occasion at least in which men have the chance to practice and to grow in virtue. Fourthly, since all previous generations of men have had to endure the sedulous attentions of the devil, there is no particular reason why the present and future generations should be exempt. We must battle through the same trials as others, conscious that with God's help we can come through victoriously, as so many others whose example is offered for our encouragement.

**605. Must Catholics believe in an Antichrist?**

Since they must believe in Holy Scripture they must believe that there will be an Antichrist. And they must believe that all the prophecies in Scripture are true prophecies, and that they will be duly fulfilled. But all this is in the sense intended by Scripture itself. We have not to believe whatever people think Scripture to mean by Antichrist, and by the prophecies concerning him. And very many absurd ideas have been taught by irresponsible people on this subject. There will come an Antichrist who will fulfill in the sense intended by Scripture the mysterious prophecies concerning him. More than that we are not obliged to believe.

**606. Must we believe that he is a real being, or that he is just a myth?**

The Antichrist is a reality, and not just a myth. We are not allowed to suggest that Almighty God would inspire the Sacred Writers to set down myths for our instruction. Antichrist will be a reality in the sense God knows and intends. Is Antichrist to be an individual being, or rather a general spirit of unbelief? We are free to interpret the future reality in either sense. But authors think that more probably Antichrist will be some definite human being because St. Paul calls him "the man of sin"-an unbelieving and immoral beast who will come by the power of Satan. That is the more general interpretation. But it is not a defined article of faith, and Catholics are obliged to believe simply that some great force opposed to Christ will arise prior to His Second Coming-a force which will deceive many members of the Church, and drag them into apostasy.

Man's Eternal Destiny

**607. What happens when a man dies?**

Death means the separation of body and soul. The body thereupon disintegrates and returns to dust. But the soul survives in a state of separation from the flesh, to experience either pleasant or unpleasant consequences according to the good or evil accomplished in this life.

**608. Please tell us from the Bible what the soul is.**

The Bible tells us that the soul is the principle of life; that it is made in the image and likeness of God who is a Spirit possessing intelligence and will power; that the created spirit of man, although united with a material body, is not to be identified with that body, but that it differs from the body in its very nature. For the soul is spiritual, not material; it is immortal, not mortal. Thus Scripture declares that at death "the body returns to the dust from which it came, and the spirit to the God who gave it." If the soul simply perished with the body, it could not go back to the God who gave it. It would simply cease to be.



**609. Thousands of Christians can quote texts which unmistakably prove the soul to be, not immortal, but mortal.**

There is not a single text in Scripture proving the soul to be mortal. And certainly no Christian who understands his religion can deny immortality. Christ's reference to those who can kill the body, but who cannot kill the soul can mean only that the soul survives the fate of the body. Again, Christ refuted the Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul, by quoting the Scriptures where God said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And He added, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." St. Paul desired that the union between his soul and his body might be dissolved that he might be with Christ. He knew quite well that his soul would not become simply nonexistent. St. Peter tells us that the spirit of Christ, after His death on the Cross, went to preach to the souls of the departed-souls which had certainly survived the death of the body and were conscious of the doctrine manifested to them by our Lord. So clear is the evidence of the Bible in favor of immortality that those who profess belief in Scripture yet deny immortality must be accused of doing so merely because they do not want to believe that the soul survives.

**610. Is there any reference in the Old Testament supporting the idea that the soul is immortal?**

Yes. When Christ quoted the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as being the God of the living, and not of the dead, He drew His reference from the Book of Exodus, III., 6. In Deut. XVIII., 11, God forbids the Jews to seek knowledge from the spirits of the dead. The text supposes the continued existence of departed souls, and merely forbids attempts to enter into communication with them. 1 Kgs. (Sam.) XXVIII., 15, narrates the fact that the soul of Samuel appeared to Saul, which could not be were the human soul not immortal. The Book of Wisdom describes the wicked as denying immortality for themselves but affirming it for the good. "For they have said, reasoning with themselves, but not rightly ... we are born of nothing and after this we shall be as if we had not been . . . our body shall be ashes, and our spirit shall be poured abroad as soft air, passing away as the trace of a cloud. . . . But the souls of the just are in the hands of God; and the torment of death shall not touch them." Wisd. c. II. & III. Again, we read in the Old Testament, "It is a holy thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins." 2 Machabees, XII., 46. If the souls of men are nonexistent after death, they could not benefit by our prayers.

**611. Do Jews, who accept the Old Testament, believe in the immortality of the soul?**

Yes. The most eminent of German Jewish Rabbis, Leo Baeck, in his book, "Das Wesen des Judentums," declares that the immortality of the soul is a doctrine of Judaism, and that "this life receives its meaning from the next." Dr. Kohler, Principal of an American College for the training of Jewish Rabbis, in his authoritative work, "Jewish Theology," says, "We all close our lives without having attained the goal of perfection towards which we strive." And he adds that our very nature demands a future life, and that the doctrine of immortality corresponds with the belief in God who cannot deceive the human heart. Another Rabbi, Morris Joseph, in his book, "Judaism as Creed and Life," writes, "The doctrine of immortality is an integral part of the Jewish creed. The transgressor who has not worked out his atonement here must complete it hereafter; whilst the Just, who can but have imperfectly realized their possibilities in this life, will realize them to the full in the life to come." In an essay on the subject, published in London in 1934, the Rabbi C. G. Montefiore writes, "The modern Jewish hope of immortality is sound and pure. The essence of our belief is this: With all the imperfections, the evil, the agony, the horrors, which have ever existed among men, and which still exist today, immortality seems to us to be the inseparable corollary or 'sequitur' to a belief in a ruling, a righteous, and a loving God. To that belief we wistfully cling because, hard as the world is to explain with God, harder still, as it seems to us, is it to explain the world without God. Into the character and nature of that immortality, Jews inquire seldom and little; yet whilst they do not depreciate this life because of that other life, it is just as false to say that, at the expense of that life, they unduly magnify this life." Such quotations prove the Jews to know that belief in immortality is quite in accordance with the teachings of the Old Testament.

**612. You quote the Bible where it suits you, but you ignore all those sections of the Bible which exclude the idea of immortality.**

There is not a single text in Scripture opposed to the Catholic doctrine of immortality.

**613. Genesis tells us that God guarded the Tree of Life lest men should eat of it and "live forever." Man cannot, therefore, have immortality by nature.**

The reference in Genesis is to preservation from that natural death of the composite human being which results from the dissolution of the union between soul and body. It is true that death in that sense is natural to man. For, although the soul is a spirit and immortal by its very nature, the body is by nature material and mortal. God gave our first parents the special privilege by a supernatural gift of immunity even from the law of natural death. The reference you quote merely indicates that, after sin had been committed, such immunity was lost irrevocably to humanity. We are all subject to the law of death, and to the necessity of separation between soul and body when the body is no longer fitted for the purposes of life. But the soul survives this dissolution; and nothing in the passage you quote suggests that it does not.

**614. In Gen. II., 17, God told Adam that he would die if he ate the forbidden fruit.**

That is true. But when God spoke, Adam possessed the natural life of body and soul, and also the supernatural life in the spiritual order of God's grace. He was also, by special privilege, immune from that natural death which results from dissolution of soul and body. When he sinned, Adam lost the grace of God, his soul dying immediately to the supernatural life it gave; and also he at once forfeited any right to the privilege of immunity from natural bodily death in due course.

**615. In Gen. III., 4, Satan said, "Ye shall not surely die."**

Correct. Our first parents, therefore, had either to believe God, treating Satan as a liar; or else to believe Satan, treating God as a liar. They preferred the word of Satan, and became subject to the penalty of death in the sense I have explained.

**616. Did not Rome get its doctrine of immortality from the word of Satan?**

No. Such a conjecture would be as erroneous as that of the enemies of Christ who accused Him of casting out devils with the help of the devil.

**617. Satan said men would not die.**

The doctrine of immortality is not a denial of death in the sense Satan intended. The death God had threatened was the separation of the soul from His grace and friendship, and the later separation of the soul from the body. He did not threaten such a radical change in the very nature of the soul that it would cease to be immortal. Our denial that the soul will cease to exist is in no way based on Satan's denial of God's threat, and has no connection with it at all.

**618. Job, c. XIV., declares that man is mortal.**

Man, consisting of body and soul, is certainly subject to death. No one denies that man, as a composite being in this life, is mortal. All must die. But whilst we bury the body from which the soul has departed, the soul lives on in a state beyond our control. And the continued life of the soul does not render Job's statement false, nor does Job's statement render the doctrine of the soul's immortality false.

**619. Job, XXXIII., 18-30, speaks of the soul as in danger of destruction.**

The word "soul" is there used as a general expression for the complete living man still in this life; much as the distress signal S.O.S. is sometimes popularly interpreted as "Save Our Souls," meaning, "Save Our Lives." Or, again, as we might say, "There were 150 souls on board when the vessel sailed." To describe a complete thing by a part is quite a common figure of speech, as when we say, "So-and-so took sail for Europe." The passage you quote, therefore has no reference to the nature of the soul in itself; and no application whatever to the question as to whether it is immortal or not.

**620. Psalm XXXIII., 19, says that the soul is subject to death.**

The verse you mention says that the eye of the Lord is upon them that hope in Him, to deliver their souls from death and "to keep them alive in famine." The

last words should have shown you that the reference is to continued bodily life in this world, requiring the presence of the soul in the body. The text does not refer to the condition of the soul after death has separated it from the body.

**621. Ecclesiastes, IX., 10, says, "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."**

That is true. But the Sacred Author is warning us simply that death ends all our activities in this world. He is referring in no way to what occurs beyond the grave. He speaks as any normal man would speak in similar circumstances. Thus, immediately prior to those words he says, "This is thy labor which thou takest under the sun." He intends, therefore, that death will end all opportunities of activity so far as life this side of the grave is concerned. How true this is you will discover by going to a cemetery and inviting those buried there to assist you in some enterprise, or to benefit you by their advice and instruction. But to the condition of the soul in the next world to which it has gone, the text has no reference whatever. And any ambiguity you might like to imagine is removed by the very author you quote, for in Ch. XII., 7, of the same Book we read that, when a man dies, the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the "spirit to God who gave it." It is against all sound principles of interpretation to forsake passages quite clear in themselves for fantastic opinions based upon strained and forced meanings read into texts which fit in quite well with the clearer passages if taken reasonably.

**622. The words in the text, "Whither thou goest" indicate that more than the body goes to the grave. It means man's whole being.**

The personal pronoun is quite legitimately used without any implication concerning the future lot of the soul. If I were to say, "When I die, bury me in the family grave," no reasonable person could argue from that that I did not believe in the immortality and survival of the soul.

**623. It seems to me that the dead lie unconscious in the grave until Christ's Second Coming.**

St. Paul tells us that the thought of death was most attractive to him. Why? Was it that he might lie unconscious in the grave? No. It was that he might "be with Christ," which is far better than living on still in this world.

**624. Isaiah X., 18, says that the glory of the forest shall be consumed "from the soul even to the flesh."**

That is a typical Hebraism intending no more than the complete destruction of living things from the face of the earth in a given area. The text has no reference to the immortality of the soul of man. Without any notion of the sense of a passage some people have but to see the word soul, and at once they conclude that they have further evidence of what they want to believe. It is useless to quote passages whose sane and

normal explanation does not touch the question of the soul's immortality against others which admit of no other explanation save that the soul is not subject to death as is the body.

**625. Isaiah LIII., 12, says that Christ's soul "was poured out unto death."**

Correct. But you will notice that His death is described as due to the separation of His soul from His body. When He had poured out His soul, His body remained lifeless on the Cross. If at the moment His soul left His body it ceased to exist, it was nothing. One does not pour out nothing. Also, when dying, Christ said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." He was commending something to His Father which was not suffering the fate of His body. It was His human and immortal soul.

**626. Matt. X., 28, speaks of the destruction of both soul and body in hell.**

In the passage you quote, Christ says, "Fear not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear them that can destroy both body and soul in hell." The first part of this text shows clearly that the death of the body inflicted by men does not involve the death of the soul. The soul, therefore, survives the death of the body, and is immortal. The second part of the text refers to the eternal and living death of all bodily comfort and of all the soul's fondest aspirations, which God will inflict on the wicked at the last judgment. According to Christ, this will mean continued consciousness in a never-ending state of misery where the worm of remorse dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. No wonder He warns us that this is the evil fate we should fear rather than a temporal death which affects the body only, and cannot wreck our eternity. The passage justifies, and does not militate against the doctrine that the soul is immortal.

**627. Do you think the soul of David has survived and is in heaven?**

I have no doubt at all as to that fact.

**628. In Jn. III., 13, Christ says, "No man hath ascended into heaven."**

That was strictly true when Christ spoke. By the sin of our first parents, heaven was closed against human souls. Christ Himself was the Eternal Son of God, who came to redeem mankind, and who opened heaven to men by His death, resurrection, and ascension. At His ascension He was the first in human form to enter heaven. With Him at the same time went the souls of the just who had died previously in God's grace and friendship. And good souls now who go from this world find their heavenly reward quite accessible to them. Thus Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you that where I am you also may be." St. Paul, therefore, longed for death saying, "I desire to be with Christ, which is far better."

**629. St. Peter said, "David ascended not into heaven."**

The soul of David did not, and could not, enter heaven until Christ had paid the price of sin on Calvary, and had Himself entered heaven in His own glorified human nature. The fact that the soul of David did not go to heaven immediately when he died does not exclude his admission to heaven after Christ had opened heaven to men. Until then the soul of David was amongst those spirits to whom the still living soul of Christ went after His death on the Cross. 1 Pet. III., 18-19.

**630. Rom. II., 7, tells us to seek for immortality. One does not seek for what he already possesses.**

If you read the context from which you have taken your words, you will notice that St. Paul is speaking of God's judgment. He tells us that God is going to render to every man according to his deeds. And as this judgment is to take place after death, it follows that every soul, good or bad, will survive to experience that judgment. In verse 7 we are told that eternal life will be the reward of those who have sought "glory and honor and immortality." In verse 8 and verse 9 we are told that the unrighteous will meet with indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. The eternal life and the immortality, therefore, which will be the reward

of the good, will be a share in the very happiness of God and in that life of glory which alone is fully deserving of the name of life. St. Paul takes the ordinary immortality of the soul for granted, and warns us to seek an immortality of happiness by a life of virtue, rather than prepare for ourselves an immortality of tribulation and anguish by our sins and vices.

**631. Rom. VI., 23, tells us that eternal life is the gift of God.**

The reference is to the life of eternal happiness as opposed to a life of eternal misery. The text has no application in a discussion of the soul's natural survival.

**632. 1 Cor. XV., 53, tells us that "this mortal must put on immortality."**

That text refers explicitly to the resurrection of the body. No one denies that the body is mortal. But it will rise a "spiritual body," says St. Paul, "and put on immortality" in order to share once more the life of the soul which is immortal by nature.

**633. 1 Tim. VI., 16, says that "God alone hath immortality." The Catholic Church teaches that man is immortal. Who is right?**

The difference you imagine between the two teachings does not exist. The text you quote from the Bible means that God alone is immortal by a supreme and uncreated right, and that He is the source of any immortality possessed by others. In the same way Christ said, "God alone is good." That cannot be used as an argument that no man can possibly be "good." As regards the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning man, you are again inaccurate. The Church teaches that man, in his present composite state, is mortal; and that every man will surely die insofar as the present union of soul and body is concerned. But, whilst death will mean the separation of soul and body, the soul will persist in existence in accordance with its own spiritual nature; and precisely because, as the Bible teaches, the soul is made in the image and likeness of God, one of whose characteristics is immortality. He, the Uncreated Immortal, creates souls immortal like unto Himself. He owes His own immortality to no one; we owe the immortality of our souls to Him. So it is quite true that God alone has immortality both in Himself, and to confer it on others by His creative activity. The passage you quote also refers to that supernatural destiny of a heavenly immortality, which makes men happy with the very happiness of God when they attain to the very Vision of Him. Thus St. Paul promises the sight of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who alone has immortality of Light inaccessible, and whom no man by his own natural powers has seen or could see. Such immortality in the sense of never-ending happiness is to be found in God alone.

**634. 1 Jn. V., 12, says, "Only he that hath the Son hath eternal life."**

All who attain to an eternal life of happiness will owe it to the merits of Christ and union with Christ. The text has no reference to the question of the soul's inherent and natural immortality.

**635. Rev. XVI., 3, says that "the souls that were in the sea died."**

The passage refers explicitly to troubles to come upon the earth and, therefore, to men still in this world. People are called souls by synecdoche, or a figure of speech by which a complete being is described by a principal part. So one will say that he intends "to take sail" for a distant place, intending the complete boat on which he will travel. The death referred to was the dissolution of soul and body, even as we say the 18 souls perished in a railway accident. Your text has no application to the question of the soul's immortality.

The Fact of Sin

**636. To the modern mind your doctrine of original sin is but the old myth of Pandora's Box in a new dress.**

The doctrine of original sin dates from the origin of humanity, hundreds of centuries before such legends as that of Pandora's Box were invented. But, granted original sin, it is most natural that vestiges of the primitive truth would find expression in just such stories. In whatever form various peoples have preserved the story of the original fall of man, the fact that they all have a tradition of original sin points to a common origin from which such a tradition could be drawn. And that common origin was not a myth. It was the actual fall of our first parents.

**637. The idea that mankind has fallen is clearly a legend of ancient Hebrew literature. It finds no sympathy with modern scientific thought which holds that man has risen continuously from primitive beginnings.**

One would be justified in saying that humanity hasn't risen very far; and that modern materialistic philosophy tends only to drag it down rather than to lift it to further heights. It is quite true that the account of the fall is contained in ancient Hebrew literature. But you beg the question when you declare it to be a legend, as if it may thus be dismissed as fiction. For the whole point at issue is as to whether it is fiction or not. It is for the critic to prove that it is fiction, not just to say so. Meantime, science has really nothing to say on the subject. For the fall of man was a fact of the moral order, which is beyond the scope of science.

**638. Do you still believe in these days that man fell from some higher kind of existence?**

I believe the Biblical truth that our first parents were endowed with a proportionate natural perfection, and that they were further enriched with additional spiritual gifts and privileges, I believe that by sin they lost these additional privileges, and gave rise to a posterity deprived of them, and prone also to moral weaknesses. This belief in no way conflicts with any scientific facts.

**639. Surely there are some indications of original sin still available!**

There are. If you deny original sin, you will find man a much greater mystery than original sin itself. It is fearfully difficult to understand the human race without admitting original sin; whilst the difficulty vanishes the moment we accept the doctrine. We know that God has revealed the doctrine, and by faith we accept it- the only reasonable thing to do. But reason alone points always in the direction of an original and inherited moral catastrophe. Nature does not know paradox; yet we have the human paradox. Our very miseries are our greatness because they proceed from our high aspirations; and our greatness is our misery because our high aspirations seek such miserable things. Meantime, we see inherent in man monstrous egotism, pride, covetousness, and iniquity. He who denies sin in himself is always denouncing it in others, and accusing God of not being either wise or good. We see in man the misery of a dethroned king. He is fallen from his true place, and cannot recover it. What is good in him is from his Creator; what is bad is the unhappy effect of his fall.

**640. So you believe that the very first result of all man's wonderful gifts was a fall; in fact, such a terrific crash that it has resounded through all succeeding centuries!**

We do not believe that a fall was the very first result. The very first result was the service of God with the initial perfections God gave to our first parents. There is no indication in the Bible that they fell immediately from their state of innocence. However, we know that eventually they did fall from a state of supernatural grace and holiness into a state of sin. But this was not the result of their gifts. It was a result of a misuse of the powers conferred upon them. By the very gifts which were a condition of its possibility, they could have avoided moral evil. However, our first parents fell into sin, and original sin has been transmitted to all men through the centuries.

**641. If man was made in the image and likeness of God, he must have been perfect. How could the perfect fall?**

When we say that man is made in the image and likeness of God we do not mean that man is a perfect replica of God. We mean that he is truly like God insofar as his soul is spiritual, and endowed with intelligence and free will. And he is relatively perfect in these things according to the demands of his own created, human, and finite level. How could the perfect fall? The absolutely perfect could not fall. Thus God, infinitely perfect and supremely free, could not fall into imperfect or sinful conduct. He is not free to sin precisely because He must be free from evil or the possibility of evil. But man has a freedom of will which is associated, not with infinite intelligence, but with a finite intelligence. And since the finite intelligence cannot see all aspects of everything at once, it is possible for man to concentrate upon one aspect rather than another. Thus a man can concentrate on the advantages of \$500 which he has an opportunity to steal, and omit to give his attention to the aspect of dishonesty. It is obvious that, if he has free will, sin is possible. Granted an object with both a good and a bad aspect, he who has free will can choose to dwell upon an alluring aspect, to the exclusion of all other aspects. Your difficulty would be insoluble in the case of an infinitely and absolutely perfect being; but not where only a relatively perfect creature is concerned.

**642. God is infinitely perfect, and omnipotent.**

Correct.

**643. Then how could He make anything evil or imperfect?**

He could not make anything morally evil or wicked. Nor, from the merely physical point of view could He directly make anything positively imperfect. Positively and directly His work is always good. But He can grant to some creatures a few good qualities, and to other creatures a greater number of good qualities. Each thing will then be relatively perfect in its own degree and according to His plan. For example, a cabbage may be relatively perfect as a cabbage, but it is imperfect in comparison with an animal which has the additional powers of sensation and locomotion, and still more imperfect in comparison with man who possesses intelligence. Although God is infinitely perfect, therefore, He can distribute created perfections in varying degrees in order to secure a gradation and harmony of different beings in the universe. Lesser creatures are imperfect in comparison with higher creatures, but they are perfect in their own kind and degree. But you are concerned chiefly with the problem of moral imperfection, not physical limitations. So let us turn to your next remark.

**644. Man was not created perfect, otherwise he would not have disobeyed in the Garden of Eden.**

Man was created perfect in the sense that he was all that God intended a man to be. Of course, as a creature, he necessarily had the limitations proper to all creatures as such. But you wrongly argue from his disobedience to some radical imperfection in his nature which should not have been there. As a matter of fact, the disobedience of which man was guilty was due, not to an imperfection, but to a perfection over and above the perfections of lesser creatures. It was due to freedom of will. That is man's great dignity. Free will, however, whilst it gives us the power of self-chosen good actions also carries with it the risk of self-chosen bad actions. But in man, as he was created by God, there were no implanted tendencies to evil, and he was given the knowledge of what ought to be avoided. But there was no physical compulsion to choose either good or evil. That had to be his own choice. And, despite God's warning, man chose evil. This misuse of freedom was not due to the fact that he was not created perfect. It was rendered possible precisely because he was given the perfection of self-determination. The abuse of that perfection was not God's responsibility, but man's own responsibility.

**645. If it is just as easy for God to create perfection as imperfection why did He create us imperfect?**

God did not create us imperfect. Had He not given us free will, we would have been less perfect than He actually made us. You are confusing the abuse of a good gift with the possession of that good gift. The possession of free will is a perfection. The abuse of free will is the imperfection, but God neither created nor caused that abuse. You may say that God at least gave us the ability to make a bad choice. But you must look at it from the other viewpoint also. God gave us the ability to make a good choice, to exercise a moral virtue of which irrational creatures are not capable. And He intended that we should freely make that good choice, warning us against an evil choice, and forbidding it. Since we were not obliged to make an evil choice, but forbidden it, and warned against it, the responsibility for any evil choice made rests with man himself. We cannot shift the blame from ourselves to God.

**646. You said it was a fallacy to conclude that God was responsible for man's fall into sin if the creation story be true.**

Correct.

**647. At least my proposition has a basis of reasoning behind it.**

It had. But you were reasoning from wrong premises. And if your logical process is sound, you can arrive only at a wrong conclusion from wrong premises.

**648. It conforms with the law of Universal Causation.**

The invoking of the law of universal causation is one thing. The application of that law to the wrong cause is quite another.

**649. You say that the cause of man's sin was man's own free will?**

Correct.

**650. You forget that there must first have been forces operating upon this intelligence or free will itself.**

Not for a moment do I forget that some object must be presented as attractive in some way before a choice is made. But whilst I admit that no deliberate choice is made without a motive, I deny that the motive necessitates the choice.

**651. These forces, I submit, were the natural instincts of man, implanted by God in his very nature.**

I do not deny that there were natural appetites in man which were stimulated by the attractive object wrongly chosen. But I do deny that the responsive instincts compelled the will to make the evil choice of pleasures forbidden by God. God would not forbid what man must necessarily do.

**652. Of course, I know that you will say that this is not Christian teaching, because Christian belief is that man was created perfect, and could not, therefore, have had such natural instincts.**

You are mistaken as to the Christian belief. Man would not have been perfect as a man unless he had natural instincts.

**653. Where, then, do the animal instincts which you cannot deny exist today deep in the nature of every one of us, spring from?**



They are implanted in us by God. Man consists of a soul and a body. His soul is spiritual, intelligent, and endowed with free will; and it is made in the image and likeness of God. His body is material, sensitive, and animal; and from the very beginning it was endowed with instincts proper to an animal nature. Those instincts are not evil in themselves.

**654. An uncaused phenomenon is unthinkable.**

I agree.

**655. Since you do not believe in the organic evolution of man from lower forms of life, you must inevitably trace the cause of man's nature back to the First Great Cause, God.**

Correct. But you are not making much headway. What you have to prove is that animal instinct necessarily impels the will to act in accordance with it. You are not making the required distinctions between the sensitive bodily nature of man with its sensitive appetites, and the intelligent spiritual soul with its rational appetite for the things of the spirit. A child may profess to see a sentence written on a blackboard. But it may not have the least understanding of what the sentence means. It sees only chalk marks with bodily eyes, a sense of sight possessed equally by a dog or any other animal. When the teacher throws light on the meaning of the sentence, the child cries, "Now I see." The child saw before, with eyes only. Now it sees with its mind. Human beings have two classes of knowledge, sense knowledge, and rational knowledge. And to each type of knowledge corresponds an appetite power, animal passion, and the rational will. The will is not compelled to follow animal instinct. Thus a child may like cakes yet be forbidden to touch them. The sight of the cakes may stimulate an animal craving for them, and awaken strong imaginations of the pleasure to be got from eating them. But the intelligence may perceive a different kind of goodness in the virtue of obedience. It is free to omit due consideration of this aspect, concentrate only on animal cravings, and choose to eat the cakes. Or it can choose to concentrate on the good of obedience, and put aside all thought of disobeying its natural instincts to eat the cakes. What you have to prove is that the child is not free to resist its lower animal appetites.

**656. You say it is a fallacy to urge that, on the creation hypothesis, God is responsible for man's fall into sin.**

I do. For man had no evil propensities as he commenced his career. He had a twofold nature, spiritual in his soul, material in his animal body. The body, being sensitive, was naturally subject to sensations, or instinctive feelings. These instinctive feelings or natural appetites were in no way evil in themselves. Nothing that God implanted in human nature could be bad in itself. But the natural bodily instincts were subject to the control of the soul. By his intelligence man knew clearly how his instincts ought to be controlled and regulated according to their true purpose and God's designs. By his will, man was well able to exercise due control. His passions did not control him. He controlled them. But man's will was free. God gave him the perfection of liberty, that he might not be a mere automaton, but live according to the self-chosen virtue which constitutes man's real dignity. God forbade any evil choice which would be an abuse of this freedom of will; but He would not compel man to be good. Despite his ability to do well, and despite God's warning, man disobeyed God. And God was not responsible for that sin, which man need not have committed, which God forbade, and against which God had warned him.

**657. Your difficulty lies in trying to reconcile belief in the entire freedom of the will with a conception of justice in relation to God and His creatures.**

You seem inclined to deny both the justice of God, and the freedom of the will. From both viewpoints that would land you in far greater difficulties than any that confront me. But, before I continue, I must clear up your misconception as to my own position. We were discussing the sin of the first man, who possessed human nature as God created it. But now you have in mind human nature as possessed by man subsequently to that first sin. You must remember that, because of that first sin, we are children of a fallen race. Our natures are warped to some extent. For when man's soul would not be controlled by God, he

found disorder in his own nature, bodily passions tending to revolt against the control of the will. This did not destroy the power of free will, but it made its exercise more difficult; and diminished the limits of responsibility, according to the duration and intensity of the interference with freedom of choice. I do not, therefore, maintain the entire freedom of the will. The degree of freedom varies in different individuals, and in the same individual under different conditions. But this does not justify an entire negation of free will. Virtue and vice as such are confined to the will. There can be no sin except in a will freely choosing to do an evil it is not compelled to do. And there are many evils deliberately chosen by men which they were free not to choose.

**658. All men are born equal is a fine-sounding phrase, but it is not a scientific fact.**

I agree. Both heredity and environment give men a very unequal start in life.

**659. Surely it is unfair for God to judge a man born and raised in the slums on the same level of judgment as a man brought up at the feet of Christ!**

That would be unfair. God, therefore, will not do so.

**660. Yet both these men, you say, are perfectly free to choose what moral path they will take.**

I do not remember ever having said that. I have maintained the general proposition that human beings are endowed with free will. In disputing that you appeal to particular cases which do not prove the universal negative that no human being has free will; also you omit my allowance for the warped nature of man since the first sin brought disorder in its wake.

**661. I deny that both these men are perfectly free to choose which moral path they will take.**

So do I. But granted relative limitations in the exercise of freedom, I maintain that insofar as each is genuinely free to refuse individual immoral decisions, he is guilty of sin before God, and personally responsible for it. And I deny that he is never sufficiently free in any individual decisions as to be guilty of sin, unless he be an imbecile devoid of the use of reason.

**662. You must admit that the slums of big cities all over the world literally breed corruption.**

I do. But that does not affect my contention that human beings as human beings are endowed with free will. It proves only that some human beings in some circumstances will have greater difficulty in exercising their free will than others; a proposition I have never denied.

**663. It takes an exceptional mind to rise above such surroundings.**

He would certainly be the exceptional man who could entirely resist the influence of such surroundings. But I deny that any man, provided he be sane, is never able at any time to resist any of the evil influences around him. And if he is ever able on any occasion to exercise freedom of choice, the thesis stands that human beings are endowed with free will.

**664. Under such a system the word justice becomes a mockery.**

If God judged men solely upon their actual conduct, without making any allowance for factors mitigating responsibility, justice would be a mockery. But God does not judge men like that. God will never blame any man for what is really involuntary. And where evil conduct is due to one's voluntary choice, God will make every allowance for degrees of volition. Semi-deliberate actions will be less guilty in His sight than fully deliberate actions. All the obstacles to a free choice in a right direction will be taken into consideration, ignorance, external violence, inherited evil tendencies, vicious habits, personally acquired

antecedently to each sin to be judged, physical and nervous health, fears, imaginary or real, influences of environment, all will be weighed in the scales of justice. And that justice will not be a mockery. There is nothing in your letter which warrants a denial of free will in man. In fact, deny free will, and justice becomes a mockery. For then a man in the most favorable circumstances and environment is no more to be blamed for evil conduct than the one in the most unfavorable environment.

**665. Consider this: First you teach us that God is wise and good.**

I do.

**666. Then you blandly assert that He is not responsible for the welfare of His creatures,**

I do not. He is responsible for their welfare. He is not responsible for their sins. God fulfills all that His responsibility demands, a responsibility due, of course, to His own justice and wisdom and goodness. He has endowed us with all the good gifts we possess, including the dignity of intelligence and free will. He endows us with a moral sense or conscience to warn us of the evils we must avoid. He will see to it that everyone is given sufficient grace for salvation, so that no soul will be lost save through its own deliberate fault. In fact, He will see to it that multitudes are given sufficient grace to repent and be saved despite the fact that they have deserved to be lost through their own deliberate sins.

**667. You teach that, for millions of human beings, it would have been better never to have been born, because they are doomed to eternal suffering in hell!**

I do not teach that. The Catholic Church condemns as heresy the doctrine that any single soul is doomed to eternal suffering. The only destiny human souls are meant by God to attain is a destiny of eternal happiness; and every single soul is able to attain eternal happiness. But man's destiny is in his own keeping. If he goes to hell, it will be due to a choice of evil which he is not compelled to make, for which he is fully responsible, which God forbids, and of which he does not repent before death. A man cannot be said to be doomed to a disaster he need never encounter. Likewise, even granted that those who do choose to lose their souls are not compelled to do so, the Catholic Church has no teaching as to the number of men who will do so. She teaches that man is endowed with free will; that God gives to every man sufficient grace for salvation; that man is capable of resisting that grace and of losing his soul; that if he does lose his soul he will justly reap the fruit of his own evil choice by eternal suffering in hell. How many will make that final evil choice is known only to God. But since the choice can be made, it is each man's duty to avoid making it, repenting of past sins, and endeavoring to comply with the requirements of virtue. And so the Church contents herself with the advice to each man which Christ gave when He said, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he suffers the loss of his soul? Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice."

**668. Pardon my insistence on this subject, but it seems to me to be of paramount importance.**

It is, precisely because human beings are endowed with free will, and can, therefore, decide for themselves what shall be their eternal destiny. But if there be no such thing as free will, then the problem is of comparatively little importance; for it's a waste of time to worry about the inevitable. However, the matter is important; and for that reason I have given such lengthy treatment to your letter. I can only hope that my treatment of it has clarified some aspects of the question even if it has not yet removed all your difficulties. I would be rather astonished if it did remove all your difficulties, for I haven't succeeded yet in removing all my own. But I know that free will is a fact despite all the residual problems it leaves for the human mind, even as I know that wireless transmission is a fact though it teems with mysteries. But ten thousand difficulties concerning a fact do not make us doubt the fact. It is a fact that God is just. It is a fact that men have free will. If we cannot reconcile those two facts to our entire satisfaction, the only reasonable thing to do is accept the limitations of the human mind, and not begin tampering with the facts in order to get an answer we like, whether it be true or not.

**669. Was the original sin the eating of the material fruit?**

No. The eating of the forbidden fruit was an action which was the outcome of an interior disposition of rebellion against God's will.

**670. If our first parents rebelled by committing adultery, how were they to propagate the race as commanded by God without falling into sin?**

The first sin was not the sin of adultery. Had Adam and Eve never sinned, they would have propagated children by the ordinary law of physical marital union which prevails today. The first sin could not have been one of sensuality. Man consists of body and soul; and it is clear that the soul, noble and spiritual, is meant to control the material body and its sensitive passions. Now before sin came, man was just as he ought to be. In our first parents then the body was perfectly subject to, and controlled by the soul. Bodily passions were subject to reason and will, and could not get out of control until the soul itself had lost that control. It was only after the soul itself had rebelled against God that passions in turn rebelled against the soul. When man would not be controlled by God, he found that he had great difficulty in controlling his own lower passions.

**671. Perhaps God intended Adam and Eve to enjoy a spiritual union only without any physical relationship.**

That cannot be admitted. God does nothing in vain; and He intended the proper use of all the powers with which He endowed human beings. Man is not merely spiritual. He is a composite being, consisting of both a spiritual soul and a material body. Moreover, God created both sexes, male and female, intending their union as a means towards cooperating with Him in the work of creation. There is nothing evil, but only that which is beautiful, in what God originally intended; and until sin came to pervert the right order which prevailed, quite normal relationships would have existed between Adam and Eve.

**672. If the higher powers of our first parents had perfect control over their lower faculties until they rebelled against God, how could they rebel in the first place?**

Because they had the limitations of finite intelligence, and free will. When Satan tempted them, two goods, the one real and the other only apparent, were put before them. The real good of which God had told them was obedience to their Creator. The apparent good proposed by Satan was independence of God, and self-sufficiency. "Do this," said Satan, "and you will know even as God knows." The limitations of their intelligence meant that the more they concentrated their attention on one of these aspects the more they would take it off the other. Now their wills were free. No outside pressure inclined them to the one side rather than to the other. They could have chosen to obey God despite all the suggestions of the devil. But they omitted due attention to God's command. They allowed their minds to become absorbed by the apparent advantages proposed by Satan. And from their original equilibrium they inclined more and more towards the fascinating prospect held out by the devil until it seemed far the better. In the end they actually chose the forbidden thing-with consequent sin. Then, when the will had gone wrong, all else went wrong; and they experienced for the first time the disorderly rebellion of sensuality and passion; and shame overwhelmed them. The first sin, therefore, was one of proud independence and disobedience in the higher faculties. It was possible because of the limitations of the human mind, and the possession of freedom of will. It became actual because of an abuse of that freedom. And this led to a derangement of the whole human personality, including ill effects upon both soul and body-a derangement which, in all its complexity, has become the inheritance of all children born of our guilty race.

**673. Do you believe the Bible when it says that sorrow and pain are due to original sin?**

Yes. Prior to the first sin men were free from suffering.

**674. But animals also suffer. What sin did they commit?**

It is true that animals suffer. But the Catholic Church does not teach that all the pain in this world of both human beings and of animals is due to original sin. A certain amount of pain is natural to living sensitive beings. Even God could not create sensitive beings naturally devoid of sensations. And, granted sensations, some of them are bound to be unpleasant, if only from climatic changes. But in many ways animals suffered before our first parents sinned at all. St. Thomas Aquinas denies that there was no suffering amongst animals before the first sin of mankind. "There are those who say," he wrote, "that animals which are now wild and kill other animals for food would have been meek and gentle, not only towards men, but towards other animals. But this is unreasonable. For by the sin of man the nature of animals was not changed. Those animals which now live on the flesh of other animals would not then have lived on vegetation." We do not teach, then, that the sufferings of animals are due to the sin of man. By a special act of His providence, however, God exempted human beings from any unpleasant sensations which would otherwise have been normal to their sensitive natures. And they would have continued to enjoy this exemption had they not sinned. This privilege animals did not enjoy. Unhappily, our first parents did sin, lost their exemption, and encountered the sufferings as a penalty. To refuse the Christian doctrine one would have to prove, not that animals suffer, but that God did not exempt human beings from such sufferings; and that they did not forfeit this exemption by their sin. No man will ever succeed in proving that God granted no such exemption to our first parents, and that they did not lose it by sin.

**675. Do you believe that death is a punishment for sin?**

That human beings have to die is a punishment for sin. We have God's word for that, and we could not have a better authority. Man is, of course, by virtue of his material and bodily nature liable to death. No one denies that. But by a special privilege man was granted immunity from the necessity of having to die. By God's special power man was to be immortal both in soul and body. This privilege was not natural, but supernatural. In Gen. II., 17, God warned our first parents that they would lose this privilege of immunity from death should they sin; and in Gen. III., 19, He told them that, as a result of their sin, they would return to the dust from which their bodies were made.

**676. Animals must have died long before men existed.**

They did. But no claim is made that animals ever received the privilege of immunity from death.

**677. Did the fall of our first parents make any difference in our relations with material things?**

Yes. Henceforth men found in themselves an inordinate tendency to devote themselves to material things beyond the due limits dictated by God's laws and by sound reason. The body is of the earth, but the soul is spiritual, made in the image and likeness of God. The soul is obviously intended, as the nobler element in man, to dominate and control the material body. And its normal tendency should be to do so. But, since the fall, man's nature is not normal. It is warped to some extent. And instead of the soul lifting man to God, the body only too often succeeds in dragging man down to the mud of mere materialism. Since the fall, therefore, man has a more difficult fight in his efforts to resist the fascination of merely material things.

**678. Catholics speak of the mystery of original sin. But is it not a mystery of injustice that we should be born in a state of sin at all?**

No. Remember that millions of men, learned and holy, have revered this mystery; and no unbeliever has loved justice as they. But let us take the problem: Injustice is the depriving of a right. But we had no right to be born in a state of grace and of supernatural dignity and immunities. The very word grace means gratuitous. Can the son of a poor man complain that it was unjust that he was not born of a rich man? Our first parents fell from a state of supernatural wealth compared with which a merely natural state is poverty indeed. And we were born in a state of spiritual bankruptcy. Original conditions are imposed upon all of us because of our fathers. We may regret inherited disabilities, but we cannot say that they are unjust. We have not lost what was due to us. It is curious that unbelievers scoff at the idea of grace and of the

supernatural, insisting that everything is natural only; yet they worry over what they call the injustice of our being born without superfluous privileges.

**679. Are the effects of original sin merely negative?**

The chief effect is the privation of grace. But other effects followed, as if heirs to great wealth, losing their fortune, fell into other evils owing to an environment for which they were neither intended nor suited.

**680. How could I sin in Adam? My responsibility alone deserves penalties.**

Original sin is not strictly speaking an individual responsibility. It is a sin of human nature which is ours as sharers in that human nature. Nor, strictly speaking, are you punished. But a member of a guilty race cannot expect to be treated as if he belonged to a faithful race.

**681. Do you base your doctrine of the transmission of original sin upon the text where God says that He will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon their children?**

No. That text does not really refer to original sin. God said, "I am the Lord, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands to them that love Me and keep My commandments." The passage is really a warning against parental bad example. Evil parents leave a legacy of scandal, their children imitating their vices. And so powerful a force for evil is such parental bad example that it will scarcely die out under three or four generations. As the punishment of sin will fall upon all who hate God, such parents will be punished not only personally, but in their very children. If the children sin also, it is not because they are compelled to do so. Only the generations that hate God will be punished. God will show mercy to all who try to love and serve Him, even though they be children of evil parents.

**682. Was it just to threaten to punish children for the sins of their fathers?**

In the sense in which I have already explained, the text rather predicts a family influence than conveys a threat. Human beings are not only isolated individuals. There is a bond of solidarity between parents and children. Parents live over again in their children; and even in ordinary affairs parents and children are affected by the family fortunes. God merely told the Jews that the same principle would affect their spiritual state. It was a telling way of bringing home to the Jews the consequences of their sins. It struck them where their natural love was strongest-in their offspring. And, as should be clear, it was a warning to the parents rather than to their children. God also made it clear that, by their own fidelity, children could avert an evil inheritance. For by the Prophet Ezechiel He says that, if a child sees all his father's sins, and is afraid, and refuses to do the like, then such a child shall not suffer for the sins of his father. And if men say, "Why hath not this son borne the iniquity of his father?, it is because the son hath wrought justice and hath kept all My commandments."

**683. If we punished the sons of criminals because their parents erred, would that be just or merciful?**

No. But that is not a parallel case. For you are introducing, not a relationship between the Creator and the creature, but a relationship between creature and creature. We are not God. Also our punishment of the children of criminals would not be by the withdrawal of supernatural privileges from them and from their parents. Your difficulties are based on mistaken notions of what the fall and punishment of the human race really means.

**684. When we turn to God's efforts to save the world, we find His efforts almost hypocritical, if Catholic dogma be true.**

Such a verdict is the utterance of folly itself.

**685. Even then Christ made no provision for innocent children who die without Baptism.**

Independently of the death of Christ, God will make provision for them in perfect harmony with His justice, and in a way which will in no point conflict with His mercy.

**686. Their only sin is in being descendants of Adam.**

No one teaches that it is a sin to be a descendant of Adam. The only sin of such children is that which they inherit from Adam. That sin is not a positive personal sin, but a privation of grace, or of a gratuitous supernatural gift never due to human nature. And to be without a gift to which one never had a right involves no injustice.

**687. For this sin the just God prevents them from ever seeing Him, and from ever attaining perfect happiness!**

That is not true. God no more prevents them from seeing Him than He can be said to prevent kittens from flying because He did not give them wings. Is God unjust to kittens because He does not make them flying foxes? Would they be justified in bitter complaints against His justice because He has not endowed them with a power with which He could have endowed them? If kittens cannot fly, it is their own natural incapability which prevents them from flying. And if unbaptized infants cannot see God after their death as God sees Himself, it is their own natural incapability which prevents them from doing so. They are simply without the superadded gift of being capable of operations proper to God, and retain merely the capability of operations proper to human nature. Again, you are wrong in saying that they are prevented from attaining perfect happiness. They do not attain the perfect happiness made possible to those who participate by Baptism in the supernatural and gratuitous destiny purchased for us by Christ. But they attain a perfect happiness proportionate to their nature and all its legitimate aspirations. A kitten can be perfectly happy as a kitten, even though it does not enjoy the additional happiness of flying which is the prerogative of animals endowed with wings.

**688. This I consider a merciless injustice.**

No trace of injustice enters into this matter. Unbaptized infants will bless God for all eternity in their perfect natural happiness. Their very existence is due to God's mercy; for that in itself was a gratuitous gift which justice did not demand. And their eternal natural happiness is assured. It may be on a lower plane than is possible to human nature elevated by divine grace. But it is still a very great gift, filling the souls of those children with gratitude to God. If I give five dollars to a beggar, and later on ten dollars to another beggar, could the first beggar accuse me of "merciless injustice" for having been good to him to a less extent than to the other?

**689. Would it not have been more merciful to give no man free will, and so to insure everybody's eternal happiness?**

It would not have been more merciful to deprive all men of that noblest gift which makes their true dignity, and makes it possible for them to attain an eternal supernatural destiny. It is because unbaptized infants have not attained to the use of free will that they cannot gain, even by baptism of desire, that supernatural destiny. And, therefore, it is because they have not attained to the use of free will that they are provided with eternal happiness on a lower plane than that possible to those able to make a choice. And you call this

provision for them "merciless injustice." Now you suggest that it would have been more merciful for God to have reduced all men to a similar condition.

#### Nature and Work of Christ

##### **690. In what year and on what day was Christ born?**

It is probable that He was born on December 25th, our present Christmas Day. I say that this is probable, because there is really no strict proof in favor of the exact day. Traditionally, we can say that there is much more for it than against it. There is more difficulty as regards the exact year. It is certain that Christ was born after the Roman year 747, and before the Roman year 749. That is, He was born between 5 and 7 years before the usually accepted year 1 of the Christian era.

##### **691. Whence came the mistake concerning the year of Christ's birth?**

From the mistakes of those who originated our present calendar. In the year 525, Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian monk, decided to draw up an exact calendar for the Christian era. He calculated that Christ was born in the year 753 after the founding of Rome. But it is certain that he was mistaken. For Herod, who persecuted Christ and slaughtered the innocents, died in April, 750. Herod could not have persecuted Christ if our Lord was not born until 3 years after Herod's death! Again, Herod was in Jerusalem when he sought to destroy Christ, yet left Jerusalem for good in November, 749. Therefore, our Lord must have been born by then. Moreover, Herod made diligent inquiry of the Wise Men as to the circumstances of our Lord's birth, and decided to kill all the male children of two years and under. Evidently, then, our Lord was at least one year old, or even perhaps 18 months. If we deduct two years from 749 we get back to 747. If Christ was born in 747, after the founding of Rome, instead of 753 as Dionysius thought, He was born six years before our present mistaken calendar supposes. It need scarcely be said that the uncertainty of human calculations as to time in no way affects the fact of the birth of Christ.

##### **692. Why did Christ refrain from preaching and instructing mankind until He was thirty years of age?**

Our Lord's life, from the moment He commenced it, was a practical instruction for all time. But our Lord did not undertake the public preaching of His religion until He was about thirty years of age. There were several reasons for this. He wished to sanctify home life by His long submission to Joseph and Mary, setting the example of obedience to parents, and showing the supreme importance of domestic society. What home life is the national life will be. Again, our Lord wished to do and to teach; and, therefore, He gave years to the exemplification of virtue before He preached it. He wished also to be faithful to the Jewish Law, which did not permit one to teach religion until 30 years of age, which was regarded as the age of maturity of thought and judgment. Christ would not give the Jews the excuse to reject Him on the score that He was under the legal age of teachers in religious matters.

##### **693. Is it not true that there are no references to the Life of Jesus in the Gospels from the ages of twelve to thirty?**

That is not quite true. St. Luke tells us that Jesus went down to Nazareth, and that He was subject to Joseph and Mary. The Greek word used by St. Luke implies that He was continuously subject to them.

##### **694. Would not that bear out the contention that He was in India between the ages of twelve and thirty, learning the Buddhist religion, and getting the ideas He later preached in Palestine?**

St. Luke's assurance that He went down to Nazareth and continued there in subjection to Joseph and Mary certainly does not bear out the notion that He went off to India. Nor is there a trace of evidence that He did. And most certainly Christ neither preached Buddhistic doctrines, nor derived His teachings from Buddhism



in any shape or form. Christ said simply, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." To the Apostles He said, "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you." He did not say, "All things that I have heard from the Buddhist monks." Again He said to Nicodemus, "No man hath ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven ... how will you believe if I speak to you heavenly things?" He did not say "Indian" things. Christ's character merits credence. The accusation that He preached Buddhism denies His veracity; and not only is there no evidence for it; it is against the evidence that does exist.

**695. The doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount were part of the Buddhist religion before Christ was born.**

That is not really true. Religion is natural to man as well as a conscience dictating natural ethics. The moral aspirations of men will, therefore, lead to certain similar ethical principles. But to construct a journey to India, and to picture Christ sitting at the feet of Buddhist teachers on a few vague similarities is fanciful in the extreme; and above all, when the dissimilarities are far more significant. In reality the moral teachings of Buddhism are nothing like those of the Sermon on the Mount. Such good and natural ideas as exist in Buddhism bear only a superficial likeness to the doctrine of Christ. Christ taught supernatural virtue to be exercised with the help of God's grace, and from motives of pure love of God. Buddhism knows nothing of this. It teaches natural virtue only, from motives of self-love, or merely natural sympathy. There is nothing in Buddhistic teaching which surpasses the natural ingenuity of man; and the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount is entirely different from anything in Buddhism. St. Matthew records that, when Christ finished speaking, the "people were in admiration at His doctrine, for He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees." And we can equally say, "not as the Buddhists." Christ's doctrine in itself, and in the manner in which He taught it, and in the source He claimed for it, rules out any possibility of its derivation from Buddhism.

**696. Was not Christ mistaken in many of His teachings?**

Christ was God in human form; and God does not make mistakes.

**697. The Gospels show that Christ thought the end of the world at hand, and that it would occur during the lifetime of some of His hearers.**

The Gospels show just the opposite. Asked when the end of the world would come, Christ expressly said that He would give no information on that point. "Of that hour and day," He said, "no man knoweth. No, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." When He said "nor the Son," He meant that Son as talking to those around Him; i. e., the Son in human form. The time when the end of the world would occur was not part of His message to mankind. He taught that judgment will come unexpectedly, deliberately leaving it uncertain as to when it would happen. However, He implies that it would not soon arrive—certainly not before the death of His immediate hearers. When He commissioned the Apostles to go and to teach all nations, likening His Church to a slowly growing tree, He knew that there would be time for all these things; and He promised to be with His Church all days, even till the consummation of the world. He could not have spoken like that had He thought the end of the world to be close at hand.

**698. What is the Catholic doctrine on the sinlessness of Jesus?**

Both that He was without sin of any kind, and that He was absolutely incapable of sin. That necessarily follows from the Catholic doctrine that He was truly God, and could never cease to be God.

**699. Was the temptation of Christ a matter of routine, or was Satan un-aware that he was dealing with an impeccable nature?**

Satan was obviously unaware that Jesus was the very Son of God in human form. He would not have tempted Him had he known that. But he at least knew that God had endowed Him with supernatural power,

that Jesus was perhaps the Messiah, and that he himself had all to fear if Jesus used this power according to God's will. So he tried at least to induce Jesus to violate God's will. The temptation was permitted, even though Christ was impeccable, not as a matter of mere routine, but for our instruction. We are taught that, no matter how holy we may be, we cannot expect to be free from temptation; and Christ gives us an example how to behave when actually tempted. Moreover, by undergoing the temptation He fills us with confidence in His mercy, that He should deign to share our temptations; and also, by His victory, He merits for us the grace to overcome our own trials.

**700. If Jesus was quite incapable of sin, it was no real temptation. Yet Hebrews IV., 15, tells us that "We have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin."**

Jesus could not sin; yet the temptation was real. You will say, "But how can that be?" It could be a non-use of His divine power on the part of Jesus to the extent of allowing His human nature to experience quite natural cravings, even as He allowed that human nature to endure the sufferings of the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and even the sense of dereliction on the cross. By calling on His divine power, Christ could have spared Himself those sufferings, but He did not. In the temptation He permitted His lower and created nature a distressing struggle between the adherence of His human will to the will of God, and the satisfaction to be found in yielding to what Satan proposed. The struggle was never allowed to get out of bounds, but it was endured. Though Jesus could not have consented, He encountered the suggestion of attractions, and experienced them as attractions, even as the Saints who could but do not consent, or sinners who do consent. And the deliberate conforming of His human will to the divine will was not less violent because it had to be, than it would otherwise have been.

**701. Who, believer or unbeliever, can prove the sinlessness of Jesus?**

Unbelievers desire to prove that He was not sinless. But any believer who knows how to read can prove from Sacred Scripture the sinlessness of Jesus. The Gospels put Christ before us as a flawless character, supremely pure and holy, with no consciousness of sin, uttering no words of repentance, and seeking no forgiveness. He is the Savior of sinners who need salvation, not one of them. He could say to His most bitter enemies, "Which of you can convince me of sin?" It was written of Him before His birth, "He shall save His people from their sins." Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, St. Peter wrote of Him in his first Epistle, "He did no sin." To the Corinthians St. Paul wrote, "He knew no sin." St. John did not hesitate to say in his first Epistle, "In Him was no sin." Outside the Catholic Church many professing Christians deny the divinity of Christ, speaking of Him as though He were a mere man, albeit the most perfect of men. But, having dragged Christ down to the merely natural level, they are now going further, and declaring that He was also subject to sin just as other sinful men, even though not so tainted as the rest. And still they do not blush to call themselves Christians. They like the name, though they reject the religion.

**702. Fundamentalists regard it as essential to Christianity to believe that Christ is the Divine Son of God.**

That is undoubtedly an essential teaching of the Christian religion.

**703. I have to qualify my agreement with regard to the interpretation of the meaning of the word divine.**

The qualification you introduce is such that you completely withdraw all agreement with those who maintain the Divinity of Christ in the truly Christian sense of the word.

**704. I do not believe that Christ was the Divine Son of God in a way utterly outside the possibility of attainment by every other son of God,**

In that case you do not believe in Christian revelation. For Christ is the Eternal Son of God by divine and spiritual generation. He was begotten, not made. We merely human beings are created, and the adoptive children of God. Could any ordinary man ever attain to the dignity of Christ whom St. John tells us to have existed in eternity as the Word of God, the Word who was with God, and who was God? Can any ordinary man say that he descended from heaven, as Christ declared Himself to have done; or assert with any trace of truth, "Before Abraham was made, I am"? When St. Peter said to Christ, "Thou art the Son of the living God," he used that expression in a sense that could never apply to anyone else. The Jews were quite familiar with the expression "sons of God." St. Peter needed no special revelation from God to apply that expression to Christ. But he did need a revelation from God to perceive that Jesus was the Eternal Son of God in human form, and our Lord therefore said to him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven." Matthew XVI., 17. St. Peter had discerned that Jesus was the Son of God in the unique sense of being God the Son. In refusing to regard faith in Christ to this extent as essential to Christianity, you reject Christianity in favor of yet one more purely natural religion ranking with all others devised by mere man.

#### **705. How can one prove that Jesus Christ is truly God?**

By His character, work, and claims. He perfectly fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. His life was one of more than human virtue and holiness. He taught a doctrine obviously of heavenly rather than of earthly origin. He wrought miracles, including even that of His own resurrection from the grave. He established the Catholic Church which has outlived empires and human institutions against tremendous opposition, betrayals from within, and persecution from without. He definitely claimed to be God; yet was neither insane nor a liar, for no one could doubt His wisdom and veracity. And He has retained a perpetual vitality and power, winning a deeply personal love from millions of human hearts through thousands of years—a phenomenon unparalleled elsewhere.

#### **706. It is true that one cannot doubt the wisdom and the veracity of Christ. But one can doubt whether He really claimed to be God.**

One cannot reasonably doubt that. In the Gospel of St. John X., 30, we find Christ saying, "I and the Father are one." The Jews clearly understood Him, and took up stones to stone Him to death. "For which of my good works will you stone me?" asked Christ. "Not for a good work," they replied, "but because, being a man, you make yourself God." In John XIV., Christ said to His Apostles, "You believe in God. Believe also in me. If you had known me you would have known the Father also." Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father." Jesus replied, "Philip, he that seeth me seeth the Father also." It is quite clear that Christ there identified Himself with God the Father in the Divine Nature. In John XX., 28, Thomas, the Apostle, addressed Christ with the words, "My Lord and my God." Christ accepted the salutation, although He could not have dared to do so had He not been God. In St. Matthew XXVIII., we find Christ saying, "Go baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He did not hesitate to rank His own authority with that of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. Nothing could be more certain than Christ's claim to Divinity in the full sense of that word; and St. John rightly speaks of His eternal Divinity when he says in the opening words 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."

#### **707. Why did Christ so often call Himself the Son of man, and so rarely the Son of God? You and I are both sons of men, and also God's sons.**

We are not God's sons as Christ was God's Son. For He declared Himself to be the only-begotten Son, which excludes other "begotten" sons. He was the only Eternal Son of God by generation. We are children of God by creation in time. But now, why did the Eternal Son of God, having become man by assuming to Himself the human nature born of the Virgin Mary, so frequently refer to Himself as the "Son of man" rather than as the "Son of God"? He did so because the title "Son of man" had a special Messianic significance for the Jews. Daniel had predicted that a son of man would come with the clouds of heaven; that he would have power and glory; that all peoples and tribes and tongues would serve him; that his power would be everlasting, and his kingdom never be destroyed. (Dan. VII., 13-14.) The Jews had first to

accept Christ as the Messiah, and then His Messianic teaching of the new revelation of God. He, therefore, constantly refers to Himself in the terms of Daniel's Messianic appellation. The Jews knew that it signified much more than a merely human nature. So, in His trial, when the High Priest said to Him, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God?", Jesus said, "I am. And you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Then the High Priest cried, "What need have we of further testimony? You have heard the blasphemy." Those words are intelligible only provided Christ meant by the expression "Son of man" that He was much more than "merely a man." Christ, together with His humanity, possessed the same Divine Nature as His Father, and was God in the strictest sense of the word.

**708. Christ quoted of Himself David's words, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool."**

He did; and He quoted those words in support of His claim to be God. Take the context. The Pharisees had put to Him the tempting question, "Master, which is the great commandment of the Law?" They did not really desire information. They wished to catch Him. Knowing that He claimed to be God, they thought that He would add to the greatest commandment, or alter it by bringing in some reference to Himself. But Christ replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Then, to show up their hypocrisy, and the fact that this question was prompted only by hatred of Himself, and not by humility or charity, He pointedly added, "And the second is like to the first. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Then at once He turned to their thought of His claim to be God. "What think you of Christ?" He demanded of them, "Whose son is he?" They said to Him, "David's." Jesus replied, "How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord . . .?" The Pharisees could not answer the argument. David had acknowledged that the future Christ to be born of his stock would in reality be his God, and Supreme Lord and Master. Christ rightly said, "If David called Him Lord, how can the future Messiah be merely his son?"

**709. The words exclude an equality of Christ with the Father, for they express the Father's dominative right.**

The words do not suggest a dominative right of the Father over the Son prescinding from the Incarnation. David referred to the Messiah as my Lord, and predicted that the Messiah would triumph in the end. But the Messiah was Christ, and the reference was to the Eternal Son as personally united to a created human nature which was as subject to God as any other created nature. It is a fallacy to apply to the Eternal Son of God prescinding from His union with a created human nature a text which refers to Him as incarnate in that nature.

**710. You have said that God the Son was man only from the time of His incarnation.**

Correct.

**711. If God is eternally all-complete and all-perfect, how could His Divine Nature have lacked that attribute till then?**

The Divine Nature is, of course, infinitely perfect, and no attribute could be added to that infinitely perfect nature. But, in the incarnation the humanity of Christ did not become a new attribute added to the Divine Nature, nor was the Divine Nature more perfect after the incarnation than before. In God we have to distinguish between the Divine Nature, and the three Divine Persons possessing that nature. Now, in the incarnation, the Second Divine Person simply assumed into relationship with Himself a created human nature. That human nature remained a created human nature. It did not become, nor was it blended with, nor was it added to the Divine Nature. The Second Divine Person merely made it His own, extending His personal control to it also. From the moment of the incarnation He acted in two distinct natures, instead of in the Divine Nature only.

**712. Was God less perfect before the incarnation than afterwards?**

In the light of what I have just explained it is clear that your question should be this: Was God less perfect when the Second Divine Person acted in the one Divine Nature only, than He was subsequently when that Second Divine Person operated in two natures, the one Divine, and the other human? The answer is: No. For the incarnation did not mean any intrinsic change in God. If the incarnation produced any intrinsic change in God, then it would have meant a perfection or attribute superadded to the Divine Nature. That is an impossibility.

**713. What change did occur when the incarnation took place?**

The change was intrinsic from the viewpoint of the created human nature, but extrinsic to the Divine Nature. It is difficult to make this metaphysical problem clear and simple. But you will get some idea of what I mean by considering the analogy from knowledge. When you get knowledge from the study of a certain object, the object causes the knowledge of it within your mind. Thus a tree reflects its image to my eye. I acquire knowledge of it, and undergo a change from ignorance to a new degree of learning. But the relationship between myself and the tree arising from my perception of it is intrinsic to me, and only extrinsic to the tree. There is no change in the tree. There is a change in myself. That is only an analogy, of course. But it gives a faint idea of what I want to express concerning God. In the incarnation the change which occurred was not in the Divine Uncreated Nature; the humanity assumed by the Eternal Son was made more perfect than any other humanity. But the receiver, not the giver was perfected. We can say that God was henceforth differently related to humanity by a relationship extrinsic to the Divine Nature, and intrinsic to the assumed human nature. So far as the Divine Nature is concerned, therefore, we have an extrinsic non-perfecting change. And it added no attribute to the Divine Nature which was previously lacking. My explanation does not do away with the mystery of it all. It merely excludes, any contradiction from the viewpoint of human reason.

**714. The idea that God begot an only Son by the woman Mary, and that this son Jesus was a second God, is too pagan for me.**

Paganism is opposed to the true God. And as Christianity is the religion revealed by the true God, it can scarcely be called pagan. But you have not correctly understood Christian teaching. It is not Christian teaching that "God begot an only son by the woman Mary." The Christian teaching is that the eternally begotten Son of God assumed to Himself a human nature formed from the Virgin Mary; and in that nature appeared to men on earth. Nor do we say that Jesus was a "second God." There is but one God. The Second Person of the Trinity, even during and after the incarnation, retained His mutual possession of one and the same Divine Nature with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Whether you understand our doctrine or not, it is useless to refute what we do not teach.

**715. You argue that because Christ worked miracles He was God, But if all the people who have worked miracles were gods, the world would have had a lot of gods.**

You must not confuse actual miracles with spurious claims to miracles. Through ignorance or superstition many people have regarded things as miracles which were certainly not miracles. Eliminating all these, and confining our attention to actual miracles, even then we do not claim that all who have worked miracles are gods. The prophets worked miracles to prove that they were truly sent by God, but they themselves were not God, nor did they claim to be God. Christ, however, was in a very different category from the prophets. He claimed to be God, and by actual miracles justified His claim. "Believe me," He said, "for the sake of the works that I do." And He exacted belief in His Divinity.

**716. Are we not always in the presence of God?**

Yes. God is everywhere present by His immensity, knowledge, and power.

**717. Why accept the teaching of Jesus that He is the Son of God, yet refuse to accept His teaching that we are all the sons of God?**

We are not all sons of God in the same sense as that in which Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus, in His Divine Nature, is the Son of God by eternal generation in an infinitely perfect and uncreated nature. We are children of God by creation in a finite and imperfect nature.

**718. Is not God in all of us?**

God is everywhere, and we are ever within His immensity of being. But in no way are we identified with God, nor He with us. We are in God; but we are not God.

**719. If Christ's Divinity was so clear, why did so few Jews accept His claim, despite the fact that they had seen His miracles?**

This was not due to obscurity in Christ's claim, nor to lack of evidence for it. The fault was in the dispositions of the majority of the Jews at the time. The Jews could deny neither the claim nor the miracles. But when it came to an acceptance of Christ in practice, their will was at fault. His doctrines demanded too much of them. They dealt a great blow at their national pride, reversed many of their traditional notions, and proposed an ethical standard of life much higher than that to which they had been accustomed. Fear of the Romans was also a factor, prompting the choice of Caesar when Christ and Caesar were put before them as necessary alternatives. Their will was at fault, and Christ knew it. "Even if one were to rise from the dead," He said, "they will not believe."

**720. It could not have been evident that He was God; for people do not trifle with one whom they know to be God.**

You are confusing extrinsic evidence with intrinsic evidence. We do not claim that the Jews had intrinsic evidence that Christ was God. But they certainly had sufficient extrinsic evidence to know it. They knew quite clearly that He claimed to be God. And they knew that the works He did justified that claim. But, whilst they had this extrinsic evidence, they had no intrinsic evidence that He was God. He was visibly a man, invisibly God; and they could know that He was God only by accepting His authority for the statement—an authority justified by His character and works. But they refused to accept His authority. They refused to put their faith in Him because it would mean worldly disadvantages. They concentrated their attention upon those worldly disadvantages to the exclusion of attention to their own spiritual advantages, choosing not what was right, but what seemed to them expedient for the time being. This attitude is of daily experience amongst men, even where there is a clear knowledge that God's love and friendship are being rejected, and His infinite power defied.

**721. Where now is the soul of Christ?**

It is united with His risen and glorified body, forming an integral part of His human nature still.

**722. The Eternal Son is of the Holy Trinity. How can the human soul be of the Holy Trinity?**

The Eternal Son is of the Holy Trinity in virtue of His Divine Nature. But that Son assumed into union with His own proper Personality a human nature, and from the moment He did so that union has never been broken. The human soul of the risen Christ belongs by natural union to His body, even as His body belongs by natural union to His soul. Both body and soul, as forming a complete human nature, belong by supernatural union to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and its relationship to the Trinity is by and through the Divine Personality of the Eternal Son of God.

**723. The Catholic Church teaches, does it not, that Christ died to atone for our sins, and thus to accomplish our redemption?**

That is the Catholic teaching.

**724. For years I have tried without success to get a lucid explanation of the doctrine of the Atonement.**

I will try to clear up all your difficulties for you.

**725. Can one suffer vicariously for another in the sense Catholic dogma teaches?**

That question is answered by the fact that Christ did suffer for us, and make vicarious atonement for our sins. Christ declared that He was the Good Shepherd who would give His life for His sheep. Again, of Himself He said, "The Son of man is come to give His life, a redemption for many." Mk. X., 45. At the last supper He said, "This is my blood which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins." Matt. XXVI., 28. And such was the doctrine preached by the Apostles. St. Peter wrote, "You were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet. I., 19. St. Paul wrote to the Romans, "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Rom. V., 10; to the Galatians, "I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself for me." Gal. II., 20.

**726. If the point be allowed, of what spiritual significance is it?**

I admit that it is of little spiritual significance to one who has no supernatural faith in Christ. St. Paul declares that the natural man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God, and that they are foolishness to him. He cannot understand "because it is spiritually examined." 1 Cor. II., 14. Applying this thought to the Atonement he wrote, "The word of the Cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is to us, it is the power of God. . . . We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. I., 18-24.

**727. Did Christ really die, or did He merely go through the form of dying?**

Christ really died, just as ordinary human beings die, His created human soul separating from His body.

**728. As God, did Christ have power over death?**

He had. He proved that by undoing in His own case the work wrought by death. Death separated His soul from His body. He reunited His soul to His body in the resurrection, resuming His human life as if He had never died.

**729. Knowing this, did He fear death?**

He did. He possessed a truly human nature, consisting of a created human soul and a body. Soul and body are naturally adapted to the formation of one human being, and this natural unity is opposed to dissolution. The body has a natural tendency to fight to retain the soul; and the soul cooperates in the struggle to retain its unity with the body. It is against natural instinct of both soul and body to separate; and Christ experienced this psychological dread, in addition to that awakened by the prospect of so much other suffering.

**730. If God, Christ must have known that He would be happier in heaven than on earth. If not, how could He teach authoritatively concerning heaven?**

As God, Christ knew the essential happiness of heaven by eternal experience; and foreknew the further secondary happiness awaiting Him in His risen humanity. Your very question shows that you are seeking an explanation of Christ whilst omitting all consideration of His Divinity. If you see in Christ merely an ordinary human being, no wonder you have difficulties. Christ is inexplicable, unless we take into account

all the factors concerning Him. And it is essential to remember that He was at one and the same time true God and true man.

**731. Why then should He fear to die and desire to remain on earth?**

He did not desire to remain on earth any longer than He did. But the knowledge of His happier state in heaven did not free Him from the natural dread of the intermediate means by which He was to attain it. The prospect of freedom from toothache does not rob the dentist's chair of its significance.

**732. If He did not wish to remain any longer on earth, wherein is the sacrifice of His death?**

His sacrifice did not rest essentially in His dying when He died, but in the fact that He did die, and in such a way. The conformity of His human will to the Divine will as to the time of His death was a meritorious element; but His essential sacrifice lay in His free acceptance of a dreadful death not due to Him, taking upon Himself the penalty due to our sins, and endowing His offering with the infinite value of His Divine dignity and charity.

**733. Was it the manner of His death that constituted the sacrifice?**

The passion and sufferings of Christ which preceded His death formed an integral part of the particular type of sacrifice demanded of Him by God's justice and charity. Had God willed it, Christ could have saved us without undergoing so much suffering. But God willed otherwise, and Jesus undertook to satisfy for human nature in human nature, and in generous measure indeed. Nor was His long-drawn-out and intense passion superfluous. He thus made superabundant satisfaction for our sins, gave an extreme manifestation of His love for us, set us an example of almost every virtue in almost every possible trial, and intensified the motives why those who profess to believe in Him should refrain from further sin. Thus Christ made essential reparation by His death, and circumstantial reparation by enduring all types of penalties deserved by the various sins of men.

**734. Had He been given a painless death, would the atonement have been accomplished?**

Yes. But that is a purely speculative question. We know that God did not decree a painless death; and Jesus fulfilled every detail of His passion and death as it had been predicted long before His birth into this world.

**735. If Christ were not God, but merely a man dying for His convictions, then there was something great and grand in His sacrifice.**

If Christ were not God, then He was a blasphemous liar, and not even an ordinary martyr for lofty convictions. He asserted Himself to be God. The alternative to deliberate deception is that He was insane, if indeed not God, and that would render His death a pity, but not heroic. It is precisely because He was God that there is something greater and grander than anything else that has ever happened in history where the death of Christ is concerned. It is a great and grand thing for a man to choose to die for the sake of justice rather than escape death by forsaking principle. It is greater and grander to die for a friend, without any obligation of justice, and solely for the sake of charity. And our admiration is increased if one in high position, with wealth and comfort, gives his life for a nobody, some poor fellow creature who is facing disaster. And if that poor person had exhibited nothing but hatred towards his benefactor, being his declared enemy, still further is our admiration increased. But that God, infinitely superior to us, should offer Himself for sinners who have used His very gifts to offend and insult Him, goes far beyond our



ordinary ideas of heroism, nobility, and generosity; and no greater or grander sacrifice comes within the range of our wildest dreams and most extravagant imaginations.

**736. I certainly find great difficulty in accepting the resurrection of Christ with the confidence exhibited by Catholics.**

I can quite understand that. There is a supernatural significance in the resurrection to appreciate which one needs the gift of faith from God. But still, abstracting from its supernatural significance, you should have no difficulty in accepting the resurrection as an historical fact.

**737. If it were a fact, I agree that Christianity would be demonstrated as scientifically true.**

No Catholic could agree with that. It is an historical fact that Christ rose from the dead. But that is not scientific proof of the Christian religion, as such. It gives rational justification for one's acceptance of Christianity, but no more. I am not watering down the case for Christianity. I merely wish to exclude extravagant claims. There are various orders of knowledge, each quite sound, but each with its own methods. Things within the scope of sense experience can be experimentally proved by actual experimental knowledge. Theorems can be demonstrated mathematically. Historical facts are proved by testimony of those who observed events in past times. Moral principles demand a moral judgment; religious teachings a religious approach, inspired by true wisdom, good will, and divine grace. Now the resurrection of Christ can be viewed historically, or it can be viewed religiously. The merely historical view is certain by all the laws of history, and as far as it goes, it is within the grasp of any man just as the fact that Julius Caesar landed in Britain, or that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo. But the merely historical view will not give religious comprehension.

**738. But there seems to be no historical proof that Christ did really rise from the dead.**

The Gospels, and the subsequent history of the Christian religion, afford all the proof that any man should want. We know that Christ truly died. That He did not is historically false. The disciples, Jews, and Romans were quite certain of it. It was physically impossible that He did not die. He was brutally scourged, drained of His blood, and His death was tested by a final spear thrust. Again, that He did not die is morally impossible, for after His resurrection Christ said, "It behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead." The moral character of Christ forbids any pretense on His part that He had died whilst He knew quite well that He had not died. But, as He was truly dead, so it is equally certain that He reappeared as living. He appeared to so many, and so suddenly, and so perfectly restored, that their evidence cannot be disregarded; and still less can the astounding change in the Apostles be accounted for save by a fact obvious to their senses. Historically, therefore, a man must either shut his eyes to the evidence, or believe that the resurrection of Christ did take place. But this belief in the historical fact would not be belief in Christianity as a religion.

**739. Personally, I think the belief was the product of the vivid religious faith of the early Christians.**

The idea that Christ rose from the dead was not the product of faith. The faith of the early Christians rested upon the historical fact, and merely explains the spiritual results of the fact in them. The Apostles knew by actual experience that Christ had risen, as we know from history. Faith, however, goes further. Even after the fact of the resurrection, the faith of the Apostles needed development. They said to the risen Christ, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" Acts I., 6. They still had material and rather temporal ideas. But when they received the Holy Ghost, their faith received an immense stimulus, and it clarified their views. They realized the supernatural character of Christ's kingdom. Where before they had seen Christ's humanity, now at last they saw His Divinity as never before. They saw that God had indeed put His seal on Christ; that Christ was indeed Lord and Master, endowed with all power in heaven and on earth, and able to keep His promise to be with His Church all days even till the end of the world.

Religiously, our own faith today gives us certainty in its own order concerning the resurrection, already known historically. We live in intimate union with Christ, and it is not an intimate union with a dead man. By His Church Christ enfolds us; by grace He dwells within us; by the Blessed Eucharist He renders Himself personally present both without and within us. All this is certainly true, yet inexplicable without the resurrection. And the fact explains the faith; the faith did not invent the fact.

**740. I admit that Christians believe in Christ every bit as fervently as Mahometans believe in Mahomet.**

The religious opinions of Mahometans concerning Mahomet cannot be compared with the supernatural faith of Christians in Christ. Mahometans in any case point to a coffin at Mecca; Christians to an empty grave at Jerusalem. Where Mahometans say of their prophet, "He is here," Christians can say of Christ, "He is not here; He is risen as He said." Mahomet is dead. Christ is very much alive and active, giving life to millions of souls.

**741. People can sustain their religious propensities on nothing when it is consecrated by centuries of tradition.**

Nothing could scarcely be consecrated by centuries of tradition. Also, religious propensities will be sustained, whether they have centuries of tradition to lean upon or not. For religious propensities are part of human nature. They result from man's intelligence; and that is why religion is peculiar to man, and not found amongst mere animals. Such propensities, therefore, will persist. And they will persist, even when men abandon all the century-old traditions. The resurrection, of course, happens to be a fact known to men ever since it occurred, and, therefore, during twenty centuries. But you cannot explain the resurrection by tradition. How did it originate? Who began it? What was it that gave the first impulse to the Apostles, and made them succeed? Whilst Jesus personally was alive and with them before His death He could sustain them. But afterwards, if He did not appear to them alive once more, who made them all so certain and so urgent in their cause? The fact of the resurrection alone can explain these things.

**742. I cannot admit that belief in the physical resurrection of Christ is essential to Christianity.**

St. Paul, who surely has a greater claim to our confidence, wrote to the Corinthians, "If there is no resurrection from the dead, then even Christ did not rise; and if Christ did not rise, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain." 1 Corinthians XC, 14. Belief in the actual resurrection of Christ was certainly essential to the Christianity preached by St. Paul!

**743. All I can admit is that the tale of his physical resurrection is told in the four Gospels.**

No one who really believes in them could refer so contemptuously to the historical value of the Gospels. If they are not reliable why pretend to believe in Christ at all? How long will your form of Christianity stand, with all the supports knocked from beneath it?

**744. I cannot see that belief in the physical resurrection of Christ has any bearing on Christian living.**

St. Paul does not hesitate to say that the just man "lives by faith." Romans I., 17. In the light of the truths put before us by faith, and in the light of all of them, the Christian lives and walks. The supernatural and spiritual life supposes supernatural principles and spiritual power. And these must be made known to US by a supernatural revelation, and made possible for us by the merits of Christ our Redeemer. And the resurrection of Christ is of profound significance in the work of our redemption and even of our present sanctification. St. Paul wrote to the Romans, "We are buried with Him by Baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead ... so we also may walk in newness of life." Romans VI., 4. Earlier, in Romans

IV., 25, St. Paul wrote that Christ "was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification." It is the continued life of the risen Christ which is derived by our souls. The resurrection of Christ was due to His divine power. And by the divine power that resurrection of Christ exercises an effect upon us so that as, in God's providence, the body lives by the soul, so now the soul lives by the grace of the risen Christ. It is because Christ, being risen, dies no more, that we, being dead to sin, are enabled to live henceforth to Christ. The resurrection is essential for Christian living.

**745. Is it a dogma of the Catholic Church that Christ ascended bodily into heaven?**

Yes. The Gospels declare the fact. And in the Acts of the Apostles we read that when Stephen was being stoned to death he was "filled with the Holy Ghost, and looking up steadfastly into heaven, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts VII., 55.

**746. I can scarcely conceive that Christ would have in heaven the same body that He had on earth.**

Christ has the same body as He had on earth, but nobody maintains that that same body is subject to exactly the same conditions as when He lived in the midst of men. No difficulty presents itself concerning the fact. The Jesus Christ who died on the cross was the Jesus Christ who rose from the dead, and that demands that He rose with the same body and soul. That body was as integral to Christ in His human-nature as your body is integral to you. It is an historical fact, also, that Jesus ascended bodily from this earth. But beyond these facts we meet with mystery. One thing is certain: The body of Christ has undergone some change which has altered its nature without changing its identity. St. Paul tells us that our bodies also, when rising from the dead, will be changed from merely material conditions, becoming spiritualized. What these mysterious changes mean we do not know. But despite the mysterious elements connected with them, we believe the facts revealed, knowing them to be true with all the certainty of divine faith. Far from being surprised by the presence of difficulty, therefore, we expect it; and are content to leave mysterious details mysterious. But we do not doubt what has been revealed as fact; and we profess with undiminished conviction that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, body and soul.

Mary, the Mother of God

**747. Why does the Catholic Church give so much honor to Mary when she was just an ordinary woman selected for a great purpose?**

Firstly, I deny that Mary was just an ordinary woman. She was a human being, but amongst human beings there are degrees of dignity. And she was no ordinary woman to whom God thought fit to send an Archangel with the salutation, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." Nor was she an ordinary woman to whom Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, cried out, "Blessed art thou amongst women; and whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me." Had any ordinary woman come to visit Elizabeth, no such exclamation would have fallen from her lips.

Secondly, you yourself say that Mary was selected for a great purpose. Selected by whom? By God. Now God has ever fittingly prepared those whom He has deigned to call to great duties. We see that in the case of the Prophets, and above all, in the case of that greatest of all the Prophets, St. John the Baptist. Yet not one of these had so close a relationship to Jesus as she who was destined to be His Mother.

**748. Some female had to be selected, and it just happened to be Mary of Nazareth.**

If one who professes to be a Christian and to believe in the Bible thinks to please Christ by speaking contemptuously of His Mother, he is very much mistaken. I do not know whether you hold your own mother in reverence and esteem. But I will presume that you do. And I will merely say that Jesus was a far better Son to His Mother than you ever have been to yours. If you would resent any attempt to belittle your mother, you have a faint indication of what Christ thinks of such words as yours. As for your remark that

"it just happened," a moment ago you said that Mary was selected for a great purpose. Selection by an infinitely wise God is not a haphazard proceeding. There were reasons for the selection of Mary rather than others, and those reasons had to do with her holiness and fitness above all others for the immense dignity.

**749. The glory does not rest with her hut with God.**

Mary herself said that. She gave the glory to God, saying, "He that is mighty hath done great things to me." But she did not deny that great things had been done to her which had not been done to others. And those who receive the greater gifts from God deserve the greater honor from us.

**750. What is her place in the Christian religion?**

Mary's place in the Christian religion should be obvious. She is the morning star preceding the Light of the World, Christ. The only difference is that all her light is derived from the Son she heralds. By God's eternal decree Mary has been associated with the highest mysteries of the Christian religion, being the very instrument of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God, and, therefore, of our redemption. We have devotion to her both because of our admiration of her, and because of her interest in our eternal welfare. When we honor Mary, of course, we are but honoring Christ in her. Without Him, she would be nothing, and she would be the first to admit it. And the honor we show her cannot displease Christ. He was the best Son who ever lived, and would rather be displeased were His Mother ignored or slighted. Remember the bootblack's answer to the parson. Whilst having his boots polished, the parson saw a medal of the Virgin Mary hanging from the boy's neck on a string. "Sonny," he said, "why do you wear that?" "She is the Mother of Christ," said the boy. "But," objected the parson, "she's no different from your own mother." "No," replied the boy, "but there's a hell of a difference between the sons." We owe love and devotion to the Mother of Christ.

**751. Scripture accords no attributes of deity to Mary, and outside the grace of God<sup>9</sup> she was as helpless as any other woman.**

The Catholic Church forbids anyone to ascribe any attributes of deity to Mary, whether inside or outside the grace of God. However holy she might be by grace, she still remains a creature. Mary would be the first to say that, but for the grace of God, she would have no privileges beyond those of other women. The Catholic Church teaches the same. But she certainly did receive graces that no other woman ever received or ever will receive, and in supernatural dignity and power surpasses them all. In bringing forth Jesus Christ she brought forth the life of my soul, and she is as much my mother in the supernatural order as my earthly mother in the temporal and natural order. And I for one hope ever to retain a child's devotion to my heavenly Mother till the day of my death and for all eternity. I know that as Eve was the mother of all the living, yet brought us forth to suffering, misery and death, so Mary, the second Eve, between whom and Satan God promised to put enmity, brought me forth to the happiness and life of God's grace.

Eve listened to Satan, disobeyed God, gave us to eat of the tree of evil, left us miserable and driven from the paradise of the grace of God.

Mary listened to an Angel, obeyed, gave us to eat of the tree of life, restored happiness to us and us to God's grace, and she is enthroned in heaven with Christ. And there she is my Mother and my Queen. I can only wish she could be as proud of me as I am of her.

**752. in what way did Mary take her part in the redemptive work of mankind, which was accomplished by Christ alone?**

Christ was the principal Author of our redemption, but there were many secondary cooperators in the work. We even find St. Paul saying that we are to fill up what is wanting to the sufferings of Christ. The explanation of this, however, would demand a treatise on the mystical body of Christ as comprising all the

members of the Church, and I can scarcely do justice to it now. All I can say is that Mary cooperated in the redemptive work in a way quite special to herself.

As Jesus is the second Adam, so Mary is the second Eve. As our first Mother Eve brought us forth to misery and suffering, so our second Mother Mary, in bringing forth our Savior, brought us forth to happiness and salvation. Mary's consent was asked by God when the time for the Incarnation was at hand; she consented to the full work of Christ from the cave of Bethlehem to the Cross of Calvary. She provided the very blood that was shed for us. In union with Christ she had her own passion, and Simeon rightly predicted to her, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce." With, in, and through the work of Christ her sufferings also contributed secondarily towards our redemption. And she was given to us from the Cross as a mother for a mother's work. To all of us Christ said, in the person of St. John, "Son, behold thy Mother." We Catholics, therefore, regard Mary as our spiritual Mother, entertaining towards her the love and devotion of children. Every Christian woman, above all, should regard Mary, the Mother of Christ, as the glory of her sex.

**753. Has the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception been defined by the Catholic Church as an article of faith?**

Yes. Consequently the only way to disprove it is by disproving the infallibility of the Catholic Church. Meantime, none of your difficulties avails against it.

**754. Why did the Church define it?**

Because it rightly expresses the truth concerning Mary as contained in God's revelation. That truth is that Mary was exempted from any trace of inherited original sin.

**755. At what date did the Roman Catholic Church adopt the idea of the Immaculate Conception by Jesus' Mother?**

I am afraid you are confusing two different doctrines. The Immaculate Conception is a term referring to the conception of Mary herself by her parents, Joachim and Anne. When Mary herself was conceived, her soul was preserved immaculate, or free from inherited original sin. But when Mary herself conceived Jesus, it was under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and not through any relations with man. This could be called the miraculous conception of the child Jesus. Usually it is referred to as the Virgin Birth, since it implies that Mary remained a virgin even though she gave birth to Jesus. Both the doctrine that Jesus was born of a virgin, and that that virgin was herself immaculate from the very moment of her own conception are taught in the Gospels. But the latter doctrine is not so clearly recorded as the former. That Jesus was born of a virgin Mother has been explicitly taught by the Catholic Church from the very beginning. So in the Apostles' Creed itself we say, "born of the Virgin Mary." That the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary herself is also part of the Christian revelation was defined by the Catholic Church in 1854. The Church did not invent a new doctrine then. She merely defined that such was the original Christian teaching of the New Testament.

**756. How can you say that Mary was ever a virgin when the Bible speaks of the brethren of the Lord?**

The expression, "brethren of the Lord," is no argument whatever that Mary had other children besides Jesus. For the Jews used that expression of any near relatives, without intending necessarily the first degree of blood relationship. It was enough for people to be descendants of the same tribe to be called brethren. James was called the brother of Jesus. Yet we know that he was the son of Alphaeus, and Mary was certainly never the wife of Alphaeus. This James, also, was the blood brother of Jude. And Jude begins his epistle with the words, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and the brother of James." Here he is using the word brother in the strict sense, and knows that he cannot in that sense call himself the brother of Jesus

Christ. Yet in the broad sense of the word, he is ranked amongst the kinsmen of Christ, as we know from Matthew XIII., 55, where the Gospel speaks of "His brethren James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude."

**757. I think the brothers and sisters referred to were the children of Joseph and Mary after Jesus was born. There is no reason to think otherwise.**

There is every reason to think otherwise. Firstly, the so-called brethren of Jesus are depicted by the Gospel texts as older than He Himself, criticizing and advising Him, and jealous of His popularity. Secondly, when the offer was made to Mary that she should become the Mother of the Messiah, she said, "How shall this be done, because I know not man." Almighty God provided miraculously that she should become the Mother without sacrificing her virginity. She was not likely to sacrifice it later on for other children so much less than the very Son of God. As that Son was the only-begotten of His Eternal Father, so He would be the only-begotten of His earthly Mother. Thirdly, Jesus alone in the Gospels is called the Son of Mary; and never once is she called the Mother of the brethren of the Lord. Fourthly, the only four brethren mentioned by name are James and Joseph, Simon and Jude. Now St. John tells us that there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas. And this latter is referred to by St. Matthew as the mother of James and Joseph. Again, if you look up the first words of St. Jude's Epistle you will find him saying, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." Why did he make that distinction? Finally, if James and Joseph, Simon and Jude, were direct children of Mary, and if there were yet other brethren and sisters of Jesus in your sense of the word, why did Jesus commit His Mother to the care of St. John after His death, so that John took her as his own mother thenceforth? That would not be necessary if she had other children to look after her.

**758. Mark VI., 3, says, "Is not this carpenter, the Son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph, and Jude and Simon? Are not also His sisters here with us?"**

The reference to Jesus as the Son of Mary and the brother of James and Joseph, Jude and Simon, as also to His sisters is also quite compatible with our Lord's being the only Son of Mary. The term brothers or sisters was applied to any near relatives within the same tribe even though they were first, second or third cousins. In much the same way I could speak of a brother American without suggesting that he was of the same mother as myself. Remember that in the Aramaic language used at the time, there was no word in existence to denote cousin. The Jews had to use the word "Achim," brethren, for the description of any kindred by collateral descent. I could give you a dozen references from the Old Testament proving the Jewish usage of those terms for half-brothers, nephews and nieces, cousins, and any blood relatives in general. Renan, quite an unbeliever in Christ and whose verdict is above suspicion, says of this passage that the preliminary expression "the Son of Mary" followed by the mention of the other names takes it for granted that Jesus was known as the only son of a widow. Loisy, another who was by no means well disposed towards the Catholic doctrine, declares that, when Mary hesitated to accept the offer of the Angel to become the Mother of Christ, she spoke so absolutely when she said, "How shall this be, for I know not man," that Catholics are justified in seeing the intention of perpetually preserving her virginity.

**759. You pick the plums out of Renan when it suits your case.**

The fact that Renan, so radically opposed to the supernatural element in the Gospels, says so few things that suit our case immeasurably intensifies the value of his verdict when he admits that the Gospel text supposes that Jesus was the only child of Mary. All his inclinations would be against making that admission. You are not happier in deluding yourself that Mary had other children than Renan, the rationalist, would have been, could he have brought himself to believe that the text permitted such a persuasion.

**760. Jesus said unto them, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country and among his own kin, and in his own house. . . ." St. Mark VI., vv. 3-4.**

When Jesus said that He had no honor among His own kin He was speaking quite intelligibly despite His not having brothers and sisters. The expression kith and kin is verified by relatives independently of the precise degree of consanguinity.

**761. St. Matthew XIII., 55, 56, implies the whole family.**

He implies too big a family, if the strict sense you wish were true. In verse 56. he says, "His sisters, are they not all with us?" The use of the word "all" in reference to the sisters implies not one or two, but a large number in various degrees of relationship. They were certainly too many, together with four brothers, to be sisters of Jesus in the strict sense of the word. There is a little axiom that "he who proves too much proves nothing." The wording used by St. Matthew tells distinctly in favor of the Catholic interpretation.

**762. St. Luke VIII., 19, implies the whole family when he says, "His Mother and brethren came unto Him."**

He implies that His Mother and other relatives in various degrees came to Him. Those relatives were not brothers and sisters in the first degree of consanguinity.

**763. Luke I., 36, confutes the story that there was no word in the Greek to describe James, Joseph, Jude and Simon as cousins.**

I have never heard it said that there was no word in Greek for cousin. It is certain that there was no word in Hebrew for cousin. The Hebrew word for brother, ah, and in the Aramaic, aha, was used to describe brothers, half-brothers, nephews and nieces, cousins, and relatives in general. It is certain that any cousins of Jesus would have to be described in Aramaic as brethren. And, in translating the Hebrew expression literally by the Greek word brethren, the Evangelists merely followed the example already given in the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament.

**764. St. Paul wrote: ' ". . . But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. . . .' Galatians I., vv. 19, etc.**

Quite so. St. Paul did not lie. He saw St. James. But when he alluded to James as the Lord's brother, he had not in mind the sense you imagine. He made a perfectly lawful use of the term in the broad sense which included cousins, according to Jewish usage at that time. Critical scholarship demolishes the idea that these brethren were other children of Mary the Mother of Jesus. It observes that these brethren are depicted as older than Jesus, though it is certain that Mary had no children prior to Jesus. And precisely because Mary had no other children of her own, Jesus had to confide His Mother to the care of John, the son of Zebedee, as He died upon the Cross. One wonders why Protestants wish to assert that Mary had other sons after Jesus was born. Is it for the sheer love of truth, and that they may contribute to the greater honor of Jesus and Mary? Or is it that they want to drag Mary down from her true dignity, and Jesus down to the level of ordinary men, in order to show their contempt for Catholicism? I am afraid that, in some Protestants, faith in the Gospels and in Jesus Christ runs a bad second to their dislike of Catholicism. It is enough for them that the Catholic Church teaches a given doctrine to inspire them with zeal to deny it, whatever the consequences to the Jesus Christ they profess to serve, and to His Mother Mary, whom Jesus cannot desire to be held in anything but the highest reverence and esteem.

**765. On the Cross Christ said to St. John, "Son, behold thy Mother," there" fore, making out John was another son.**

Christ, in His infinite wisdom, would not waste words in those precious and most painful last moments to tell John something of which John was already well aware. It was precisely because Mary was not the natural mother of John that Christ asked him to be a son to her. And the Gospel tells us that "From that hour the disciple took her as his own." Which means that only from that moment, in virtue of this commission of Christ, John recognized that he had filial obligations to Mary. Had he been her natural son,

he would have had them all along. Scripture gives us the names of John's father and mother, and they were not Joseph and Mary. Mark I., 19, tells us that his father's name was Zebedee. In Mark X., 35, we again read that "James and John, the sons of Zebedee came to Christ saying . . ." etc. In Matthew XX., 20, we are told that the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Christ adoring Him and asking a favor. And she was not His own Mother. Who was she? Her name was Salome, mentioned in Mark XV., 40. So that St. John was the natural son, not of Joseph and Mary, but of Zebedee and Salome. And it was precisely because Christ knew that His Mother Mary had no other children to care for her that He committed her to the care of His loved disciple St. John, asking him to regard her henceforth as if she were his own Mother.

**766. Was our Lady vowed to virginity from early childhood, or was she "espoused to a man named Joseph" with the intention of marrying him in the ordinary way, until the advent of the Angel Gabriel changed her plans?**

According to the teaching of Catholic theologians, Mary, under the inspiration of God, had formed the determination to preserve life-long virginity, and under that same inspiration of God, had agreed later to be espoused to St. Joseph, both of them by mutual consent making a vow not to demand of each other the right to those marital relations which are one of the normal privileges of marriage. This espousal was in view of God's purpose to provide a protector for the Mother and Child, a purpose which became clear to Mary when the Angel Gabriel, as St. Luke says, "appeared to a virgin who was espoused to a man named Joseph." When the Angel predicted that she would bear a child, consciousness of her determination to remain a virgin is evident from her reply, "How shall this be done, because I know not man." As St. Augustine points out, she would not have said this, despite her engagement to Joseph, had she not resolved to remain a virgin.

**767. Do you believe that Mary ascended into heaven, and was crowned amidst the glory of all the Saints?**

Catholic teaching does not speak of Mary's ascending into heaven. Christ, by His own divine power, ascended into heaven. Mary was assumed or taken up into heaven, body and soul, after her death. We Catholics believe, therefore, in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And we speak of the fitting honor with which God received her as her crowning with glory. There is nothing in this doctrine which is in any way opposed to sound and reasonable principles. Nor a single rational argument can be advanced to prove that it could not happen, or that it did not happen. On the other hand, there are solid reasons for the belief that it did happen, and also the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, an authority guaranteed by Sacred Scripture.

**768. There is nothing in Scripture about this.**

It is not necessary that there should be. We know that Christ is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. We know that His Mother is in heaven, and that the Mother of the King rejoices in a queenly dignity. It is quite certain that our Lady has a closer bond with Jesus than any other human being, and that, if He is going to crown His Saints with glory, He will give the highest honor to His Mother.

**769. What authority is there for the doctrine?**

Firstly, of course, the inherent teaching authority of Christ. The Catholic Church was commissioned to teach all nations with His authority and under His protection. The mere fact that she teaches the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven is sufficient assurance of the event. But what reasons support the teaching, apart from the authority of the Church? There is no express reference to the subject in Sacred Scripture. But it has ever been the tradition of Christians from the very beginning, and, as the Anglican Mozley has pointed out, "The conviction of the fact did not arise from mere belief; the belief can only be accounted for by the primitive fact." Theologically, the corruption of the body is a consequence of the corruption of original sin. But Mary was exempted from the corruption of original sin, and it was most fitting that she should be exempted from corruption in the grave. The Greek Orthodox Church agrees with



the Catholic Church on this doctrine. High Church Anglicans are returning to it. I have just been reading an Anglican booklet on the subject, in which the author writes: "It would seem rash to deny such a bodily Assumption, for despite the prevalence of credulity in the matter of relics, no Church (or city) has ever claimed to possess the mortal remains of our Lady. Why not? It is a fact which requires explanation. Relics of our Lady would possess a greater value for Christians than any others. Do not urge that the Reformers abolished the festival of the Assumption. They abolished much that had been better left untouched. Many of their experiments have not proved successful. We may hope the day will come when the authorities of our provinces will repair the loss which has been sustained by its omission." I quote that to show the High Anglican tendency, and also, because there is something in the historical fact that, whilst St. Peter's body, for example, is so deeply revered at Rome, no city has ever claimed to possess the remains of our Blessed Lady. Her assumption, body and soul, into heaven is an obvious reason why.

#### Grace and Salvation

#### **770. Am I right or wrong in saying that all men are sure of salvation through the merits of Christ?**

Wrong. Your mistake arises from your notion that Christ expiated our sins on the Cross without making any conditions for those who desire to benefit by His redeeming work. But redemption is not unconditional. Christ said to the man who asked, "What must I do to be saved?", "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Again, we are told that men must repent and be baptized; or again, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." All such conditions suppose that it is possible not to be saved. You will say, "Then Christ has not redeemed the human race after all!" To that I reply that He has paid a price sufficient for the redemption of all men who are willing to be saved and who are prepared to comply with the conditions. And henceforth it is each man's own fault only if he is lost.

#### **771. Of what avail was the shedding of Christ's blood if there is still a danger of everlasting damnation in hell?**

Of great avail. For without the shedding of that blood no human being could possibly have attained eternal salvation and the supernatural destiny originally intended for man by God. But whilst the death of Christ made this salvation possible, it was never intended to save men whether they wished to be saved or not, and whether they continued to do evil or not. Christ did not offer unconditional salvation to mankind.

#### **772. When we Protestants are converted or changed by accepting Jesus as our Savior, we are then Christians with full assurance of eternal life.**

If Protestantism teaches that, then Protestants are very much to be pitied. For their Protestantism is simply building up false hopes within them, and offering conditions of salvation radically opposed to the teaching of the New Testament. Nowhere is full assurance of salvation promised to anyone. Our Lord says to us, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Why, if one is fully assured of salvation? Christ manifestly tells us that there is a danger of forfeiting it. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "He that thinks himself to stand, let him beware lest he fall." To the Hebrews he wrote, "It is impossible for those who were once illuminated, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; have moreover tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and have fallen away, to be renewed to penance." Hebrews VI., 4, 5. According to you people who have been once illuminated, have tasted the heavenly gift, and who were made partakers with the Holy Ghost, should have had full assurance of eternal life with Christ. Yet the event proved such an assurance illusory. St. Peter, too, tells us of those who had made shipwreck of the faith. He is talking of Christians, who had accepted Jesus as their Savior.

#### **773. Jesus offers salvation as a sheer gift. All we have to do is to accept.**

Jesus offers Himself and His grace to us as a free gift, beyond all our deserts. But you are wrong when you say we only have to accept. We have to labor and strive to fulfill all the obligations imposed upon us by

God. Mere acceptance of Christ without that is of no avail. St. James, the Apostle, writes, "Faith without works is dead. Do you not see that by works a man is justified and not by faith only." James II.

**774. The gift of God is life eternal through Christ Jesus.**

That is quite true. But it is not an unconditional gift. After the fall of man, God had no obligation to offer us eternal happiness, and, therefore, His doing so was a sheer gift. But all the same He laid down certain conditions involving good works, and as we are not necessarily compelled to fulfill them, your full assurance becomes a chimera, as also your peculiar idea that for salvation we have only to accept Jesus as our Savior. With the help of His grace, we have to work out our own salvation by good works in fear and trembling lest we ourselves should fail to do our part.

**775. But with Roman Catholics one always has to be doing something to gain grace.**

I can merely say that, of course, that is so. When we pray we are doing something to gain grace. "Ask, and you shall receive," is the promise of Christ. Our Lord also showed the necessity of good works when He said, "He that doth evil cometh not to the light." Scripture tells us, too, to redeem our sins by almsgiving. But that would be impossible unless almsgiving for the love of Christ were a means by which we gain grace. All along the line, in this matter, your ideas are at variance with Scripture, whilst Catholic ideas are in accordance with it. And if your ideas are the average ideas of Protestants, it brings out once more that Protestantism is fundamentally un-Scriptural.

**776. God has called us out of dead works to worship Him through Jesus, the true and living way.**

That is true, provided you interpret "dead works" correctly. But it is quite wrong if you imagine that all good works are dead and useless.

**777. Please explain the doctrine of Predestination of souls.**

Predestination of soul is simply a special Providence of God in regard to a particular individual for whom God has foreordained special graces with which He knows that the individual will certainly correspond. There is no such thing as predestination to hell. To every man in this world God gives sufficient grace for salvation and every man can be saved by corresponding with it. Therefore, if any man is lost, it is his own fault. But there is a predestination for a specially chosen few to very special graces over and above the ordinary distribution, as in the case of St. Paul, who though a Pharisee, was predestined to his glorious Apostolate. Now, with these principles in mind, we can go on to your other questions.

**778. Has everyone an equal chance of getting to heaven?**

Not necessarily. The attaining of heaven depends upon the reception of actual Baptism in the case of infants, and upon Baptism at least implicitly by desire on the part of adults. But I take it from your letter that you are referring to adults, i. e., those who have come to the age of reason and responsibility. Yet even then, not all have necessarily an equal chance of salvation, although all, without exception, have a true chance. For example, Mary, the Mother of Christ, certainly received very special graces and helps which are not given to ordinary souls. But God gives to every adult sufficient grace for salvation. He has no obligation to give to every soul those extraordinary graces which, in His sheer generosity, He bestows upon some. The question of justice does not enter into the distribution of gratuitous gifts, although God is bound in justice to Himself to give sufficient grace that men may observe the commandments He imposes. And He does so.

**779. After all, it is the kind of body that we have that governs our actions during our lives, and the kind of life we lead determines our reward in the next world.**

It is true to a certain extent only that the kind of life one leads determines his reward in the next world. I say "to a certain extent," because after an evil life a man could die repentant and be saved almost solely through the merits of Christ, his only personal good being practically the one act of good will by which he corresponds with the final grace God's mercy offers him. But as it would be a sin of presumption to lead an evil life in the expectation of such a final grace, we wisely try to live according to the graces God gives us day by day, so as to be ready whenever God should decide to take us from this world. In this sense, the kind of life we live normally determines our future lot. But, now, let us take your first statement: It is the kind of body we have that governs our actions during life. That is not true. Man's higher faculties, reason and will, govern his actions. If he has the use of these faculties, and they do not govern his actions, but are subservient to the blind impulses of bodily inclinations, he sins. But men do not necessarily give in to those blind impulses, and I absolutely deny the general statement that the kind of body a man possesses governs his actions during life.

**780. The course our life is going to take is affected to a great degree by the type of make-up we are given, a factor over which we have no control.**

We have control over our make-up. Thousands of people have successfully resisted inherited tendencies. I agree that the standard of virtue attained by different people often varies according to their natural characteristics. For example, a person naturally irritable because born of nervous and highly strung parents will find it harder to practice patience and good temper than another person of a naturally sanguine and happy temperament. But God makes every allowance for relative difficulty, and if a naturally irritable person attains to fifty degrees of patience, whilst a person with an equable nature seems to possess one hundred degrees, the one who attains fifty degrees may be far more pleasing to God, insofar as his apparently less virtue is the result of much greater efforts at self-control than the placid type ever had to exercise in his life.

**781. You say each soul gets enough grace for salvation if it will but correspond.**

Correct.

**782. Yet God creates souls immediately. What of those He creates with evil inherent tendencies?**

No soul is evil in virtue of its creation by God. But the soul is not the complete human being. Man consists of both body and soul, and both cooperate in the formation of his personality. Now if the body be defective owing to parentage or malformation, the soul will be affected in its operations. And the body can be defective either in brain formation or in general dispositions. A defective brain, which the soul must use for its thought processes, may result in dullness and consequent ignorance, or even in complete imbecility. General dispositions can, as a result of inherited tendencies, give a propensity to sensuality in various forms, anger, or any other of the bodily passions. But the point to note is this, that these apparently evil tendencies are not due to the creative production of the soul by God, but to the quality of the bodily counterpart with which it is necessarily associated. In other words, they are due, not to the primary cause, God, but to secondary causes, whether physiological or psychological. Having cleared up this point as to the origin of inherited evil tendencies, let us turn to their effects as regards the salvation of the soul.

**783. You say that enough grace is given such people to make up for their inherited evil tendencies. That seems a very doubtful proposition.**

You make me say more than I have said. I say that enough grace is given them to enable them to save their souls. I do not say that that grace will so make up for their inherited evil tendencies that they will be on an equal footing with others. But you overlook a most important point. The salvation of a soul depends not only upon the use of grace, but upon the relative standards expected of the soul by God. Our Lord tells us clearly that God will adjust His demands according to the actual responsibility of each individual. And that that responsibility varies He shows in His parable of the talents, five being given to one man, two to another, and but one to a third. Not so much will be required of the man with but one talent as from him

with five talents. Again, in Luke XL, 48, Christ says, "Unto whom much is given, of him much shall be required." But that God gives sufficient grace to each according to the standard required of him for salvation is not in the least a doubtful proposition. God has revealed that He sincerely wills the salvation of all men and also that grace is necessary for salvation. Therefore to all men He offers sufficient grace for their salvation according to their relative needs and the relative standards allotted to them.

**784. Some souls are too brutal and hardened to be sensitive to grace. Does grace create a new moral nature within them?**

Grace does not necessarily destroy inherited evil tendencies. But sufficient grace is offered to those with them to enable them to resist their influence. If they refuse to listen to the promptings of grace and of conscience, they may become more and more brutal and hardened, and less sensitive to grace. They become habitual sinners. But don't mix up the question of sanctification with that of salvation. Christ died for sinners. He came to save that which was lost, and He wills not the death of a sinner but that he be converted and live. Even after a lifetime of sin. He will still offer sufficient grace for salvation, and special graces towards the end of life when sinful attractions have lost much of their fascination.

**785. You say he can turn to God if he will. But he could not easily do so, and my argument hinges on this point.**

I presume your argument is that not every man does receive sufficient grace for salvation. If so, it hinges on a point which scarcely affects the case. He receives sufficient grace if he can save his soul. Whether he can do so easily or with difficulty is beside the point. As long as he can do so, the grace is not insufficient for salvation. Then, too, you seem confused on two important matters. Remember that final salvation does not imply that a man will necessarily correspond with every grace during life, or turn to God at this moment or that. He is saved if he actually dies in a state of grace, whatever his previous life may have been. Again, when you mention the word "easily," you are working on the old idea that it is harder for some people to be good than for others. Very good. But if that be truly so, their responsibility is diminished and God expects less of them. Yet, at the last, to say the least, He will give them grace sufficient for their radical conversion and salvation, a grace adjusted to their particular needs. If they need a greater grace than a less hardened person, they will get that greater grace. That grace will not force them. They will have to accept it voluntarily with whatever will-power they actually have. But it will be truly sufficient for their salvation according to their actual capacity and the relative standard God expects of them.

**786. Even the well-disposed fall into sin at times, finding it hard to resist temptation. How much harder for one subject to evil tendencies and environment.**

You are mixing up sanctification and salvation. A lifetime of holiness means the regular avoidance of sin, and the practice of Christian virtue. And we owe it in justice to God to strive to live such a life. But salvation is the blending of a state of God's friendship with the moment of death. And the problem put before me was the problem of salvation, not the problem of perpetual resistance of temptation and sin. It is harder for one subject to evil tendencies and environment to resist sin. But God will make every allowance for that. The man who sins when he can easily resist is of a far more malicious disposition than one who sins when he can't easily resist. And the former is in far more danger of dying in persevering malice than the latter.

**787. Won't you admit that the one with evil heredity and environment has a harder task to save his soul than we have?**

I admit that it is harder for him to live a life of consistent virtue. But I deny that sufficient grace will not be so offered him for his ultimate salvation that if he lose his soul, it will be due to his own fault. He may fall into sin more often during life. It may be harder for him to be good. But God will make every allowance for his disabilities and offer him a truly sufficient grace according to his necessities to enable him to die repentant.

**788. Is not his harder task due to no fault of his?**

Whatever is due to no fault of his will not interfere with his salvation. A man can be lost only for what is his own fault, not for what is not his own fault. God knows all the grades of personal responsibility and guilt, and will duly allow for them.

**789. Why did you become a priest, and dedicate your life to the work of God, and why has some other unfortunate become a heathen? If we take the two lives and examine them we must find two different sets of circumstances over which neither party had any control.**

This question sums up the mistake which characterizes your whole letter. You are dealing with man's relation to a supernatural destiny, yet you are trying to explain it by natural elements only. You are leaving out God and the influence of grace, and all notions of supernatural agency. It's rather like complaining that you can't dig up cube roots with a spade. Why did I become a priest, and why has some other unfortunate become a heathen? I became a priest because God inspired me with the thought to do so, and because I chose to correspond with that good inspiration. I need not have done so. I could have refused and could have become a heathen. Why did some other unfortunate become a heathen? Well, if he ever possessed the Christian faith, he became a heathen because he chose not to correspond with the grace God gave him. If you took our two lives, you will not find different sets of circumstances over which we had no control, in the sense you intend. Some circumstances may have happened which we could not control, but we did not lose the power to control ourselves in those circumstances. That is the point you overlook. I could not control the fact that I was brought into contact with the claims of the Catholic Church. But acceptance or rejection of those claims certainly was within my control.

**790. What did Christ mean by the parable in which the late arrivals re-ceived the same pay as those who had worked all day, and who justly protested?**

The parable is not to be interpreted literally and merely from this world's point of view, but as exhibiting the conditions of the kingdom of heaven to which Christ applied His illustration. Eternal salvation depends upon the gift of divine grace, and God will grant that salvation by justice to those who have served Him from their youth, by mercy and goodness to those who turn to Him in repentance or later stages of life, or even at the last moment. And no one will ever have the right to complain against God whether He manifests His justice or His mercy in granting salvation to any given soul. Equity will be secured, of course, by the greater glory and merit of those who have served God longer and more faithfully on earth. But our Lord is not here concerned with that. He is concerned with the general fact of eternal salvation given equally to souls of various qualifications. The parable was directed against the Pharisees who thought themselves the elite, and condemned our Lord's goodness to the publicans and sinners, as if these poor people should not be given any hope of eternal salvation. They thought that was theirs by right, and that God was not free to grant it to others even in sheer mercy. Where the dispensation of grace is concerned God is above all human criticism.

**791. I understand that Catholic people believe that they can be saved if forgiven by a priest up to the last moment of life.**

That is so. We Catholics dare not put limits to God's mercy; God has Himself declared that His mercy outnumbers all reckoning on the part of men. But don't conclude that Catholics believe that they are justified in continuing in sin merely because if a man repents at the last he can be saved. They know quite well that they are never justified in continuing in a state of sin. God has promised forgiveness when a man does repent, but He has never promised time to repent. If a man mocks God's mercy by making it the excuse for further sin, and for further delay in his conversion, such a man forfeits any right to mercy at the last. If he repents he will save his soul, but how does he know that he will not meet with a sudden and unforeseen death? If he receives the Sacraments from a priest, and is in proper dispositions, he will save his soul, but what guarantee has he that a priest will be available just where and when he is needed? Remember, too, that according to Catholic doctrine, sins, even though forgiven, have to be expiated in

purgatory; and the man who barely saves his soul after a lifetime of sin, will expiate his sins in a purgatory that will scarcely bear description. God is not mocked. Sins cannot be multiplied with impunity, even though God is merciful.

**792. If two Catholics die, one after a good life, and another after an evil life, but getting forgiven before he dies, does the evil one get the same reward as the good one?**

No. The evil one will have far more to expiate in purgatory, and when he does enter heaven, will attain a far lower degree of happiness and glory than the one who has consistently served God.

**793. Don't you think it would be very hard on one who lived a very good life, but was unfortunate enough to die at the last with a mortal sin on his soul?**

That is hardly a likely contingency. But if it did happen, it would be hard for such a person, but not unjust. Firstly, he has no need and no right to be in a state of mortal sin when death comes. Secondly, his previous good life does not affect the matter. The observance of all God's commandments for sixty years gives no right whatever to violate one of them then. It's like arguing that a man is justified in stealing on Tuesday because he did not commit adultery on the preceding Monday.

**794. On the other hand a person who had led a bad life could repent at the last and save his soul.**

That's not hard on anybody. The grace of repentance is always at the disposal of men of good will, offered through the sheer mercy of Christ. Both the cases you give me could have accepted it. The first man did not, the second man did.

**795. The good man would go to hell, and the bad man to purgatory. That's hardly fair, is it?**

Fairness is not involved in this question. Firstly, you are comparing two cases which have no relation to each other. The fact that the wicked man accepted God's mercy has no relation whatever to the fact that the previously good man would not have it. Remember that God offered sufficient grace equally to both according to the necessities of each. Supposing that I meet two beggars, and offer each half-a-dollar; if one notices that I am a priest, and through bigoted enmity towards me, spits on the ground and refuses to take my offering, whilst the other gratefully accepts it, are you going to blame me for injustice because one man goes without his dinner, whilst the other has it? Again, you are not right in assuming that the good man, as you put it, is condemned to hell. You are thinking only of his previous goodness, forgetting your own supposition of subsequent mortal sin. Being in a state of mortal sin, he is no longer a good man, and you have no right to assume that he is still good. Nor is he condemned to hell for any of his previous goodness. He is condemned for being an evil man in a state of enmity with God, a state which no previous goodness could justify. And the bad man is not saved because he was bad. He is saved because he had ceased to be bad, repenting of his crimes, and becoming good in God's sight by his willing correspondence with the grace offered him. We cannot exclude goodness by supposing that a man falls into mortal sin and dies in that state, and yet still regard that man as possessing goodness. Nor can we suppose a bad man converted to goodness, and then argue as if he were saved because of his badness.

**796. Catholics seem to rely so much upon external rites such as their Sacraments. A spiritual life does not require external rites.**

A spiritual life to be lived by human beings requires them. We are not angels. We have both a soul and a body, and religion must cater for our complete needs. We live by our senses, and acquire our certainty from sense data. Significant symbols, and rites and ceremonies play a big part in the individual and social lives even of those who object to our religious rites. God Himself respects our twofold spiritual and material nature, and leads us to Himself by means on our own level. The soul uses the bodily powers in God's service, and God uses the bodily rites called the Sacraments in communicating grace to men. He wishes to sanctify man just as man was made by Him.

**797. God would not employ material things in His religion.**

God employed material forces in our creation, and He employs them to recreate us in grace. It is quite normal that a material element should intervene in both cases. In our natural lives we use the forces of God immanent in nature. The Sacraments are the forces proper to God in our supernatural and spiritual lives.

**798. Is not God Himself a spirit?**

He is. But we are flesh. And we have to rise above the flesh to a spiritual plane, from the natural level to the God-level. To enable us to do so, the Eternal Son of God came down to earth and took flesh, obviously setting before us and using a material nature for our spiritual regeneration. It is quite in harmony with this that material and visible Sacraments should be used to continue the work of our spiritual regeneration.

Baptism

**799. You teach that a child after Baptism is free from the guilt of original sin?**

Such is the teaching of Christ, who instituted the Sacrament of Baptism precisely to confer the life of divine grace as opposed to the state of spiritual death common to all souls in virtue of their birth as members of a guilty human race.

**800. When the child grows up and marries, do not his children inherit original sin? How can this be, if the parents have been freed from original sin by Baptism?**

A right understanding of the Christian doctrine of original sin is the all-sufficient answer to that question. Original sin is not something positive. It is essentially the absence of divine grace. Now, by the natural process of generation, parents can transmit human nature as they received it from their own parents. But they cannot, by this merely natural process, transmit supernatural grace which they received, not from their parents, but immediately and individually from God. Therefore, their children will be born in a merely natural state, and not in the supernatural state conferred only by a spiritual gift from God. Until the children receive that spiritual gift of grace by Baptism, they will be in the state of original sin, sharing in the collective and racial spiritual bankruptcy of unregenerated humanity. Remember that Christian parents do not generate children in virtue of their spiritual regeneration by Baptism, but in virtue of the fact that they were generated in a merely natural way by their own parents. Children, therefore, must be given the spiritual life of divine grace by Baptismal regeneration individually.

**801. Is it possible for a man to believe the Gospel, and show forth the fruits of the Spirit of God, yet be eternally lost through lack of Baptism?**

No. But no such man would deliberately omit Baptism were he aware of its necessity. If he were not aware of its necessity, his ignorance would excuse him from responsibility.

**802. Is it possible for a child who has not attained the faculty of understanding, to be eternally saved by virtue of Baptism?**

Yes.

**803. Will the soul of a baptised imbecile go to heaven?**

Yes. Where else could such a soul go?

**804. Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," A lunatic cannot believe.**

He said much more than that. Those particular words are applicable to all normal adults who have had the doctrines of Christ sufficiently explained to them. In the case of infants, it is sufficient for them to be born again of water and the Holy Spirit in Baptism. Every birth means a life; and this rebirth implants in them the grace of Christ as the very seed of eternal life. An imbecile is ranked as an infant who has not attained to personal responsibility.

**805. I think an innocent baby's soul, which hasn't reason to consent to original sin, is left to God's own way, if it hasn't gone through God's form of initiation into His Church by Baptism.**

Firstly, whilst a baby's soul is innocent of any personally committed sin, it is not innocent of original sin. Every human being born into this world is born as a child of a guilty race. "By nature," says St. Paul, "we were children of wrath." Again, it is enough to be a child of a guilty race to share in its inheritance of guilt. Personal consent, after having attained the use of reason, is not required before original sin becomes operative. Thirdly, it is a contradiction to say that it is left to God's own way, if it hasn't gone through God's form of initiation by Baptism. For if Baptism be God's way, if the child be not baptized, it has been excluded from God's way.

**806. God said, "Unless a man be born again of water, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." But I think that applies to a person who really knows he should be baptized, and deliberately refuses.**

According to the Greek text God says, "Unless one be baptized," not "unless a man be baptized." By birth a child attains its natural life, but is by no means born into the supernatural life of divine grace. And precisely because it has not attained to the use of reason and to an ability to secure sanctifying grace by its own interior and personal desires, it has but one means of getting it; and that is by the actual Baptismal rite.

**807. Was Christ's death for the remission of sin useless?**

No. That is evident from the fact that some are saved through that death who would not otherwise be saved. Here let me explain the character of Christ's redemptive work. By his sin, Adam forfeited for himself and all his posterity any right to heaven. And we are all born in spiritual bankruptcy as far as our inheritance of eternal supernatural happiness is concerned. Now Christ died to atone for the sin of Adam, and make it possible for men to recover their right to heaven. But He Himself laid down the conditions by which souls would benefit by His death. And one of the necessary conditions He declared to be Baptism. If an infant dies without Baptism, therefore, it lacks the application to itself of Christ's merits. But that does not mean that His death was useless in itself. The soul in whose case the conditions appointed by Christ are not verified, fails to benefit by the all-sufficient price He has paid.

**808. All infants are saved, and go straight to heaven by the blessed sacrificial work of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

You wrongly take it for granted that no other conditions were appointed for salvation save the death of Christ on the Cross. But Christ Himself laid down very definite conditions for the application to souls of



His redeeming work. And one of those conditions is Baptism. Every birth means-life. A child born of its earthly parents gets a natural life. But Christ offers another life which can't be got from earthly parents, and which demands, therefore, another birth. And He tells us that it is a rebirth by water and the Holy Spirit. An unbaptized infant lacks that second birth, and the second principle of life given by it. And it is not capable of inheriting the higher destiny to which Baptismal rebirth gives access.

**809. Did not St. Augustine teach that all unbaptized infants are cast into the torment of eternal fire?**

No. To understand St. Augustine's mind on the subject we must notice the circumstances under which he wrote. He was engaged in refuting the Pelagians who denied original sin, and taught that unbaptized infants attained supernatural happiness in a place distinct from heaven. St. Augustine proved the fact of original sin, and denied the existence of any state of supernatural happiness apart from heaven. But he did not suspect the possibility of a third state of purely natural happiness. For him, therefore, it was a question of either heaven or hell for eternity. But he admitted that hell would have two aspects, deprivation of the Vision of God, and positive suffering for personal sins. Whilst insisting that unbaptized infants could not attain to the Vision of God, he declared that he did not see how they could meet with positive suffering. In Epistle 116 he wrote, "I don't know what to say when you ask what their sufferings will be." And in his treatise against Julian he says, "Our Lord declares of wicked men that it would be better for them had they never been born. But who can doubt that infants, dying only in original sin, and without any personal sins, will encounter the least of penalties? Although I cannot define of what kind or how great those penalties will be, yet I would not dare to assert that it would be better for those infants had they never been born." After those words of St. Augustine it is certainly not correct to say that he taught that unbaptized infants are cast into the torment of eternal fire.

**810. I cannot find the word Limbo in the Bible.**

You will not find the word itself there. But the teachings of the Bible render necessary the admission of the intermediate state described by those words. In a similar way, we speak of having a child christened. The word christened is not in the Bible. But people don't object to it on that account. For the Bible teaches that Baptism makes a child belong to Christ and incorporates that child in Christ. And the word christened beautifully expresses that reality.

**811. I want exact Biblical references, with direct texts, without any building up of theories.**

To that I must reply firstly, that Catholic theologians did not invent the idea of Limbo for the sheer joy of doing so, and then try to back up the theory from Scripture. It was their study of Scripture which forced them to conclude that the souls of unbaptized infants must have a state reserved for them which may fittingly be called Limbo by us, if we are to speak of such things at all. Secondly, you ask that I give exact Biblical references for the conclusions arrived at. Now a conclusion from a given text is a logical inference from that text. But in the next breath you say that you will not accept any logical inferences at all. Evidently, then, you wish for a direct text from Scripture expressly teaching that such infants do go to Limbo. I admit frankly that no such text can be found in the Bible. Our teaching is a logical necessity in the light of other texts. But, although no direct text is in the Bible, remember that you can prove our doctrine wrong on that score only provided you can prove that such a direct text must be in the Bible before we are justified in believing in Limbo. That would shift the discussion to the question of the sources of Christian doctrine.

**812. Inferences, or logical deduction will carry no weight. Let us to the Law and the Testimony.**

Let us to the Law and the Testimony by all means. But if you will not accept logical deduction from the Law and the Testimony, I cannot help you. All I can point out to you is that you are taking up a most unreasonable attitude, and one opposed to the very methods of Christ. For He did appeal, again and again, to logical deduction from the Law as being a source of truth. Take the famous occasion when our Lord wished to prove to the Pharisees the supernatural origin and the divine dignity of the Messiah. He relied

upon logical deduction: "What think ye of the Christ?" was His question to them. "Whose son is He?" They replied, "David's." "How then," said Jesus, "doth David in spirit call Him Lord: saying: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou on my right hand. If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" The logical deduction was clear. The Christ could not be merely the son of David. Though promised an earthly lineage derived from David, the Messiah must obviously be much more than a mere descendant of David, if David had to call Him Lord. Scripture tells us that, to this inference of Christ, no man was able to answer Him a word. But, if your ideas were right, the Pharisees should have said, "Inferences or logical deductions carry no weight with us. Give us an exact and express text from Scripture saying that the Christ will be the Son of God." They were not so foolish as to thus violate reason. However, I am merely pointing out to you that your rejection of logical deduction is opposed to the very procedure of Christ Himself.

**813. The word Baptism is a Greek word, meaning immersion. Now to immerse is to cover the whole body. Why speak of Baptism, when you don't baptize.**

The Catholic Church does baptize, though it is not her practice to do so by immersion. She does so by pouring the water upon the person to be baptized. It is true that the literal sense of the word baptize in Greek is to immerse. But the literal sense of a word is not always the only correct sense. We have to ask whether a word in current use has acquired an accepted sense by those using it; and above all, when the word is chosen to denote some special rite. Thus St. Mark uses the Greek word baptize to signify washing. Jesus used the word Baptism to express the agony and suffering of the passion awaiting Him. No sound argument, there-fore, can be drawn from the literal sense of the Greek word; and you can safely leave the correct application of the Sacrament of Baptism to the Church.

**814. Christ Himself was baptised by being immersed in the River Jordan.**

That is probably correct; though it is possible that our Lord merely stood in shallow water, and allowed John the Baptist to pour water over His head.

**815. How did the departure from the method of immersion come about?**

Through necessity, and in the times of the Apostles themselves. Immersion is a lawful method of Baptism, but it is not a necessary method. St. Paul himself was baptized in the house of Ananias. In turn, whilst in prison, St. Paul baptized his jailer under circumstances where immersion was impossible. Nor are invalids to be deprived of Baptism because they cannot be carried to water in which they can be immersed. Baptism by pouring the water, instead of by immersion, has been practiced in the Church from Apostolic times. The practice of Baptism by immersion gradually grew less frequent in the Church until, about the thirteenth century, Baptism by pouring became the universal method.

**816. I find no record of infant Baptism in God's Word.**

Letting that pass, you will find no record there that children were not baptized, and no trace of a prescription forbidding the Baptism of infants. If you want to show that the Baptism of infants is against the evidence of Scripture, you must first produce the evidence either that the Apostles deliberately refused to baptize infants, or that they taught expressly that infants were not to be baptized. Search how you will, you will never find any evidence of these things.

**817. One must be an adult, and have faith, and understand Baptism.**

That idea is based on a misunderstanding of the New Testament, and of the nature of Baptism. Baptists say that in the New Testament converts were required to believe and be baptized, and that the only practice recorded is the baptizing of adults. But, obviously, when a new religion is first taught, it must be addressed to adults, and they must be asked to believe in the new religion before submitting to its requirements. But nowhere in the New Testament is there the faintest suggestion that adults only could be baptized. On the other hand, Christ expressly said, "Unless one be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter

the Kingdom of Heaven." And a child is someone. Christ also sent the Apostles to teach and baptize all nations, and the term "all nations" certainly includes men, women and children. Our Lord did not say, "Baptize the adults only of all nations." More than once we are told that, when certain adults were converted, they and all their household were baptized. Again, St. Paul tells us that Baptism for Christians replaces circumcision, yet circumcision aggregated even children to God's chosen people. Is the New Law to be less perfect than the Old, containing no purifying rite for children? And if all human beings born of Adam are born children of God's anger, is Adam's sin able to ruin all, yet Christ unable to save any except adults? The rejection of infant Baptism is opposed to the whole tenor of Christianity. But chiefly this error arises from the loss of right notions of grace and of the supernatural life given by Christ, and from a complete mistake concerning the nature of Baptism.

**818. If Protestant Churches are false, why does the Catholic Church recognize Protestant Baptisms?**

Because Baptism, as a Sacrament of such necessity, can be administered by anyone, provided he pours water which comes into actual contact with the one to be baptized, says at the same time the right words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and intends to do what Christ intended in instituting the Sacrament. Since the Sacrament operates independently of the faith or morals of the human agent, and derives all its efficacy from the will and merits of Christ, you can see that the faith or virtue of the minister does not of itself affect the validity of Baptism.

**819. If that be so, why does the Catholic Church baptize converts again?**

The Catholic Church re-baptizes conditionally only because of a doubt at times whether one was baptized or christened at all, or because, if baptized, the water may not have been rightly applied, or the correct words may not have been used, or the right intention may have been absent. So many non-Catholic ministers have become loose in their notions as to the nature and necessity of Baptism; and so many are careless in its administration, that the Catholic Church treats the previous Baptism as at least doubtful. And this Sacrament is so important, that it is in their own interests to be quite sure that people have received it validly. Therefore, all converts are re-baptized conditionally. The priest says, "If thou are not validly baptized, I now baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." If the first Baptism was valid in God's sight, the second has no effect. If the first was not valid, the second one avails.

Confession

**820. I cannot but regard the whole business of Confession as an unjustified usurpation of conscience.**

To declare independence of a means appointed by God is the usurpation of rights which do not belong to us. We get forgiveness from God in the way God appointed. The Church exists to take us to God. When we want to be reconciled with God, we apply to the Church, and God's reply comes to us through the Church. When you remember that all are obliged by this law of Confession, Pope, bishops, priests, and laity, you must see that all idea of usurpation is excluded. If the clergy were conscious that Confession was an unjust usurpation of authority over the laity, they would not submit to the obligation of Confession themselves. No. It is not a usurpation. The practice of Confession is due to our faith in Christ, and a spirit of obedience to His manifest will. And those who refuse the obligation, forfeit also its graces and privileges.

**821. God alone forgives sin through our own personal application.**

Of course, the one who is offended is the one who must do the forgiving. But you overlook one point. He who can forgive immediately and personally, can also communicate forgiveness through agents of his own choice. A King can forgive a rebellious subject himself, or he can give his authority to an official empowering him to do so. In both cases, forgiveness would ultimately rest upon the authority of the King. So, too, forgiveness of sin must rest ultimately upon the authority of God. In that sense, God alone can forgive sin. But if you say that God cannot delegate His authority, how could authority be given by Christ to His Apostles? When Christ said to them, "Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins you forgive, they are

forgiven," did He give them any real power, or was He uttering words He knew to be meaningless? And if He gave them real power, and they did have authority to forgive sin, what becomes of your assertion that God alone can do so? The Apostles were men, after all. And if there were men in the early Church from whom Christians could secure forgiveness, why should conditions in the same Church differ now, in so vital a matter? If you deny that the power to forgive sin was handed on in the Church, you may as well deny that the power to baptize, or even the commission to preach the Gospel was handed on. In fact, you would have to deny that Christ ever meant His Church to continue through the ages just as He had constituted it. Personal dispositions of sorrow, and the will to make necessary reparation are always necessary for the forgiveness of sin. But, granted these dispositions, we are to secure forgiveness from those whom God Himself has authorized to forgive sin in His name. The priests of the Catholic Church have that power, transmitted to them from the Apostles, who received it from Christ.

**822. St. Paul says, "There is one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy II., 5.**

That text in no way militates against Catholic doctrine. For Catholic doctrine teaches that in Confession Jesus exercises His mediation by using human instruments or agents. After all, Baptism is a Sacrament instituted by Christ, and to be administered by human beings in His name. Yet no one ever worries lest the human beings who administer Baptism should be interfering with the mediation of Christ. And if Christ can institute one Sacrament for the conferring of grace by human instrumentality, why could He not institute another Sacrament, such as that of Confession? The principle is the same in both cases. The mediation of Christ is not affected in this matter. It is all a question of how Christ willed His own mediation to be applied to men. It is then, a question of fact. Did Christ will His mediation to be applied to men by means of sacramental absolution of sins, an absolution administered in His name by men? He did. Otherwise His words to the Apostles, very much human beings, are simply unintelligible. He breathed on them; said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"; and then declared the scope and purpose of this new gift of supernatural power. "Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven."

**823. In your own Roman Catholic Version I read, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father: Jesus Christ the just." 1 John II., 1.**

And did you think that the Catholic Church has been unaware for two thousand years of the existence of those words in her own Version of the Bible?

**824. According to your own Church's Version, Jesus is revealed as the sinner's advocate before God; not the priest. How will you reply to that?**

Without the slightest difficulty. For you are stating Catholic doctrine. Every Catholic knows that, even in the confessional, it is Christ who forgives the sin through the priest to whom He has merely delegated His own power. The priest is but the instrument used by Christ, our one great Advocate, in the work of forgiving sin. No priest, therefore, dreams that, by his own natural and human power, he can forgive sin. He exercises a communicated power which is ever proper to Christ who remains the sinner's real advocate before God.

**825. By paying the price of our sins which is death, and by conquering death, He is in a position to forgive sin and to be our Advocate, our Intercessor, and our Mediator.**

That is quite true. But you must not stop at that. You must go on from there and ask how Jesus chose to exercise His mediation. And it is evident that He chose to do so through His chosen Apostles and their successors.

**826. If we attempt to come any other way, Jesus said, we are thieves and robbers.**

It is true that we must come by the way He Himself has appointed. After all, it is for the Savior to dictate the terms of salvation, not the sinner who is to be saved.

That is why we Catholics accept Confession. But when you deny the existence of any power to forgive sin in the Church, despite the witness of the Word of God, it is you who wish to go a different way from that appointed by Christ.

**827. The priest, after all, is an ordinary mortal.**

The prophet Isaiah was a human being like anyone else, how then did he have prophetic power? God gave it to him, and he had it, not insofar as he was a human being, but insofar as he was commissioned by God. So, too, insofar as he is an ordinary mortal, the priest cannot forgive sin. But insofar as he is ordained a priest he is not an ordinary mortal; for not all ordinary mortals have been ordained priests. It is only insofar as he has been ordained a priest, therefore, that he can forgive sin. In John XX., 23, you will read that Christ said to the Apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven." If you said to Christ, "But, Lord, these men are ordinary mortals; how can they forgive sin?" He would reply, "By the power I have just given them. And I had to give them that special power precisely because as ordinary mortals they would never be able to do so."

**828. Priests, being only human, are just as liable to commit sin as other men.**

Not just as liable. It is just as possible for a priest to sin, but not just as probable. The state and duties of a priest preserve him from many of the occasions of sin a layman has to meet.

**829. If a priest is a sinner, how can he possibly forgive the sin of another person?**

That question arises from your notion that a priest forgives sin by his own personal and human powers, in virtue of his own merit and holiness. He does not. It is the power of Christ operating through the priest, and applying the merits of Christ, not of the priest, to the penitent. The personal worthiness or unworthiness of the priest cannot rob him of his ordination, nor of the priestly powers conferred by that ordination. For example, supposing that a judge in a law court has been guilty of dishonesty on Wednesday in his personal private life, how can he sit in judgment on another man in court on Thursday and condemn or acquit him in a similar matter? His jurisdiction is from the state, and he judges, not in virtue of his personal worth, but as an agent through whom state authority operates. So, too, the authority of Christ operates through the priest in his official capacity, and quite independently of that priest's personal holiness or otherwise.

**830. Is a Catholic who confesses to a priest any better off than a Protestant who confesses to God?**

Yes, in many ways. Firstly, the one who goes to Confession seeks forgiveness in the way our Lord prescribed instead of laying down his own conditions. Secondly, by confessing to a priest, the Catholic benefits by an act of Christian humility the other avoids. Thirdly, the Catholic receives many Sacramental graces the other does not receive. Fourthly, the Catholic has an objective and solid assurance of forgiveness where the other has but subjective persuasion. Fifthly, the Catholic can secure sound advice as to his or her spiritual life and the will of God concerning reparation or restitution to be made, whilst the other is left to uninstructed self-guidance.

**831. The attraction of Confession must be because it is most consoling.**

It is most consoling. And yet that is not our reason for the practice of Confession. Our reason lies in our obedience to the will of Christ. And obedience is independent of feelings whether of consolation or repugnance. Christ did intend Confession to be a help and a consolation to troubled souls. But such consolation is an effect of Confession. It is not the cause of our belief in Confession. Faith in Christ and His

Church is the cause of our belief in Confession, and a sense of duty makes the Catholic seek absolution should he be so unfortunate as to fall into sin.

**832. Is a priest obliged to observe complete secrecy concerning the sins confessed to him?**

Yes. The obligation is absolute. In no way at all may a priest ever betray the sins of a penitent to others.

**833. So the priest must keep secret even the confessions of murder!**

A priest is obliged to keep secret whatever he hears in Confession. And the sins confessed do not necessarily include murder. The obligation of secrecy falls on the priest the moment a man tells his sins in Confession, for the simple reason that the priest would know nothing about them unless the man did tell them in Confession. And since he tells his sins solely for the good of his soul, and not for any considerations affecting this world, the priest must behave towards this world as if he had never heard those sins. Before the Confession, the priest knows nothing, and is as little able to betray the sinner as any other man. And the sinner is quite free to leave the priest in that state of ignorance, by not confessing to him at all. If he does confess to this or that priest, it is for the sake of his soul, and the whole matter is beyond any jurisdiction proper to this world. A priest may use only that knowledge which comes to him in the ordinary way in which knowledge comes to any other citizens. He cannot use knowledge confided to him in the confessional, and confided to him not as to a fellow man, but as to the representative of God.

**834. If a murderer went to Confession, would the priest give him absolution?**

If he happened to be a Catholic, and was indeed truly sorry, yes. But remember that, if a man is truly sorry, that includes the intention to fulfill all the conditions required for absolution. He would be prepared, therefore, to make such reparation as the law of God might require. For example, if he murdered a man upon whom a wife and children were dependent for their very existence, he would be obliged to provide for their upkeep in place of the breadwinner of whom he had deprived them. As far as possible, men are obliged to repair the harm they do to others.

**835. My point is as to whether the priest could give absolution, knowing that the man had not confessed publicly to the crime.**

The priest could certainly do so, provided the man were sincerely sorry for his sin against God's commandments, and were prepared to make such reparation as he could of harm to others. The law of God does not require that one who commits a crime should denounce himself to the state. Civil law itself does not require that. Even after his arrest, civil law allows a criminal to plead not guilty. Therefore, it certainly does not expect a man to denounce himself as guilty before his arrest.

**836. If this man could get absolution for such a heinous offense, I think the Church would be encouraging such crimes.**

That is absurd. The priest must warn the man that absolution cannot be given unless he resolves to avoid such sins for the future. Absolution is given, therefore, only on the understanding that the man determines not to commit any further murders. Is it encouraging sin to urge people not to commit it?

**837. The man might resolve to sin no more, yet before long do so.**

If he did so, it would not be because he had resolved not to do so. To whatever cause you might attribute his later sin, you certainly could not attribute it to the fact that he confessed his previous sin and resolved not to be guilty of it again.

**838. if he were truly sorry once again, he could receive absolution again, though his crimes might never be revealed publicly.**

That is perfectly true. But what is your objection to that? If you object to the fact that a man who is truly sorry for his sins can get forgiveness no matter how serious and frequent has been his guilt in the past, you object to the mercy of God. If, on the other hand, you object to the fact that state officials have never discovered the man's crimes, you object merely to the inefficiency of those officials. But I don't see why the failure of the police to detect and arrest a criminal should prevent that criminal from repenting of his sin against God's laws, and securing God's forgiveness.

**839. If my reasoning is wrong, please point out my error.**

To my mind your errors are legion. You seem to think that a man ought not to be forgiven by God for a present sin, for which he is truly sorry now, because he was forgiven a past sin for which he was truly sorry then. Again, you seem to regard the forgiveness of sin at any time as a kind of permission to commit still further sin in the future. A further error is the implied idea that the priest in the confessional is an agent employed on behalf of civil jurisdiction. He is not. Another little error is your notion that one who violates state laws is obliged to denounce himself to state authorities. And, worse still, you argue as if the failure of the state to vindicate its own laws forbids God to forgive those who repent of having violated His laws. All these ideas are erroneous, and as they form the basis of your argumentation, that must be rejected as erroneous also.

**840. If a murderer's victim goes to hell, how could the murderer in common justice be forgiven, and get to heaven?**

Justice, common or otherwise, does not enter into this particular phase of the question. The victim committed a mortal sin. The murderer did not make him commit it. And the victim had no right to be in that state and unrepentant, when death happened to come. The murderer causes his death even as a flash of lightning might have caused it. But the being in mortal sin was the victim's personal fault, despite God's warning, "Be ye ready, for ye know not the day and the hour." Now, as the victim committed mortal sin, so the murderer, granting sanity, also commits a mortal sin in killing the victim. Had the victim repented sincerely of his mortal sin prior to his death, his soul would be saved. If the murderer sincerely repents, he will be saved. You may say, "Yes. But the murderer will live on and have time to repent. But the victim does not." Yet remember that the victim did have time and should have repented after he had committed his sin instead of remaining in that state of soul until death surprised him. God's mercy is available to every soul whenever the soul chooses to turn to Him with an act of perfect sorrow. If the victim fails to do so, he loses his soul through his own fault. If the murderer does so, he saves his soul through God's mercy. Salvation of soul is an individual responsibility and to every man sufficient grace is offered. Anyone who commits a serious sin and does not return to the friendship and love of God by prayer and an act of perfect sorrow and repentance before the day is out, is simply a fool.

**841. Why is a priest hidden from view behind a curtain in the confessional?**

The privacy of the confessional is solely in favor of the penitent, not in favor of the priest. People are obliged to confess their sins to a priest, not to the general public. As they prefer to see a doctor in the privacy of his surgery, when dealing with bodily disease, so they prefer to speak of their spiritual diseases to a priest in the privacy of the confessional. The priest would much prefer to sit in the open fresh air rather than in so small, confined, and uncomfortable a place, but he puts up with the self-sacrifice for the benefit of those who seek consolation, advice, and absolution from him.

**842. When Christ had any dealings with people He did not screen Himself off.**

Christ did not finally commission His Church to begin her work until Pentecost Sunday. Only then did all the powers He conferred upon her begin to be exercised in the preaching of the new religion, and you

could scarcely expect to find confessionals until Christian Churches had been built. Meantime, you will notice that Christ reserved His private conversation with the woman taken in adultery until her accusers had been made to slink away. Jesus alone remained, and the woman. So, too, when He spoke to the woman by the well and mentioned to her that the man with whom she was living was not her husband, he reserved this betrayal of her sin to her for a moment when His disciples were absent in the city. Whether privacy be secured by retiring from others or sending them away is im-material, so long as the privacy demanded by justice and charity be secured.

**843. Do you think a priest's personal opinion of a penitent would be lowered by hearing his Confession?**

No. Confession is a most impersonal thing. I may be very friendly personally with some Catholic man. Should he ask me to hear his Confession, the moment I enter the confessional, our relations completely change. I am no longer his personal friend for the purposes of this action. I am simply any priest. He is no longer acting in any capacity as my friend. He is just any soul. As professionally as any surgeon concentrating on the physical troubles of a patient, I concentrate on the spiritual troubles of the penitent, whoever he may be. The moment the words of absolution have been said, the priest dismisses all thought of what he has heard in the confessional; and five minutes later you would find him talking with the penitent on the normal friendly basis as if no Confession had been made at all. No one has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a greater sympathy with human frailties, than a priest. All human beings have their faults. If a friend asks me to hear his Confession, it is not a shock to me to hear that he has faults. That I know quite well, without his confessing to me. All he does is to confess his particular faults to me, as he would otherwise confess them to some other priest. I merely hear them in my capacity as a priest, give the spiritual advice I would give to any soul in similar circumstances, pronounce the words of absolution if warranted, and then dismiss the matter, consigning all that I have heard to that oblivion in which thousands of Confessions lie buried and forgotten.

**844. Are not young priests taught all kinds of indelicacies and abominations in the name of moral theology as a preparation for the confessional?**

No. They are fully trained in a knowledge of the spiritual diseases of humanity, just as medical men in bodily diseases. But minute descriptions are not necessary, not as necessary in fact as they are in 'medical training. A priest is trained to know facts concerning the ways in which God's commandments can be broken, the causes, effects, and remedies. But minute descriptions of the facts are not necessary. If human legislation needs a special body of men trained legally to explain its extent and application, you can be quite sure that God's legislation also needs a body of men trained in the science of its interpretation and application. Yet outside the Catholic Church, men who would never consider themselves competent to interpret human law, think themselves fully capable of interpreting Divine law for themselves. A mistake in interpreting human legislation might mean a civil offense against the state, and, of course, that would be terrible. But a mistake in interpreting Divine law would only be an offense against God, and, of course, that doesn't matter. Catholics are wiser. The Catholic Church puts at their disposal a body of men who have all had a full four years' course in the science of moral theology and canon law, and Catholics consult them. Protestant clergymen have not had this training, and, in any case, how many of their own people consult them on purely personal and interior matters of conscience? One High-Church Anglican clergyman admitted to me that he had no real training at all for the hearing of Confessions, and said that he had to hear them, though the Anglican Church had no right to let him be ordained with such inadequate training in moral theology.

**845. If I were a Catholic, I would have to confess all my venial and mortal sins in all their sordid, revolting, and soul-polluting details.**



You would not have to confess every one of those sins. Catholics have no obligation to confess venial sins. Your mistake in that matter, of course, does not affect your question, for Catholics are obliged to confess their mortal sins, which are necessarily the more grave. But, even as regards mortal sins, you are again mistaken in thinking that penitents have to go into all the sordid, revolting, and soul-polluting details. They have not to describe their sins; they have to confess the sinful facts of which they have been guilty. Commenting on the strange notions held by some non-Catholics concerning this matter, non-Catholics who have had no experience of the confessional in practice and who rely on their peculiar imagination, G. K. Chesterton says, "Nobody has to go into such morbid detail confessing to a priest as in confessing to a doctor. What matters in the confessional is the moral guilt, not the material details. But the material details are everything in medicine, even for the most respectable physician, let alone all the anarchial quacks who have been let loose to hear confessions in the name of psychoanalysis."

**846. Moral corruption appears to me to be almost inescapable, owing to the very nature and purpose of the confessional.**

You do not understand the nature and purpose of the confessional. If you were to contrast the nature of the confessional with the nature of the doctor's surgery, you would find the confessional a thousand times better safeguarded against abuses than the surgery. Yet you don't suggest that moral corruption is almost inescapable in the medical profession. Again, the purpose of the confessional is the destruction of "sin, and the prescribing of precautions against sin. Naturally a priest does not go to the confessional expecting to hear a list of the penitent's virtues. He expects to hear the story of human frailties. But he hears this story with a sense of responsibility and in a frame of mind which is bent on the salvation of souls to the exclusion of any particular interest in the nature of the sins confessed. Also, when a priest is conscious that he is the representative of the mercy of Christ, and that he is administering a Sacrament of Christ, he is in an atmosphere of grace which is in itself a protection. No medical physician, whether by circumstances or the nobility of his duties, is so well safeguarded as the spiritual physician in the Catholic confessional.

The Holy Eucharist

**847. I presume that the Eucharist is of supreme importance in your religion.**

It is. Since the Eucharist is the sacramental presence of Christ Himself in the Catholic Church, it cannot but be the very heart and soul of our religion. As a matter of fact, there is no true Christianity without the Eucharist any more than there is without the Incarnation itself.

**848. My studies have shown that union with God by eating is the law in all ancient religions.**

Your studies should have shown you that the immense differences totally unexpected far outweigh any expected similarities between the Christian doctrine, and any ritualistic taking of food in ancient pagan religions.

**849. Could not the first Christians have got the idea from pagan religions?**

No. The first Christians were Jews, rigidly attached to Mosaic beliefs and rites. They would never have abandoned those beliefs and rites for pagan rites which they hated and held in the utmost abomination. Christ Himself instituted the Eucharist, and apart from that no one would have dreamed of inventing it. Christians accepted it because they believed in Christ. They had no other reason for doing so, and a right idea of the Christian doctrine shows that no pagan rites could have given rise to such a concept.

**850. I have read that primitive Christians used bread and water for the Eucharist, copying Mithraism, the rival religion which so severely challenged Christianity.**

Mithraism was widespread during the first centuries of Christianity, chiefly amongst pagan Roman soldiers. This pagan and mythological religion did include in its rites a symbolical banquet of bread and water. But the rite was in no way sacramental in the Christian sense of the word, and had no similarity with the Christian Sacrament of the Eucharist any more than any other partaking of bread and water under any other conceivable circumstances. Above all, the statement is entirely untrue when it suggests that the use of bread and water in a Christian Communion service is a reversion to primitive Christian practice. Never did the early Christians substitute water for wine in this sacramental rite. They knew quite well that water would be an invalid substance for the purposes of the Eucharist, and that the very substances used and prescribed by Christ had to be employed. As for the remark that Mithraism was a rival religion which severely challenged Christianity, I can but say that it was a prevalent form of paganism in the early centuries, rivaling the official pagan religion of Rome. But it was no more a challenge to Christianity than that same Roman paganism. Christianity rather challenged all forms of paganism rife in the Roman Empire, and fought them out of existence,

**851. Why is it not idolatry to adore a wafer of bread, just as it is to adore idols of wood and stone?**

Because the Blessed Sacrament is not an idol of wood or stone. Nor is it bread. It is the substance of Christ's Body under the appearances of bread. And this substance of Christ's Body is the living Christ whom we adore as our God. It would be idolatry did we adore a thing as if it were God. It is not idolatry when we adore as God One whom we know to be God.

**852. If the Apostles returned to earth, would they not be amazed to learn that the consecrated wafer was the body of Christ?**

No. They would be amazed to learn that any other doctrine could possibly be believed as the teaching of Christ. They would quote St. Paul's words from I Corinthians XL, 29, "He that eateth or drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord."

**853. Cardinal Cajetan confesses that the Gospels nowhere prove that the bread is changed into the body of Christ, and admits that Christ spoke figuratively.**

Nowhere does Cardinal Cajetan say that. Cardinal Cajetan is dealing with the one text, "This is My body." and not with any other references in Scripture. Nor does he say that Christ spoke these words figuratively. He says that Christ meant them literally, and that these words prove that bread is changed into the body of Christ. He gives it as his personal opinion that a man might doubt whether this particular text was to be taken literally or metaphorically if he did not have the guidance of the Church on the matter. But he says that the guidance of the Church is clear as to the literal sense of the words, and that those words are undoubtedly the direct revelation of Christ and the conversion of the substance of bread into the substance of His body really takes place.

**854. I am afraid I could never believe that bread and wine are changed into the actual body of Christ.**

If you look up St. John, Chapter VI., you will find that you are uttering just what those Jews said who refused to believe Christ Himself. Jesus had said, "The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." The Jews therefore said, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

**855. It seems to me that it could only be a spiritual change.**

That is not intelligible. You might say that Jesus meant the bread to remain merely bread, but that it should effect a spiritual change in those who received it, just as the water of Baptism remains water, yet effects a spiritual change in those baptized. That, I say, is intelligible as a process. But it is not what Christ meant. When the Jews said, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat," they thought He really meant to give His actual body under the appearances of bread. And Jesus knew that that was the thought in their minds. If He did not mean that, He had only to say so, and all their difficulties would have vanished. But no. He

intensified their thought. "Of a truth I say to you," He said, "except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man . . . you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life ... for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. . . ." The Jews saw that He did mean that they should eat His actual body, and many cried, "This saying is hard, and who can hear it." So they walked no more with Him. And you say with them, "I, too, am afraid I could never believe."

**856. How could Christ give them His very body without apparent diminution of His natural body?**

Difficulties in our minds as to how God could do a thing are of no value against the fact that He did do it, I am quite willing to admit that the real presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist is as much a mystery to be believed by an act of faith as the mystery of the Trinity. At the same time, there is no reason of any value in your objection. Any apparent diminution of Christ's mortal body would be by a reduction of quantity. But quantity is not concerned in this matter. Substance as such underlies all quantity and all qualities, and is distinct from these accidental qualifications. The substance of bread, underlying the qualities of bread, was converted into the substance of our Lord's body, the qualities of bread remaining as usual. This change neither added to, nor took from, any dimensive properties of our Lord's mortal body. Your difficulty arises from your confusion of substance and accidental and variable modifications of substance. Abstracting from all such modifications, the substantial reality of bread was miraculously and instantaneously converted into the substantial reality of Christ's body. No man on earth could say that the omnipotent God could not do this, for He who can create substance out of nothing, can put it through any subsequent changes He might wish.

**857. You claim an unseen change in the substance of bread to the sub-stance of the body of Christ, yet no visible change in the appearance or taste?**

That is correct. At the moment of consecration the substances of bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

**858. Can you give a logical reason for this invisible change?**

The change not being due to natural powers, I cannot account for it by any natural factors. But granted the Divinity of Christ, the logical reason is to be found in His omnipotent power, and in His own teaching. In the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, He undoubtedly promises that He will give us His very flesh to eat. Twelve months later, He kept that promise, taking bread and saying, "This is My body." The word of God is power. He had but to say, "Let there be light," and light existed. And when He said, "This is My body," His body was present. Now since the appearances or qualities of bread did not change, there was but one way left in which that bread could become His body, and that was according to substance. The logic is clear enough. Could God do it? Yes, for He is omnipotent. Did He do it? Yes, for His words bear no other logical explanation.

**859. All Christ's miracles were visible changes. This isolated case of an invisible miracle is against His usual methods of clear and concise guidance of mankind.**

Firstly, you do not understand our Savior's method of clear and concise guidance. Christ chose as His method of guiding mankind the establishing of an infallible teaching Church, sending it to teach all nations, and saying, hear the Church. A man has but to study the claims of the Catholic Church, notice her unity, holiness, Catholicity and historic Apostolicity, submit to her teaching authority and accept all that she teaches. At once he attains clear and concise guidance. But now, to your main thought. You have concentrated upon one aspect of the miraculous only. The miraculous may be taken to refer to any event above the capacity of any merely natural laws. In this sense, the invisible change of substance is miraculous, for only the omnipotence of God can account for it. In a second sense, the miraculous can refer to an event which is not only beyond the power of any law of nature, but is also apparent to the sense-faculties of bystanders. To this category belong the incidents you mention. Now Christ used His miraculous powers in both ways. For example, God alone can forgive sin. No natural powers in existence can do so.

Yet Christ said to a sinner, "Son, be of good heart. Thy sins are forgiven thee." This involved an invisible supernatural change of soul. No external sign guaranteed it. Christ's word alone guaranteed it, and, of course, His word alone is sufficient guarantee to anyone who believes in His Divinity. But the Pharisees would not believe, and for the sake of these unbelievers, Christ proceeded to an external and visible miracle merely to confirm the former. "You do not believe," He said. "But which is easier? To forgive sin, or to say, 'Take up thy bed and walk.?' " Then He restored the man to health in order to prove His Divine power, so that, believing in Him, they would take His word for it that the greater disease of sin had really been healed. Almost the same thing occurs where the Eucharist is concerned. In the sixth chapter of St. John, when Christ promised to give His very flesh to eat, the Jews took His words literally, just as Catholics do, but they refused to believe, as Catholics do not. They cried, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" just as they had cried, "How can a man forgive sin?" Yet as Christ had associated the external miracle of the sick man's bodily cure with His forgiveness of sin, so here He had associated the miraculous multiplication of the loaves with His doctrine concerning the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, of course, when Christ fulfilled His promise, there was no need to perform any external miracle. All the Apostles believed in His Divinity. External miraculous signs are for unbelievers rather than for believers. The word of Christ is sufficiently clear and concise guidance for them; and for us today, the teaching of the Catholic Church is sufficiently clear and concise guidance as to the word of Christ.

**860. I cannot see how such a change of substance could be made.**

That does not surprise me in the least. For you are overlooking the fact that Christ is God to whom all things are possible, and judging the matter merely from the natural standpoint, and the ordinary laws of nature as experienced by men. But I would like to remind you that, if you cling to that attitude, you must give up believing in Christ at all; you must reject the Gospels, and cease even to be a Protestant. For you don't see how Christ could walk upon the waters, or how He could amplify five small loaves of ordinary bread to feed thousands of people. If you do accept the fact that Christ could in these cases act independently of ordinary natural laws, despite your inability to see how He could do so, then you can accept the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. If you can't accept the latter for the reason you give, then you can't logically accept other departures from ordinary and merely natural laws. It all comes back to the question as to whether you really have faith in Christ, or not.

**861. You would have the body and blood of Christ, whilst yet alive, simultaneously in two places at once.**

That is not really true, for place supposes location in space, and the substantial presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist happens to be independent of the ordinary laws of space. Here, I know, I will be out of your depth. But the greatest philosopher in the world cannot tell you what space is, or what place is, or what precisely is the relationship between a thing in a given locality, and the locality in which it is. And if we do not know what a place is, or what it is to put something in a place, how can we say that God can't put a thing in two places at once? However, as I have said, the Catholic doctrine does not really require a presence in two places at once. For normally a material substance occupies a place by its quantity. Now the substance of the body and blood of Christ was present in Him according to the ordinary limitations of quantity as He spoke the words, "This is My body." But that same substance became present in the Eucharist independently of the ordinary laws affecting quantity and its relation to space. I say that this will be beyond you, but I give it to show that, however mysterious it may be, the fact of the twofold presence violates no principles of reason and philosophy. Men can but say, "It could or it could not be. If God wanted to do it, there is no reason why He could not do so. The whole point is as to whether He did do it." And we Catholics reply, "The fact that He did do it is clearly recorded in the Gospels."

**862. But the same substance would be present in the two places simultaneously.**

I have, already warned you against superficial notions of place. Here I must warn you against equally superficial notions of time. For simultaneous means at the same time. Do you know what time is? You do not. The deepest philosophers are unable to tell you. St. Augustine said, "If no one asks me what time is, I know. If anyone asks me, then I don't know." You would say that a body could be here and there

successively, but not simultaneously. But you don't know what here is, or what there is, nor what succession is, nor what simultaneity is. All our thoughts are necessarily conditioned by our space-time environment; but both space and time are relative things only, and our thoughts by no means embrace the whole of reality. No wonder God has said to us, "Your thoughts are not My thoughts, nor My ways your ways." Where the Eucharist is concerned the only thing we can do is to see what Christ says, and take His word for it. St. Peter and the Apostles did that when they refused to follow the unbelieving Jews who abandoned Christ, and said, when Christ challenged them with the words, "Will you also go away?", "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Such is still the Catholic attitude.

**863. According to you, Christ Himself, whilst still alive, would have partaken of His own flesh and blood, together with His disciples.**

That is true. But any difficulties on that point arise from our notions of quantity, and space-time relationships from which the substantial Eucharistic presence of the body and blood of Christ abstracts. Meantime, our Lord both gave Himself and received Himself as He instituted the Blessed Sacrament in order to signify the intimate sacramental bond of union with Himself created by Holy Communion. So He said, "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you." I admit the mystery in all this, but that is not sufficient reason for rejecting the clear teaching of Scripture on the subject. If it were, as I have pointed out before, you would have to reject Christ altogether. He who has faith in the Divinity of Christ has already accepted an overwhelming mystery, and should have no difficulty in accepting His teachings, however mysterious they may be.

**864. I would like to be able to feel and know the Divine Presence. But how?**

You can have no means of feeling that our Lord is present in the Eucharist. You can know that He is there by Faith. We believe in Christ. We know that Christ said, "This is My body." We know that the Catholic Church definitely teaches that Christ meant by those words that He intended to give us His very body under the appearances of bread. Our belief in Christ, and in His Catholic Church enables us to know by Faith that Christ is indeed present. I admit that deep Faith can awaken a reaction of feeling. But devotional religious feelings are caused by Faith. Faith is not a product of those feelings.

**865. You have not always been a Catholic and could help me more than others. How did you get the feeling of the Presence of our Lord on the Altar?**

I have never had it. But, if I have never felt that our Lord is present, I have the supreme conviction that He is there. It is a conviction of Faith. I say Mass every morning. After the words of consecration, I see no external and apparent change in the Host. It still looks like bread. Yet I know that there is no bread there. The qualities of bread remain, but the substance of the bread has changed into the substance of the risen and glorified body of Christ. And I adore and worship the Blessed Sacrament with the same adoration which I will give to Almighty God when death carries me into His eternal presence. My adoration then will be more intense, more vivid, better realized; but it will not be different. We are living now by Faith, not by sight. Though a priest, I am as subject to the conditions of Faith as any other Catholic. When the Blessed Sacrament is lying before me on the Altar, the reason for my belief is not in anything I can see in the Host before me. The reason is in God; or, if you wish, in His infinite knowledge and veracity. God has said it. God must know. God could not tell a lie. I believe absolutely.

The Sacrifice of the Mass

**866. When, and by whom, was the first Mass said?**

Jesus Christ Himself instituted and celebrated the first Mass at the Last Supper on the night before He died.

**867. Before Christ came, how did men worship God?**

From the very beginning of the human race, men have rendered to God the worship of prayer and sacrifice. Thus Abel, the son of our first parents, offered sacrifice to God. When the Jews were liberated from Egypt, they were told by God to sacrifice a lamb without blemish, and every year afterwards until the coming of Christ, a lamb was sacrificed at Paschal time, as a commemoration of God's goodness to the Jews, and as a type of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, the true Lamb of God who liberated the souls of men from the captivity of sin. Many other secondary sacrifices of expiation and purification also characterized the worship of the Jews, before Christ. The tradition of sacrifice also persisted amongst the nations who did not belong to the chosen people of God, and even when they had drifted into paganism, they still regarded sacrifice as essential to religion.

**868. Christ made the one and only Sacrifice when He died on the Cross.**

The Sacrifice of the Mass does not take the place of that on Calvary. Far from supplanting it, it supposes it; and the Mass would have no value apart from the Sacrifice of the Cross. That Sacrifice was the one absolute Sacrifice. The Mass is substantially that same Sacrifice, not another. It is the same priesthood of Christ offering the same Victim, Himself; and for the same purpose. In the Mass, Christ merely offers Himself in a new way, applying the fruits of Calvary to those present, and to all for whom the Mass is offered. Far from diminishing the efficacy of Calvary, it manifests that efficacy.

Holy Communion

**869. Does it not seem like cannibalism to devour the body of Christ in Communion?**

Christ is not present in the Eucharist under a form in which cannibalism could be possible. His body is really and substantially present, but not in a natural way. It is an entirely supernatural mode of presence which you may not believe, but which at least excludes all notions of cannibalism. You give the same objection as that which came to the minds of the Jews when Christ told them of His intention in regard to the future Eucharist. Christ said to the Jews, "He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me." Many of the Jews said, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" And they forsook Christ, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" They pictured a cannibalistic eating of raw human flesh and the drinking of human blood. Christ did not intend to be received in such a way, but did intend to leave the substance of His bodily being under the qualities of bread, for the purpose of uniting us as really to His humanity as His humanity is united to His divinity, the union in our case being sacramental and in His case personal or hypostatic. So Christ reiterated to the Jews, even though knowing their thoughts of a cannibalistic eating, "Amen, Amen, I say to you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man you shall not have life in you." Instead of having any real faith in Christ and the humility to ask in what way He intended to leave His body and blood, in a sacramental form, they proudly took their own concept for granted, asked no further light, and departed. However, though Christ is really received in the Blessed Sacrament, it involves no cannibalistic devouring of human flesh in the sense you imagine together with those who abandoned Christ rather than believe.

**870. When a cannibal eats human flesh, it is not to appease hunger, but a ceremonial.**

At times cannibalism has been practiced through sheer hunger. However, it is true that it has had an almost entirely ceremonial significance amongst various primitive and pagan races.

**871. The cannibal has the belief that he is assimilating the courage, prowess, etc., of the victim.**

Such a notion certainly prevailed.

**872. Is not this the basic idea of a similar ceremonial of the Christian religion, to assimilate the virtues of Christ in the form of body and blood?**

The answer to that is a decided negative. Any linking of the two notions would be an exceedingly superficial process of thought. I need not delay to point out at any great length the fact that no one in his senses would suggest any idea that the Christian doctrine of Communion has been derived from cannibalistic superstitions. Here I will confine myself to the question of detached similarity. Now in the first place, no Christian has any idea of eating Christ under the external forms of body and blood. Christ exists in the Eucharist under the forms of bread and wine. According to Catholic doctrine, the very substance of Christ's body and blood is present under the forms of bread and wine. The external act of receiving Communion is nothing like the act of cannibalism. Nor is the significance of the act anything like the significance imagined for their rites by superstitious cannibals. Their outlook is one of natural, materialistic, automatic magic. The Christian concept is supernatural, spiritual, non-automatic, and in no way suggestive of occult forces superstitiously believed to be inherent in nature itself.

**873. I read in a book recently that, during the Mass there is a mystical separation of Christ's Body and Blood, but no actual separation.**

It is because there is no actual separation of Christ's body and blood that he who receives Communion under either kind receives Christ entirely, body, blood, soul and divinity.

**874. What the difference between mystical and actual separation may be, I am not qualified to say.**

The difference is that between an external symbolism and an interior reality. From the mystical point of view, the separate consecrations under solid and liquid forms represent the separation of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrifice of Calvary. Actually, however, no real separation of the two can occur in the risen Christ, and, therefore, He must be completely present either under the appearances of bread or under the appearances of wine. For the Mass, as a Sacrifice, the external mystical symbolism is required. For Communion it is not required. The Eucharist, as a Sacrament, demands only that it be received under one kind or the other. The Church has restricted the distribution of Communion to the form of bread.

**875. Whatever the difference may be, it seems to me that by His words at the Last Supper, "Drink ye all of this," Christ must have intended the chalice to be given to all.**

By the fact that His Church, exercising His own authority, has decreed that Communion is to be given under one kind only we are quite certain that that was not His intention. Had that been His intention, the Holy Spirit would never have permitted the Church to entertain the idea of such legislation. But even apart from the fact that the legislation of the Church rules out any possibility that our Lord intended the chalice to be given to the laity as essential to Communion, the text and context of Scripture in no way supports the idea. When speaking, to the ordinary multitude on the occasion when He promised the Eucharist, our Lord said simply, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." John VI., 52. St. Paul, who certainly knew the mind of Christ, said clearly, "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." 1 Corinthians XI., 27. When our Lord said, "Drink ye all of this" He was addressing the Apostles only, and His words then applied only to priests called upon to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass. This is evident from His further words to those present, "Do this for a commemoration of Me," words which have reference only to priests lawfully ordained.

**876. A separation of the Body and Blood of Christ, mystical or otherwise, suggests that Communion should be given under both kinds, whether Christ be entirely present under either kind or not.**

An actual separation would require that. A mystical separation does not even remotely suggest it. The consecration under two forms gives an external symbolism which in no way affects the reality of Christ's complete presence under either kind. The priest, in receiving Communion under both kinds, receives no more than those who receive under one kind, for it is impossible to receive more than the complete Christ. Having offered Mass as a sacrifice, he receives the same Christ in two different ways.

**877. We are told that we are to receive both the body and the blood, for in St. John VI., 54, we read, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you."**

That is correct. But, since the complete Christ is present under either form, one who receives Communion under either form receives both the body and the blood of Christ.

**878. Does not marriage give people the best chance of the best kind of happiness?**

Not necessarily. Christian virtue and fidelity *to* God's laws give the best chance of the best kind of happiness, the eternal happiness God intends for men of goodwill. If, however, you wish to restrict matters to this world, even then marriage does not necessarily give the best chance of the best kind of happiness. It can do so to given types, but only then when entered upon after due consideration, and virtuous preparation, together with high ideals and the determination to observe the laws of God relative to the married state.

**879. Why does the Roman Catholic Church forbid divorce and remarriage in spite of the teaching of the Bible?**

The Catholic Church strictly observes the law of Christ in this matter.

**880. According to Matthew V., 32, Christ said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and marry another, maketh her to commit adultery."**

Christ allowed permanent separation without remarriage, if adultery has been committed by one of the parties. What He meant was this: Whosoever shall put away his wife (I am not now speaking of mere separation without remarriage, for that is lawful in the case of infidelity), but whosoever puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery himself and by his adulterous union forces his wife into adultery if she marries another. That is the only possible interpretation in the light of the context and parallel passages. If the man who marries the woman so put away commits adultery, she must still be the wife of the one who dismissed her; and if she is still his wife, he must still be her husband, and forbidden to take a new wife. If we turn to parallel passages, we find St. Mark recording Christ's words absolutely, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another; committeth adultery against her." Mark X., 11. In St. Luke also we have the words without any parenthesis. "Everyone that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." Luke XVI., 18. For a Christian, then, there is no such thing as divorce from a valid marriage, and remarriage, whilst the first partner is still living. Attempted remarriage results in a sinful union only. You can have divorce, and give up Christianity; or you can have Christianity, and give up divorce. You cannot have both.

**881. Is it not wicked to forbid unhappily married people the further chance of a happy marriage?**

That depends upon how you would define the term wicked. On my definition that is wicked which violates the law of God, it is extremely wicked for men to take it upon themselves to abrogate an obligation imposed most strictly by God. Yet even apart from this, it would not even be a kindness to give unhappily married people a further chance of finding happiness in another marriage. If they showed so little prudence in the first place, you only offer them the chance of further misery. There is no guarantee that they will not make an equally silly mistake again. However, even granted a possibility of success in the second, third, or fourth venture, no human considerations can avail against God's law.

**882. So the Catholic Church gives the unhappily married no further chance of marriage?**



The Catholic Church is not responsible for the refusal. She had no *say* in the prohibition of divorce. God forbids it, and the Church but declares the law of God. Christ clearly said, "If a man puts away his wife' and marries another he commits adultery." St. Paul definitely repeated that law of Christ, saying, "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband lives, but if her husband dies, she is at

liberty." And, of course, since marriage is a mutual contract, it cuts both ways. The husband is subject to the same conditions as the wife. Since the Church claims to be but repeating God's law, it's no use in your attacking her attitude on the subject. The only way you can make headway is by trying to disprove her radical claims to be the teacher of faith and morals authorized by God in this world. However, the answer to your question is that the Catholic Church opposes divorce because God forbids it.

**883. Why hinder the dissolution of a hateful bond where husband and wife are enemies, and children brought up in an inhuman atmosphere of hatred and deceit?**

Loosen what you call the hateful bond, and grant facilities for divorce, and there will be still more homes in which husband and wife are enemies, the children will be in a worse atmosphere, the best instincts of humanity will be still further outraged, and the evils in society will be incalculable. Divorce is an insult to human nature, and will have its sure revenge. Marriage is a human contract based upon man's rational will. It is not based upon passing emotion and passions. Man is a little nobler, after all, than the mere animal who mates according to the lust of the moment. Divorce, fosters the very evils you urge. It injures the idea of real love, which is unchanging and deathless. If marriage cannot be terminated during life, people will be induced to make sure before they enter that state. Having entered it, they will be strengthened in good will and cooperation, overcoming their faults, and practicing mutual charity. But the very prospect of divorce weakens their determination miserably. The hope of finding happiness in another marriage actually fosters present discords, and gives reason for the creation of still more grievances. If divorce is easily obtained, people will marry through passing attraction and passionate lust, and without true love based on appreciation of character. After all, there will be a way out later on! Will a man be wholeheartedly devoted to any woman whom he expects to abandon after a few years or months? The children need the influence of both parents, the authority of their own proper father and mother. The worse conduct inspired by the prospect of divorce on the part of the parents gives greater scandal and disedification, and whether they go with the father or the mother; the children are subjected to a new partner who cannot have the same interest in them, even if sheer brutality of treatment be not their lot. Finally, the best instincts of humanity are outraged by divorce, for if the marriage bond be dissolved at will, you have but legalized prostitution and promiscuity. It is because people speak as you do, and act on your principles that there is a rapidly increasing corruption of morals, tending to a logical result in the matrimonial degradations of Communism. Outraged human nature revenged itself on the degenerated Greeks. Pagan Rome yielded to the Greek culture, and when Roman matrons related the story of their successive husbands, Rome was doomed. Your views are simply a reversion to paganism and brutality, and they spell the destruction of the social good.

**884. The reform of the divorce laws is urgent.**

In other words, you want to make divorce and remarriage easier still. We must adjust even the laws of Christ to suit what men want. Christian standards must be abolished. In his book, "Anthony, Viscount Knebworth: A Record of Youth," by his father, Lord Lytton, there occurs a most illuminating remark about modern morality. Anthony was not, and died without becoming a Catholic. But he was very straight and honest. So listen to his words. He wrote to his father, "A man does wrong and then argues, 'That can't have been wrong. If there is anything wrong, it must be the morality which condemns what I have done as sin. And so he scraps that bit of religious teaching. In other words, man is daily pitting his puny judgment against God's. I have done it so often myself, and it is so grotesque really, the attempt to change Christian teaching in order to make oneself a saint instead of a sinner.'" Those words of Anthony's reflect a very common attitude, and are really the explanation of the desire to water down the divorce laws to suit those

who do not want to observe them. Not to stop doing what is wrong, but merely to call it right because one wants to do it, is hypocrisy itself.

**885. We don't want to say anything to undermine the sanctity of the married state. No one wants its ideals weakened. But there are good reasons why men and women who marry in haste should not be left to repent at leisure.**

The burglar said, "I don't want to undermine the sanctity of your right to life. Not for a moment would I weaken the ideals which vindicate that right. But there are good reasons why I should acquire certain pleasures your money will give me if I violate the law just this once." Whereupon he split the skull of his victim with an axe.

**886. There are, of course, some who view divorce and remarriage as the violation of a sacred ordination.**

There are, if it be a question of divorce from a valid Christian marriage with the intention of another attempt at matrimony whilst the first partner is still living. About four hundred and fifty million Catholics take this view, and a vast number of Protestants who still retain their Christian convictions as regards marriage.

**887. But civilization has lived long enough to recognize that there is often more wickedness in a strict adherence to religious traditions than in sensible modifications of those ordinances.**

The sweeping reference to civilization is absurd. That section only which has drifted from Christian moral standards is clamoring for easier divorce. Still worse is the jump from sacred ordinances to religious traditions to prepare the way for talk of modifications. We are not talking of religious traditions; we are talking of God's law; and if there is any wickedness it is in the suggestion that men are free to modify or even abolish God's law instead of obeying it.

**888. The Sermon on the Mount gives evidence that divorcement was considered a social necessity even in those early days.**

Christ mentioned the fact only to declare that henceforth such laxity was to be absolutely repudiated and abolished. To quote a custom mentioned by Christ, yet not to mention that He was abolishing it is anything but honest.

**889. Modern usage has perpetuated the right of judicial termination of the marriage tie.**

A right has to exist before it can be perpetuated. The marriage tie cannot be terminated by civil law. "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder" still holds good. The truth may be that modern usage tends more and more to ignore God's law, and wrongfully takes matters into its own hands in favor of whatever it pleases men to do.

**890. It is only seemly, therefore, that relief should be reasonably easy without offering any inducement to hold lightly the duties which men and women owe one another in marriage.**

Do you really think that we offer less inducement to take marriage duties lightly by making divorce easy than by a rigid refusal of divorce?

**891. The words of Gibbon on Justin's divorce reforms still have an interest in modern times: He yielded to the prayers of his unhappy subjects and restored the liberty of**

**divorce by mutual consent; the civilians were unanimous, the theologians were divided, and the ambiguous words which contain the precepts of Christ are flexible to any interpretation that the wisdom of a legislature can demand.**

That is a correct quotation of Gibbon's words; but Gibbon is wrong in his interpretation. Firstly, Justin's legislation permitting divorce by consent cannot be called a reform. It was the abolition of the true reform law made by his father, Justinian, to suppress the abuse of divorce. Modern times find Justin's law of interest precisely because it was the retrogression to an abuse. And the moderns want just that. Secondly, it must be remembered that the legislation of these Byzantine Emperors did not voice the mind of the Christian Church. Whatever may have been the aberrations of civil legislators during the ages, the Church has ever taught that divorce and remarriage are not permitted to validly married Christians. Gibbon himself does not give a true picture of the state of affairs. When, in 556 A. D., Justinian legislated against the abuse of divorce, those guilty of laxity protested, and Justin II. abolished his father's prohibitive law to please them. I deny, of course, that the New Testament is really ambiguous on the subject. But Gibbon is right when he says that the words are "flexible to any interpretation a legislature can demand." It would be difficult to quote any passage in the English language which politicians will not find flexible to any interpretation they themselves wish to impose upon it.

#### Marriage and Divorce

**892. Mr. Justice Swift, at Birmingham, England, said indignantly: "Those who talk about the sanctity of marriage, who lay the greatest emphasis upon 'let no man put asunder,' do not realize the pain and suffering we see here, the broken lives, the misery of years that these cases mean."**

Firstly, the One who first laid emphasis upon the words "Let no man put asunder" was Christ; and, as God, he foresaw all the consequences of that law, yet thought fit to give it. His own disciples foresaw the difficulties, and said to Him: "If the case be so, it is not expedient to marry at all." And Christ did not deny the possibility of hardship in certain cases. Secondly, Mr. Justice Swift is wrong in thinking that only judges in a divorce court see the broken lives, pain and suffering, and misery of years that these cases mean. Priests see far more cases than those that actually arrive at the divorce courts. They are constantly dealing with domestic trials; and they have seen far more pain and suffering, broken lives and misery of years through the facility with which divorce can be obtained than through the rigid observance of Christ's law forbidding divorce. I could amplify that, did time permit. But it will be enough to add that the sum-total of marital happiness has certainly not increased in a world widely accepting divorce, and crying out for its still further extension. Emotion over particular cases has simply rendered the judge blind to universal issues.

**893. A book by a recent writer says that "behind this conflict of opinion lies the fundamental contradiction between the sacerdotal and the secular concepts of marriage."**

The new ideas mean the abandoning of Christianity. Of course, it would not do to say so openly. Ours is a Christian civilization. We are not pagans. So the old trick is employed by speaking of the sacerdotal concept instead of the Christian concept of marriage. But one must prove that what is termed the sacerdotal concept is not the Christian concept. Again, since your author mentions a conflict between but two concepts, the sacerdotal and the secular, will he tell us that the secular concept is the truly Christian concept, and that it is the sacerdotal concept which is un-Christian ?

**894. The central difficulty lies in the variance between the two ideas of marriage as a contract and a sacrament.**

In other words, the question is as to whether marriage is still to be regarded as a sacrament integral to the Christian religion, or merely a social agreement as unconnected with that religion as a partnership in business. What you call the sacerdotal view is that marriage is a Christian Sacrament; the secular view is that it is merely a civil and rescindable partnership having no real connection with the Christian religion. So the problem is, after all, are we to take the Christian view of marriage, or not?

**895. Will you solve this case: An Anglican man married an Anglican woman in the Anglican Church.**

Such a marriage would be binding until the death of one of the parties.

**896. Later she divorced him, and married a Catholic, but not in the Catholic Church.**

That second marriage was not a true marriage in the sight of God. Nor could it have taken place in a Catholic Church, for no priest could assist at the second marriage of a divorced person whose former partner is still living.

**897. The woman now wants to become a Catholic, and the Church will not receive her, because it says the first marriage is binding. How can the Church refuse to save a soul?**

The Church cannot refuse to save a soul, but souls can refuse to save themselves. In this case, the second, marriage is not valid, and it is not lawful for her to live with her second husband as his wife. If she insists upon continuing as the wife of the second man, the Church cannot admit her to the Sacraments, even as her Catholic husband cannot be admitted to them.

**898. Since the Catholic Church is the only true Church, she can't be bound by the first marriage according to the man-made laws of the Church of England.**

If you believe that the Catholic Church is the only true Church, you should accept her verdict that the first marriage is binding. The Church does not teach that all marriages between non-Catholics are null and void. She legislates for her own subjects. While she declares that God's legislation does bind all non-Catholics she does not make laws for those who are not Christians and modifies her legislation in cases of its application to Christians who are not Catholics. If two Anglicans marry, whether in the Anglican Church or merely in a Registry Office, that marriage is valid and binding, and death alone can break it in the sight of God.

**899. The Church is losing two souls instead of one, by acknowledging the laws of the Church of England.**

She does not acknowledge the laws of the Church of England. She acknowledges her own laws, and her own laws say that, whilst Catholics cannot contract valid marriage outside their Church, Protestants can, provided both parties are Protestants, and this, whether they marry in their Protestant Church, or merely in the Registry Office. In the case you give, an Anglican woman married an Anglican man in the Anglican Church. That marriage was binding in conscience and still is, despite the civil divorce. The second marriage is, therefore, invalid. The Church is not losing two souls by her attitude. The two souls are forfeiting the privileges of the Catholic Faith by their determination to continue in an unlawful union instead of separating, as they should, from each other.

**900. Can she get a dispensation to be received into the Church?**

No. The Church is here to keep God's law, not to break it. And it is the law of God, taught by Christ, that if a woman puts away her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. The Church can't say that it is all right for her to continue as she is when it's all wrong. Her first marriage is valid, and unless she and her present partner agree to live separately, she cannot be received into the Church. We can't have it both ways, proud of our Church because of its fidelity to the law of Christ forbidding divorce, yet desiring her to relax her fidelity when convenient.

**901. Can you tell me what can be done in this case?**

Yes. The two in question should agree to live separately. The Catholic man should return to the practice of his religion. The non-Catholic woman should receive instruction and be received into the Church.

**902. In dealing with dispensations granted by Rome for civilly divorced persons to remarry, you have often explained that there is a difference between a decree of nullity, and a divorce strictly so-called.**

That is true. Often enough a marriage accepted as valid by civil law lacks the conditions required for validity according to the laws of the Christian religion. If, upon request, and after full inquiry into all the circumstances, Rome grants a decree of nullity in such a case, she merely declares that such a marriage was null and void from the very beginning, and never was binding in conscience. Such a decree breaks no existing bond of marriage, simply declares that the parties to it are and have always been single people so far as that particular contract is concerned, and tells them that they are free to enter into a valid marriage with anyone free to marry.

**903. Does Rome recognize as valid the marriage of two non-Catholics, one of whom is a baptized Christian and the other not?**

She recognizes it as a valid matrimonial contract, but does not grant that it has the peculiar religious quality of a Christian Sacrament.

**904. I have heard of one such case where, after a civil divorce, one of the parties became a Catholic and was permitted to marry a Catholic. If Rome recognized the first marriage as valid she could not have issued a decree of nullity, but must have allowed the breaking of an existent bond.**

It is true that Rome could not issue a decree of "nullity from the very beginning" in such a case. But, since the first marriage was not a Sacrament, the Church using what is known as the Pauline privilege as taught by Saint Paul designates it as a valid contract but not a Sacramental union and, therefore, has the power to dissolve the purely natural bond in favor of the Christian Faith should one of the parties later become a Catholic and desire to marry a Catholic.

**905. If both parties to the first marriage had been validly baptized as non-Catholics, could the Church have granted a similar permission?**

No. For the Church declares that, if two baptized Protestants contract marriage, they contract a valid Christian and Sacramental marriage wherever it takes place. And that Sacramental marriage is binding in Christian law until the death of one of the parties. The Catholic Church, therefore, could not sanction the divorce and remarriage of such partners, even though they are willing to become Catholics,

**906. On what grounds do you claim that the Church has power to grant such annulments where, through lack of baptism, a valid matrimonial contract is not Sacramental?**

On the teaching of the New Testament itself. There it is evident that the merely natural bond may at times give way in favor of a marriage according to the Christian law under special circumstances. For example, a somewhat similar case is given by St. Paul in 1 Cor. VII., 15. There he deals with the case in which a married person is converted to the Church, but not his or her partner. And St. Paul says that, if the unbelieving partner is willing to live in peace with the believer, the marriage must stand. But, if the unbeliever refuses to live with the believer, and departs, the believer is not under servitude in such a case. That is, the believer is released from the obligations of the first marriage if he desires to marry a fellow believer in the Christian religion. Thus the natural bond of a former marriage with a non-Christian would give way in favor of the Christian Sacrament of Marriage with a fellow Christian. The foundation for the power of the Church to dis-solve the merely natural bond of marriage with a non-Christian who is unwilling to continue to fulfill marriage obligations is clear.

**907. Does not the granting of such "decrees of nullity," and "dissolutions of the natural bond" in special cases, show that money carries weight with Rome?**

No. Every case is weighed on its own merits independently of the financial circumstances of the persons concerned. If the first marriage were a true Christian marriage and both parties were still living, not all the money in the world could avail to secure permission from the Catholic Church for another marriage. Even today, as I am answering your inquiry, the news has come that the Pope has refused to sanction any second marriage of Princess Charlotte of Monaco. She married Prince Pierre de Polignac, but got a civil divorce from him two years ago. She was anxious to remarry, and her father, Prince Louis of Monaco, made a special journey to Rome to ask permission for her to remarry. The case was weighed on its merits. The Papal decision was that her first marriage was undoubtedly valid and that civil divorce could not give a right to a second marriage so long as both parties still live. Money and social standing do not weigh with the Roman Tribunal, If applicants for a decision can pay the legal expenses involved they are requested to do so. If they cannot, a reduction is granted, or even a total remission. And those able to pay the expenses are not in the least more likely to get the decision they want. All depends upon the evidence itself. A study of the cases submitted during the ten years from 1920 to 1930 shows that, whilst sixty-six per cent of those who could pay got a favorable decision, eighty-nine per cent of those who could not pay were granted the verdict they desired.

Extreme Unction

**908. What is the literal meaning, and also the spiritual meaning of Extreme Unction?**

Literally the words mean Last Anointing. The rite consists in the anointing of the various senses of a dying person by a priest, who uses a special oil blessed by the bishop for the purpose. By his senses man comes into contact with this world; and those senses are one of the chief sources of sin. How many sins are due to a misuse of the senses, of sight and hearing, of speech, and of touch! To the dying Catholic, therefore, the Church comes, and in her name, the priest anoints eyes and ears, nostrils, lips, hands and feet in a last purifying rite, praying that God may forgive any sins due to each sense thus anointed. The Church gives life to the soul at the Baptismal font, accompanies it through life with her teachings and Sacraments, and is present as a true spiritual mother at one's deathbed with the final Sacrament of Extreme Unction to wash away the stains and scars of earthly faults and failings, giving special graces of consolation and confidence to the soul as it is about to go to God at last.

**909. If a priest administered Unction in the literal way to one dying man, and another administered Unction in the spiritual way to some other dying man, what difference would there be in results?**

There would be an immense difference in the results. By Unction in the spiritual way, I presume that you mean words of consolation and spiritual advice. But a man who received merely such words would lack those special sacramental graces attached to the rite of Extreme Unction by Christ Himself. The Sacraments instituted by Christ do a work for which no merely human efforts can supply. And this is the case, in a special way, with the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. We know by experience that, in many of the greater

crises of human life, mere words seem so futile and inadequate. If only one could do something, instead of just talk, is the uppermost thought. And in that great crisis, when a human soul is about to go to its judgment, Christ has given the Church something to do.

**910. Would you please explain the passage where St. James V., 14, says, "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."**

In that verse we are taught that the Catholic Sacrament of Extreme Unction or Last Anointing, is truly a part of the Christian religion. Most Protestants, of course, either ignore these words, or try to explain them away. Some few interpret them as a justification for faith-healing, omitting the use of oil as savoring too much of the Roman Ritual. High Church Anglicans tend to interpret them in the Catholic sense, and are making efforts to restore this Sacramental rite which they regard as having been wrongly rejected, together with much else, at the Reformation. But, putting these diverse opinions on one side, I will explain the true sense of the words. St. James is speaking here, not of ordinary ills of life, but of really serious sickness. He therefore invites, not prayer for him, but prayer over him, the patient being confined to the sickbed. And he gives the command, "Let him call in the priests of the Church." He does not mean merely the elders amongst the sick man's fellow Christians. He is dealing with a sacred liturgical function which the simple faithful are unable to perform. One from amongst the priests properly so-called is to be brought in, and he is to pray over the sick man, "anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." By these last words St. James shows that he is prescribing, not a natural remedy, but a religious rite authorized by Christ and to be performed in a spirit of faith in Christ.

**911. In verse 15 St. James says, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."**

Here the three effects of Extreme Unction are given in ascending order of importance: Firstly, in the physical order the man may be cured even of his bodily disease. This, however, being but a temporal benefit, is a conditional promise dependent upon God's will according to each one's circumstances. If one's recovery of bodily health would be to one's spiritual harm, God will not grant it. And even apart from that, if God permits a sickness, it is normally His providence that we should endure the sickness. Sudden relief from it is necessarily the exception rather than the rule. Secondly, we are told that the Lord shall raise him up. This refers chiefly to his interior spirits. The graces of Extreme Unction will alleviate the sick man's despondency and sadness in his affliction, consoling him and strengthening him to bear his trials with Christian fortitude. Thirdly, we have what is obviously the most important effect. "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." It is not the primary effect, for the primary effect is always attained by the conferring of spiritual consolation and strength. Here we have a secondary effect, for the condition is made, if he be in sins. But it is obvious that the destruction of sin as the obstacle to salvation is most important where such sin exists, not having been otherwise remitted. These verses, as I have said, are the justification of the Catholic Sacrament of Extreme Unction which non-Catholics have lost through the destructive work of the Protestant Reformation.

#### Man's Death and Judgment

**912. Could you tell us, what this judgment is which men say takes place after death?**

Yes. Whether you like it or not, you will still be you after death. Your soul, the very principle of your life, and that in you which can know and love, and be happy or miserable, is immortal. And the quality of the life awaiting you will be according to your deserts. The moment your soul leaves your body, it will be made aware of what it is, its value, its deeds, and its eternal lot. That is judgment

**913. Where is the Tribunal of Judgment?**

That is a metaphorical expression. No material place enters into the question of judgment. We are always in God, and no one has to travel to find Him. And judgment occurs where God and the soul both exist. We live in God right through life without perceiving His presence, but at death a soul awakens to an awareness of that presence as a man becomes aware of things about him when he awakens from sleep. That thought is worth keeping in mind, and being made the rule of our conduct.

**914. If you maintain a private judgment immediately after death, I fail to see why we should be judged twice.**

The real difficulty occurs here. Sacred Scripture teaches us the fact of two judgments. That each soul is judged at once is evident from many references. Thus, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this, the judgment." Heb. IX., 27. St. Paul said, "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." Phil. I., 23. He declared that, on his death, the just Judge would give him a crown of justice. 2 Timothy IV., 8. On the other hand, we know that Christ will come again with glory to judge all mankind. What is the reason for these two distinct judgments, one for each individual, and one for all men collectively? The first is to do justice to each individual at the end of his probation; the other is to do justice to Christ. At the Last Judgment, all shall see the justice of God. Men who publicly deny that there is a God will then publicly confess that there was a God after all, and to their cost. Those who deny God's Providence saying that sin does not matter, will see and admit that it did matter. Those who blaspheme, ridicule, and mock Christ before their fellow men will equally publicly bear witness to the glory of Christ. You can see, therefore, how the first individual judgment will decide the eternal fate of each soul, whilst the final and general judgment will mean the vindication of God's rights in the presence of all His creatures.

**915. The fact remains, however, that we have to pass two judgments, according to Catholic dogma.**

We have to be present at two judgments, but the second and general judgment is rather to be a manifestation of the results of the first. Man's chief concern is so to live and die that he may be able to pass the first individual and particular judgment successfully. The final general judgment is really a consequence of the social character of men and of religion. Life is common to mankind as a race, and should have a common conclusion. Again, at the particular judgment all is a question of the individual soul and God. Judgment takes place at death, but it is not publicly manifested. And our Lord has said that there is nothing hidden which shall not be revealed. The general judgment will be the justification of God in the sight of all creatures.

**916. Men have said that there is no occasion to fear death, and that we should banish a fear which causes inability to get any happiness in this world.**

Whatever men may say, there always will be a natural dread of death. But good people soon take a happy and supernatural view of death, as they accept it from the hands of God. And the thought of death does not rob us of all happiness in this world. There is enough lawful happiness without sinning to get more. And sin alone can give a really miserable view of death. As the conclusion of an evil life, death is an evil thing. As the conclusion of a good life, it is a glorious and most desirable event. If we are not afraid of sin, we will be afraid of death. If we are afraid of sin, we will not be afraid of death. St. Francis of Assisi praised that death which those who love the world so fear, and he called upon her by name, saying, "Death, my sister, welcome be thou." We should not, then, banish the thought of death. We should let the thought of death enkindle a fear of sin, and of nothing else. Holy Scripture rightly warns us, "Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."

Hell

**917. Why does the Catholic Church forget that God is love, and teach the dogma of hell?**

The Catholic Church rightly teaches that a hell of eternal misery is a fact because God Himself has revealed that truth. And God does not thereby make Himself to be otherwise than a loving God. Because God loves



there must be a hell. Love cares, and very deeply. It is not indifferent. And it involves hatred of all that opposes its purpose. If a man does not love a girl, he does not mind who marries her. If he really loves her, he resents losing her. If God loves good, He must hate evil. If He did not hate evil, He would not love good. He would be merely indifferent. The greater one's love of good, the greater one's hatred of that which would destroy the good, and, therefore, the greater one's hatred of evil. And God's infinite love is simultaneously an infinite hatred, the hatred being the very fire of love in defense of the thing loved. Every denial of hell is a denial that God is a loving God at all. God's love is like white light. White light contains all colors. If it falls on an object which absorbs none of the light to itself, but reflects all back to the source whence it came, the object is white, as is a white collar. If the object reflects some of the rays, absorbing others, the object will be colored, red or blue or yellow, as the case may be. If the object reflects none of the rays, but absorbs all to itself, the object is black. The difference is in the object, not in the light which falls upon it. So, too, God's love falls upon a soul. If the soul reflects all back to God, it is white in God's sight, a saint; if it reflects some of God's love, but absorbs part to itself, selfishly, it is not white, but imperfect in God's sight. If it takes all, reflecting nothing back to God, it is black in God's sight. It would not even have existed to be black, had not God loved it. But it has accepted God's gifts only to use those very gifts against God. It is evil and not good. It has rendered itself black in God's sight, opposed to the good God loves, and, therefore, putting itself under the hatred love must have for all that is destructive of good. Good and evil in time have two counterparts in eternity, heaven and hell. And both heaven and hell can be explained only, and precisely, because God is a loving God.

**918. What does the word hell mean in the Bible, as in Psalm XVI, 10?**

In the Bible, the word hell has various meanings, to be determined in each case by the context. At times it means the grave, as when Jacob cried, "You will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to hell." At other times, it means the abode of the dead in general, as when Jacob said earlier, "I will go down to my son into hell, mourning." Again, the word hell can mean, not the grave, nor the abode of the dead in general, but the eternal fate of the wicked in conscious torment. Thus Christ said that the rich man was buried in hell and was conscious of terrible sufferings. The generic significance of hell is evident from the fact that the Bible repeatedly speaks of hell, the lower hell, and the lowest hell. When St. Peter wrote that God spared not the angels who fell but delivered them to hell, it is obvious that there is no reference to the grave in that text. Angels have no bodies to be buried in a grave. And Jesus Himself speaks of the hell of the fallen angels as everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Now in Psalm XVI, 10 (XV., 10), David says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption." The word hell there refers to the kingdom of the dead, not to the hell of eternal suffering. It is a prophecy fulfilled in Christ, whose body was not allowed to corrupt, and whose soul returned from the kingdom of the dead to revivify His body on the day of His resurrection. St. Peter tells us clearly that Christ was put to death in the flesh, but that His soul lived on, and preached to those spirits who were in prison; that is, to the souls of the just who had died before Christ, and were awaiting the completion of His redemptive work.

**919. Because scholars made faulty translations of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, thousands fear eternal torment in a hell which does not exist.**

In the first place, the word hell was not a faulty translation of the Hebrew word Sheol and the Greek word Hades. I will explain that in a moment. Secondly, the millions who believe in the existence of a hell of eternal suffering have more than sufficient ground for their belief. Thirdly, your implication that belief in hell necessarily fills people with dread and trembling betrays a limitation of outlook which destroys confidence in your judgment. It is a fallacy to isolate the doctrine of hell, making no allowance for other compensating doctrines which preserve the balance of every intelligent Christian. Lastly, the categorical statement that hell does not exist has the value only of the knowledge possessed by the person who makes it.

**920. The misunderstanding about hell is the result of faulty translation of the Hebrew Sheol, and the Greek Hades from the Old and New Testament manuscripts.**

No argument of any value whatever can be drawn from the primitive meaning of the Hebrew word Sheol. Many people have said that that word in Hebrew meant simply the grave, and not the hell of conscious survival in suffering which Christianity teaches to be the lot of those who die at enmity with God. It is true that Sheol is derived etymologically from Sha-al, meaning a subterranean cavity. But the sense of Sheol throughout the Old Testament shows that the Jews intended by it a much wider significance than the grave. By it they meant the nether regions in general, or the state of the dead, whether good or wicked, whatever that state might be, short of heaven itself. So they spoke of a dead man having gone to join his fathers. In that same general sense we still say in the Apostles' Creed that, after His death, Christ descended into hell. The word hell is there used in the original Jewish sense, the soul of Christ going to the souls of the departed who were not yet admitted to heaven. He did not go to hell in the later restricted sense of the hell of the damned. But He definitely taught that it is possible in Sheol, or in the state of souls after death, to encounter eternal punishment. And the English word hell, whether as a translation of the Hebrew Sheol, or the Greek Hades, is restricted by modern usage to this aspect of the future life. No philological argument based on the primitive meaning of Sheol, has any value in this matter, despite the shallow and superficial assertions of rationalists.

### **921. The wages of sin is death, says the Bible, not eternal torment.**

The wages of sin is indeed death, death to happiness, and all those hopes and aspirations that make life worth while. But, if the appeal be to the Bible, it is certain that sin cannot be said to lead to mere extinction. When Christ described the lost as weeping and gnashing their teeth; as not securing forgiveness in the world to come; as being cast into the furnace of fire, and an unquenchable fire at that; as enduring the worm of remorse that dieth not; in a word, as going to everlasting punishment as the good to life everlasting, no one could maintain reasonably that He was using words suitable as a description of the grave and of unconscious nonexistence.

### **922. Why did Christ go to hell?**

Christ did not go to hell in the modern and restricted sense of that word. At the time when the Apostles' Creed was composed, the word hell was used to designate any state of existence lower than heaven. After His death on the Cross, our Lord's soul went, says St. Peter, to preach to those spirits who were in prison. That is, He joined those souls which were detained from the fullness of heaven and who were awaiting the opening of heaven to mankind by Him. This descent of Christ's soul into hell was obviously not to the hell of the eternally lost, but to what we call the Limbo or detention place of the souls of the just who lived prior to our Lord's coming into this world.

### **923. Will men's bodies go to hell as well as their souls?**

If men die in such a state as to deserve hell, both their bodies and souls will endure the misery. Thus, in St. John's Gospel, V. 28, 29, Christ is recorded as saying, "The hour cometh when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." At that last judgment men will be present in their complete personality, body and soul. And they will reap one of two destinies, heaven or hell. The complete human being will be either saved or lost. Such is the teaching of Christ, and one must accept it, or cease to claim to be a Christian.

### **924. Is hell a place of eternal fire in a material sense?**

Hell will be eternal. Its fire cannot possibly be fire exactly as we know it in this world. Hell is a revealed mystery which cannot be adequately explained by ideas drawn from things around us. But it is certain that there will be physical bodily suffering in hell, a suffering which our Lord thought best described by the analogy of pain caused by fire. As the complete man, body and soul, will be saved, so the complete man, body and soul, will be lost. And, if lost, both body and soul will endure their proper penalties and

sufferings. The cause of bodily suffering in hell will be an agent more or less equivalent to what we understand by fire.

**925. Will there be degrees of punishment in hell as there are degrees of reward in heaven?**

Yes. Even amongst lost souls, the less guilty will not be punished so severely as the more guilty. Even the man bent on accomplishing his eternal damnation cannot multiply his sins with impunity on the score that one may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb. Every degree of added guilt will result in an intensification of suffering which the less guilty will not experience to the same degree.

**926. Would the denial of an eternal hell exclude one from membership of the Catholic Church?**

Yes. The eternity of hell is a defined article of the Catholic Faith. Any Catholic who knows this, yet persists in denying the eternity of hell would by that very fact renounce his Catholic Faith, and repudiate the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. No priest could admit such a one to the Sacraments unless he rejected such ideas as wrong, and fully accepted the teaching of the Church as true. But here there are several things to be noted. The eternal hell in which we have to believe is a revealed mystery which we cannot fully comprehend, but which we have to accept on the authority of God, just as we accept the mystery of the Trinity. Too many people, in objecting to an eternal hell take it for granted that they fully comprehend the hell to which they object. But a hell which the human mind could fully comprehend is not the hell in which we are asked to believe. And certainly we are not asked to believe in a hell which is in any way in conflict with any of God's attributes. If we think we see a conflict, then we have wrong ideas somewhere. Our notions must be inadequate. Our minds, familiar only with that succession of events known as time, cannot understand what an eternity outside the time sequence will really mean. Nor do we understand the nature of the sufferings in hell. We have to believe in a hell such as God knows it to be. And having been told the fact of a possible destiny of untold misery, it is for us to take the means necessary to avoid such destiny, leaving other aspects of the matter to God. He will safeguard all His attributes. That is not our responsibility. But it is ridiculous to forget our limitations, and to deny a fact revealed by God, merely because our little minds cannot quite explain the fact to our own present satisfaction. No right-minded person would do that.

**927. Surely the doctrine of hell is hard to believe even by Catholics.**

It is no more difficult than any other revealed mystery of the Christian religion. If a man can believe in the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, or the Blessed Sacrament, he can just as easily believe in hell. He has exactly the same motive for doing so, the authority of God for its existence. Hell is as much a mystery of faith as any other revealed mystery. We have to believe in it as God knows it to be, not as we imagine it to be. As we can state simply that there are three Persons in one God without fully comprehending the complete significance of the doctrine, so we know that there is a possible final and eternal wreckage called hell. But the nature of hell, and its reconciliation with all the attributes of God, are beyond our comprehension. That, however, does not justify us in denying the knowledge and veracity of Christ. Our faith in Him compels us to believe in hell; and our belief in hell inspires us with a dread of sin. You will notice that I say our faith in Christ compels us to believe in hell. We look, not at the thing we are asked to believe but at the knowledge and veracity of the Christ who tells us to believe it. The only really valid argument against hell would be to prove that Christ did not teach it, or that He did not know what He was talking about, or that He deliberately lied. That our limited minds find difficulty in comprehending hell is no argument against it. We expect that, in the presence of a mystery of faith.

**928. A merciful God would not punish even a man's deliberate sins.**

God would not be merciful if He did not do so. Would God be merciful did He allow men to think that evil conduct does not matter? And if He shows that it does matter by threatening evil, would He be merciful if He allowed men to think that He did not mean what He said, and failed to fulfill His own sanctions? Even Carlyle has said, "One who does not know how to punish does not know what pity is." Weakness is not

kindness, but cruelty. Mercy is offered to all men before their death, if only they will repent sincerely of their sins. But they cannot reject God's mercy and have it. Nor can we say that God is not merciful because He offered His mercy, only to find it refused. Were He not merciful, He would never have offered mercy.

**929. How much pleasure could the Author of this beautiful and wonderful world find in tormenting eternally with fire any of His erring human family?**

You concentrate on one aspect of life to the neglect of all others by your appeal to a beautiful and wonderful world. But is it so beautiful and wonderful? Is it not a mixture of good and evil? Do you lose sight of the fearful pain inflicted by, say, cancer? If you were God, would you have permitted cancer? Your soft and gentle heart would at once say no. Yet cancer is a fact. And if your judgment as to what should be in the world you do see is at such variance with what God has actually permitted, why must God's dealings with souls in the next life conform to your ideas of what ought to be there? Notice, too, your mild reference to erring humanity. It is begging the question to suggest that the sin which takes a soul to hell is but an error, or a mistake. The wicked who go to hell will go there for persevering malice. Again the reference to God's taking pleasure in the sufferings of the lost is a human and earthly piece of thinking which could apply only to an anthropomorphic God acceptable to no instructed Christian.

**930. If a man of low intelligence tortured even a rat for one day we should shrink from him with horror.**

Possibly. But there is no parallel between that case and the matter under discussion. The case given omits ever so many vital factors essential to a right estimate of eternal retribution; and it can have value only for those who let imagination usurp the place of reason.

**931. Yet our religious leaders have taught us to believe our loving Heaven-ly Father has planned a hell of eternal torments for us !**

They have not taught us anything of the kind. They teach what Christ taught, that those obstinate in evil will go to everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. That hell was not meant and planned for us is evident from all the warnings given us both as to its existence, and the conditions that could take us there. If I want a man to fall into a pit, I don't warn him against it. Also, so long as we behave as children of God, accepting Him as our loving Heavenly Father, and rendering Him the reverence and obedience due to Him as such, there is no danger of going to hell. Those only will go to hell who repudiate God as their loving Heavenly Father. They cannot reject Him and have Him. Nor, for a moment, will they say in hell, "Our loving Heavenly Father sent us here." All I can add is that those who do go to hell will have no difficulties on the subject as to why they are there.

**932. Could one respect a God who would permit any one of His creatures to suffer eternal torment, however grievously that creature had sinned? Reason rejects the thought.**

Does such a doctrine violate reason? If it does, I could not respect such a doctrine. But let us see. Now it is not unreasonable that God should hate evil, and punish it. My reason is not violated by the thought that those who stole the Lindbergh baby and murdered it, should be apprehended if possible, and endure a pretty severe penalty. So far, so good; for I think you will agree with me there. Your difficulty concerns not the fact of retribution, but the idea of eternal retribution. So let us proceed. It is a truth of reason that the human soul is immortal of its very nature.

And it must therefore live on. Now granted that a soul goes from this world in a state of sin, its will radically opposed to God's will, hating the things God loves, prepared to do again the very sins that deserved punishment during life, it is not unreasonable that its exclusion from God and from happiness should last as long as such evil dispositions continue. And if such dispositions as a matter of fact constitute an eternal hatred of God, reason is not violated by the thought that the retribution will be equally eternal. It may harrow our feelings; it may stagger our imagination; but I deny that it violates reason. As a matter of

fact my reason is violated by the thought that there can be no eternal torment however grievous a man's sins may be. A law is not a law without a proportionate penalty. And if God gives very serious Commandments, it is absurd to suggest that a man can break them with impunity and challenge Him, "Do your worst. You may be able to punish me for a time. But there's no eternal punishment. It has got to end, and You have to make me eternally happy sooner or later. And once I'm in eternal happiness temporal experiences will be negligible." And, mind you, the man doesn't repent, or change his evil dispositions. God is holy, but the sinner remains wicked, and still defying God, he has to be admitted to God's presence and share His eternal happiness. You see, it won't work. Reason revolts. An eternal hell is reasonable as the only fit place for eternal malice. The only way he could get out of the admission would be by supposing that God would annihilate evil souls. But annihilation is against reason both from the point of view of proportionate penalty, and from the point of view of the soul's essential immortality.

**933. Take a suicide. You Catholics have to believe that his soul was destined for hell.**

Before proceeding, I must correct you. The expression destined for hell could be taken in two ways. Yet neither of those two ways could fit in with the Catholic view. Firstly, one could interpret the expression in the sense of predestination to hell. But the Catholic Church condemns the doctrine that God has predestined any soul to hell as straight-out heresy. Secondly, and I think this is what you have in mind, one could understand the expression in the sense that the soul of such a man will certainly go to hell as a result of his own perverse conduct. But even that is not the Catholic view. Undoubtedly suicide is, in itself, a gravely sinful thing. And every Catholic is taught that objectively it must be ranked as mortal sin. But when we turn from the crime itself to the person who takes his own life, we are quite unable to say that that particular person will go to hell. For we are unable to estimate his subjective responsibility. That depends upon the clarity of his mind at the time, the deliberateness of his decision, and the degree of untrammelled consent. Those things we cannot estimate. Then, too, even granted a sufficient degree of subjective guilt, we do not know whether or not a supreme act of God's mercy has intervened between the sin and the actual death of the unfortunate man. The Catholic view, therefore, is that we must refrain from judging that any given soul has actually forfeited salvation.

**934. Can heaven even remain heaven, with hell functioning?**

What it does do, it can do. Jesus is in heaven, and the devil is in hell. And both heaven and hell are functioning.

**935. Do you think people would be happy in heaven if they could see their loved ones burning in hell?**

It is quite certain that people will be happy in heaven, whatever our speculations about the conditions that will prevail. You can safely leave it to God to adjust the future for you, if you serve Him faithfully now.

**936. Belief in hell causes the most harassing fear and distress in the mind.**

Belief in the doctrine of hell certainly does not have such effects in the mind when the doctrine is taught in its right perspective, and side by side with the other doctrines of the Catholic faith, which include right ideas of human freedom, and the immense mercy and love of God. In the Catholic mind, the doctrine of hell awakens a clear idea of God's essential goodness and hatred of evil; it gives a very healthy dread of sin just as one dreads any other great disaster; it inspires vigilance over self; and impels people to recover God's grace by early repentance should they miserably fall from His friendship. All these effects are good.

**937. The appeal to fear, to my mind, is not half so efficacious as the appeal to love.**

I agree. Fear is a transitory emotion; love more lasting. But response to love supposes some generosity of character. Now habitual sin dries up generosity. The sinner becomes more and more selfish. He is less sensitive to noble motives, and is more affected by those which threaten his own comfort. This type will be more moved by fear than by love. But fear of God is but the beginning of wisdom. It is meant to make a

man abandon his sins. But if he does so, and begins to lead a better life, selfishness wanes, nobility develops, and he begins to respond more to love than to his initial fears. And love will then show that it has the greater power to inspire positive virtue.

**938. This picture of punishment constantly put before Roman Catholics helps to account for the large attendances at Catholic Churches.**

It does, just as every single teaching contained in the Gospels helps one to live a Christian life, and be faithful to duties to God. Surely you are not going to blame the Catholic Church for refusing to forget the sterner elements of Christ's own teaching, and His repeated warnings on the subject of hell. No Catholic can bring himself to disregard the intensely serious warning Our Lord gave on this matter. Eternal punishment infinitely transcends in horror any human tragedy. And neglect of this doctrine has always proved disastrous. The Churches which no longer believe it their mission to save souls from eternal disaster have lost their inspiration and power. The passionate drive behind the mission of the Apostles, of the Catholic Church through the ages, and even of the Protestant Churches until recently was the unbearable thought that souls might not be rescued from the hell Christ preached. But the dwindling emphasis upon that doctrine, and loss of belief in it, obviously leads to indifference to religious duties. To drop one's religion is less and less regarded as a disaster; and modern Protestant parents are not greatly afflicted by the sight of children who ignore God and religion altogether.

**939. Does this not give the impression of a religion essentially of fear, fear of punishment, fear of the everlasting bonfire?**

Not to one who takes complete views, and considers the Catholic religion as a whole. The Catholic Church insists that the first and greatest commandment is that we must love God above all things, with all our hearts and souls, mind and strength. Everything else in the Catholic religion is subordinate to that, and meant to lead to its fulfillment, now on earth as far as poor weak human beings are capable of doing so. and eternally and perfectly in heaven. The essential thing in the Catholic religion, then, is the love of God. But that does not justify the omission of other things. Nor, because other and secondary elements of Christianity are preached, and insisted upon according to their importance and the danger of forgetting them, is it right to concentrate your attention on them as if the Church preached nothing else. Finally, you are no more justified in thinking, because fear of punishment is preached, that this is the one reason why Catholics go to Church, than you would be in thinking that the majority of people in Australia pay their just debts only because they would be taken to court if they did not do so. People who do not pay their debts are liable to legal retribution. But all decent people want to pay what they owe. So, too, the vast majority of Catholics desire to render to God the acknowledgment due to Him, and for that reason fulfill their religious duties. There is a choice of motives, all good insofar as they help people to do the right thing. And each person may choose the motive that appeals most to him. But there is no one, not even the saint, who should not keep in the back of his consciousness the thought of the grim fate awaiting him if he does not continue to serve God. Holy Scripture therefore gives the advice to all: "Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin."

**940. Why does the Roman Catholic Church stress God's justice rather than God's mercy?**

The Catholic Church certainly does not. If you hear a priest preaching on the subject of hell, you will naturally hear a discourse confined to that subject. But you will hear the same priest preach also on God's mercy, again confining his discourse to that particular subject. And a right judgment will consist in balancing the two. It would be an excess to stress hell as if there were no mercy, and another excess to stress God's mercy as if there were no possibility of hell. The Catholic Church teaches that God's mercy is above all His works; that it is offered to everyone without exception; and that despair of salvation is forbidden by God to every human being, no matter how great and numerous his sins. No man is allowed to hope that he will secure salvation whether he repents or not of grave sins. That would be presumption. But God commands him to believe that, if he does repent sincerely of his sins, forgiveness is waiting.

## Purgatory

### **941. What is purgatory?**

An Anglican clergyman, Reverend Vernon Staley, describes it very well in his Manual of Instruction for Members of the Anglican Church. He there says that "for those who depart this life and who are neither good enough for heaven nor bad enough for hell, a place of mercy is provided in the intermediate state, in which the evil will be completely purged, and the good perfectly developed." No Catholic could quarrel with this Anglican statement of doctrine for Anglicans. The very word, purgatory, really tells us what the intermediate state after death really is. Purgation means purification or cleansing. Those who go from this world without having fully expiated the sins of which they have repented will complete their expiation of them in purgatory. In this life, of course, sin and suffering are very unevenly distributed. Many, with few sins, have much suffering. Others, with many sins, have little suffering. But God is just, and all will be balanced in the next life. Purgatory, then, is a state after death in which some souls will expiate their sins during a period of suffering before their admission to heaven.

### **942. I have never seen the word purgatory in the Bible.**

The Bible does not use the word purgatory any more than it uses the word Trinity. But just as it gives what is described by the word Trinity when we are told to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, so it gives what is described by the word purgatory when it tells us that souls not bad enough for hell, and not good enough for heaven, will be purified after death in order to fit them for heaven. Thus St. Paul tells us in I Corinthians III. 15, that the soul which does not satisfactorily stand the test of judgment will be saved, but so as by fire. Whatever the nature of the fire of purification, it will mean a cleansing by suffering as opposed to the pleasures of the sins rendering it necessary.

### **943. if there is a verse in the Bible to which you can give an indirect meaning in favor of a purgatory, a Protestant is not only able to discredit that meaning, but he may find more verses to discredit it.**

No Protestant ever has found, or ever will find, anywhere in the Bible, any statements in any way opposed to the Catholic doctrine that there is a purgatory.

### **944. In Isaiah XLIII., 25, God says that He forgives us our sins when we turn to Him in obedience.**

That is true. But He does not say that He will not exact reparation of our evil conduct. Though He promises forgiveness, nowhere does He say that we can therefore get away with sin without any fear of further consequences. He both forgives and punishes. Since you are quoting the Old Testament, look up II Samuel XII., 14. When David said to Nathan the Prophet, "I have sinned against the Lord," Nathan said to David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because of this deed, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." So God forgave the guilt of the sin, yet exacted expiation.

### **945. In Luke XXIII., 43, Jesus said to a person who had disobeyed one of His Father's commandments, "Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." He didn't go to purgatory.**

From the viewpoint of logic, and granted your interpretation, your text would not prove that there is no purgatory. It would prove merely that that particular man did not go there. But from the viewpoint of Catholic doctrine there are a few things I want you to notice. In the first place, the Catholic teaching that there is a purgatory does not imply that every soul must go to purgatory before entering heaven. According to Catholic doctrine, perfect charity or love of God means full and complete expiation of all sins. One therefore who dies in dispositions of perfect love for God does not go to purgatory at all. Purgatory is for sinners who die repentant, but who have not attained perfect love of God. In the second place, according to Catholic doctrine, sin can be expiated in this life by voluntary acceptance of sufferings in a spirit of faith and love. Such sufferings are the equivalent in this world of sufferings which otherwise would have to be endured in purgatory. It is not surprising, therefore, that Our Lord said to the good thief, "today thou shalt

be with Me in paradise." If you were crucified, and accepted your crucifixion with the faith and love and resignation to God's will manifested by the good thief, I would certainly be prepared to say that you had endured your purgatory in advance, and would be spared further painful purification of soul in the next life. One thing you cannot say of that dying thief. You cannot say that he was admitted to paradise without undergoing a very painful expiation of his sins.

**946. The Epistle to the Romans says that eternal life is a free gift.**

Correct. But that has nothing whatever to do with the question of purgatory, unless you really think that we have no obligation to earn our heaven by being good, and that it does not therefore matter how much we sin. If they are your ideas, of course, yours must be a very comfortable religion. But it is not the Christian religion. St. Peter writes, "Brethren, labor the more that by good works you may make sure your calling and election." Evidently good works are a contributing factor towards our salvation. St. Paul says, "With fear and trembling work out your salvation." Your mistake lies in thinking that salvation is a free gift not requiring our cooperation. The truth is that our opportunity of salvation is the free gift of Christ which we could never have deserved. But granted that He has made salvation possible for us, it is necessary that we earn the right to benefit by it. Without Christ, no good works could have enabled us to save our souls. With Christ, our good works can do so; and He demands them of us; forbids sin; and will exact from all of us an account of the sins we have committed. And though we die with our sins forgiven, yet we will expiate them in purgatory. That blocks any idea that we can trade on God's forgiveness and continue to sin whilst there is time to do so. Apart from revelation, the Catholic position is the only reasonable one, and thinking Protestants are beginning to realize it more and more. That is why the High Church party in the Church of England is rapidly restoring the practice of prayer for the souls of the departed who may still be suffering in purgatory for their sins committed whilst on earth.

**947. How beautiful is the Protestant teaching that the spirit of the believer, relying entirely on the merits of Christ, goes immediately into the Divine Presence, and is forever with the Lord.**

There is nothing in Scripture to warrant such a belief. Firstly, how does reliance solely on the merits of Christ fit in with the clear words of St. James, "Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." 11, 24. Secondly, where is this immediate entry to the Divine Presence when St. Paul says every man's work will be tried by God, and that he whose work fails to come up to requirements will suffer, yet be saved so as by fire? 1 Cor. III., 13, 15.

**948. Even priests, and all holy Roman Catholics are in purgatory until the last Peter's pence have been paid for their souls.**

There is no connection between Peter's pence and purgatory. Not all holy Roman Catholics are in purgatory. There are multitudes of them in heaven. That many are in purgatory, I admit; and they will remain there until they have been purified of their sins either by their own sufferings, or by special graces secured for them by our prayers. I might mention that not only Catholics go to purgatory. If they have been fortunate enough to save their souls, Protestants also go there until sufficiently purified for their admission to heaven.

**949. We read appalling stories of the long and severe purgatory meted out to bishops and priests.**

I am afraid that such stories will make Protestants think that there is something to be said for purgatory, after all. However, whenever you come across stories and incidents introduced by the vague expressions, "It is related that" or "Once upon a time," you are quite free to regard them as illustrations rather than as history. The stories may not be true, though true ideas gave rise to them in the first place.

**950. Revelations to St. Gertrude and other Saints concerning the severity of sufferings in purgatory make it appear that normally good people regard death with dread apprehension.**



That is a wrong conclusion. Rather they show that abnormally good people apprehend, as others do not, the dread character of sin. I have assisted so many people when approaching death that I can vouch for it that normally good people are not filled with unusual dread. As regards what are known as the private revelations St. Gertrude and others claimed to have received, you must remember that the Catholic Church does not oblige us to accept them in all their details by any means. Above all, when they deal with purgatory, we must not forget that, holy as they were in their personal lives, they were children of the age in which they lived; and they were not experts at sorting out the natural, human, and imaginative elements from those interior psychological and spiritual experiences which were due to a truly supernatural grace. I, personally, do not believe in the descriptions of purgatory given by many mediaeval writers, even though they were Saints. In these private revelations they were not giving the official and authentic teaching of the Church, but their own thoughts for what they might be worth. At times they sincerely believed that they had intimations as to the sufferings of particular souls: and they spoke in terms of earthly time which are scarcely applicable to purgatory in any strict sense. Being so saintly, they had an intense realization of the evil character of sin, and that realization projected itself into their meditations. And not being very critical in the analysis of their spiritual and mystical experiences, they were often mistaken as to the source of the convictions that came to them, many of which could easily have been due to a merely natural association of ideas. Many of their revelations I personally view rather as parables providing edification as lessons on sin; I do not accept them as historical fact? in all cases, save, of course, the fact that these pious souls sincerely thought their vivid imaginations to correspond with objective reality.

**951. We are told that no sin, even venial, can be forgiven without true repentance.**

That is quite correct.

**952. We are told also that there can be no repentance after death.**

That is true of one who dies in a state of mortal sin. But it is not true of one who dies with venial sins only.

**953. Therefore a person with the guilt of venial sin on his soul cannot get to heaven.**

He can do so after he has repented of his venial sins, and fulfilled his period of expiation.

**954. How can one get to heaven who dies in a state of venial sin which he had no intention of abandoning?**

His intention is rectified the moment he goes from this world; and after due expiation of the sins he has committed, he attains heaven. To understand this it is necessary to be quite clear about the nature of venial sin. It differs greatly from mortal sin. Of its very nature mortal sin cuts us off from the grace and friendship of God. But venial sin does not. In comparison with mortal sin, venial sin can be called a kind of minor disloyalty to God. Even in natural friendship, a man who would not for the world forfeit such a friendship entirely will often do small things which displease his friend. And they are things he would not do, if he thought they meant a complete rupture with his friend. Now, since venial sin does not forfeit sanctifying grace, it is reparable by its very nature. For example, a beautiful child permanently loses its beauty if you chop off its face with a meat-ax. But if it merely plays in the mud, and obscures its beauty with a veneer of dirt, its beauty can be restored by a good wash. So venial sin disfigures the soul, but does not destroy the life of grace, nor the predominant will to retain God's friendship. And the moment the soul goes from this life, all lesser inclinations automatically yield to this predominant will, whilst the principle of sanctifying grace which remains in the soul destroys all mortal guilt by a new ardor of charity, or love of God.

**955. For how long do you pray to make departed souls perfect?**

We set no time limit to our prayers. If those for whom we continue to pray, no longer need our prayers, then our prayers avail for others who do need the help our intercession can give. No sincere prayer is ever wasted. God hears all such prayers, and answers them in the way He knows to be best.

**956. I wouldn't thank anyone to pray for me after my death.**

That's how you feel about it now, owing to lack of knowledge. You'll change your opinion when you are in purgatory. However, the Catholic Church will pray for your soul then, together with all other souls there, and you will be grateful that the Church has not forgotten you even though your friends never offer a prayer for you.

**957. Will the departed souls know who are praying for them?**

They will certainly know, when they attain heaven. They could know, even whilst still in purgatory if God chose to manifest to them who their particular benefactors might be.

**958. Are they conscious of the help they receive, and from whose prayers it comes?**

Of course they are conscious of the relief they experience. Normally they would not be conscious of the precise person who had procured the relief for them, for they are not in contact still with this world by the normal medium of the senses, and have not yet attained to the Vision of God and the full knowledge that Vision supplies. If God chooses to manifest a knowledge of their benefactor to them whilst still in purgatory, they will know. But that is not very important. They know that someone has prayed for them, and pray in turn for that person. God hears their prayers on behalf of the one whom He knows to have prayed for them.

Indulgences

**959. In a Catholic prayer book I noticed after one of the prayers, "300 days' indulgence." What does that mean?**

In the early days of the Church, when persecution was the rule of the day, those Christians who publicly denied their faith and relapsed into pagan ways, or committed any public crimes received very severe penances when they sought reconciliation with the Church. Perhaps for seven years they would have to submit to penitential discipline, and the loss of their full privileges as members of the Church. An indulgence of 300 days, therefore, is the remission of that amount of expiation which would correspond with 300 days of such penance in the early Church.

**960. How can the saying of prayers secure an indulgence of say 300 days, when time as we know it cannot exist in purgatory?**

The saying of prayers can secure indulgences if the prayers recited be appointed by the Church as the condition for gaining them. The prayers are the condition. It is the Church which grants the indulgence. An indulgence of 300 days, however, does not mean 300 days less purgatory. It means a remission of expiation equivalent to 300 days of canonical penance such as used to be imposed upon penitents in the early Church. The 300 days therefore would refer to earthly time, not to any purgatorial time. In purgatory the soul would be exempted from that quantity of expiation which would correspond with 300 days of earthly penance in the early Church. It is true that time is not measured in purgatory as it is measured for us in this world by calculations based upon the rotation of the earth, and its journey round the sun. But that does not exclude the existence of duration in purgatory. The sins to be expiated in purgatory meant a reluctance to seek perfect union with God, and purgatory will mean a corresponding delay in one's admission to the joy of perfect union with Him in heaven. How that delay and duration in purgatory are measured is once more beyond our experience, and therefore, a mystery. But if we are to speak of it at all, we must do so in human terms which are inadequate, but which express a reality subject to its own proper conditions.

**961. What were the abuses regarding them that crept in during the sixteenth century?**

The abuses arose through the granting of indulgences to those who would contribute alms towards various charitable works. This in itself was quite all right. Scripture tells us to redeem our sins by almsgiving. But some of those deputed to collect donations towards charitable works became more anxious about the revenue than about spiritual considerations. And they adopted unwarranted means to obtain that revenue. In their preaching they went far beyond the doctrines of the Church, even to saying that any offering would immediately secure the release of a departed friend in purgatory. They had no authority for saving that. Their methods, too, were hardly distinguishable from the straight-out selling of indulgences. Moreover, some were deducting a percentage of the revenue for themselves. These abuses then were on a par with those of today amongst many engaged in charitable causes. People run bridge-drives, or sweepstakes, or bazaars, but get more concerned with cash results than with sweet charity. They are not bad people, yet they often assume that, to raise money for good purposes is to 'sanctify certain more or less questionable methods of doing so. And they have little scruple in making deductions for their efforts, deductions of which no mention is made, or to which no prominence is given.

Abuses very easily creep in in such things, and the granting of indulgences in return for an alms became in many cases a traffic in indulgences for cash considerations. The Council of Trent, therefore, condemned all persons guilty of such an abuse, forbade it absolutely, and required strict supervision on the part of bishops to see that indulgences were treated, not as a means of gain, but as an incentive to godliness.

**962. Will you please tell me if indulgences are sold in Spain? I read the other day that they are.**

Indulgences are certainly not sold in Spain, nor anywhere else in the world. Such a thing is absolutely prohibited by the Church under the most severe penalties. Thus Canon 2327 in the Code of Universal Law declares that anyone attempting to purchase or to sell indulgences incurs the penalty of excommunication from the Church. That ought to bring out the severity of the view taken by the Catholic Church in this matter.

**963. It was stated that the Bula de Carnes, which costs fivepence, permits the lucky Spaniard to eat meat on fast days.**

If the writer adduced that as proof that indulgences are sold in Spain, he shows that he lacks any real knowledge of his subject, to say the least. A dispensation from the eating of meat has nothing to do with indulgences, which are the remission of temporal punishments due to sin. But let us see just what your author's Bula de Carnes really is. Its right title is the Bulla Cruciatæ, and it is a privilege granted to residents in Spain. It does not cost a lucky Spaniard fivepence to benefit by the privilege. That is sheer misrepresentation. It does exempt the recipient of the document from the obligation of abstaining from meat on certain fast days. The obligation to abstain from meat is an ecclesiastical law, and therefore it can be imposed, or abrogated, or dispensed from, according to the discretion of the Pope. It is but one of many good works proper to Christians, fasting, almsgiving to the poor, prayer being usual practices of the faithful. The Bulla Cruciatæ is a concession dating from past centuries, and granted to Spain as a recognition of its loyalty to religion. But the Pope grants the privilege, and exempts the recipient from the need of abstaining from meat, provided he substitutes for that good work another good work in the form of almsgiving. Originally, as the very title of the document suggests, the alms given, not as a price but as a condition of benefiting by the Bulla Cruciatæ, were devoted to the support of the Crusades. Other religious necessities still exist, and the alms are now devoted to the maintenance of religion. The Government undertakes to maintain religious institutions, and the alms given to this work are administered by the Government. I cannot go more deeply into this matter now, but I have said enough to show you that the writer you consulted does not understand his subject. The Bula de Carnes has no connection with indulgences; it is not sold; grants an exemption from fasting which the Pope can lawfully grant; and merely substitutes one good work for another, namely, almsgiving for fasting.

**964. Another Bula is known as the Thieves' Bula, and permits the purchaser to retain any stolen property. It costs one shilling.**

Your eager author should make a careful study of the commandment, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. The Bula your friend has in mind is known as the Thieves' Bula only by ignorant and prejudiced enemies of the Catholic Church. By Catholics it is known as the Bulla Compositionis. It is quite an ordinary document dealing with obligations of restitution. It is not a Thieves' Bula. Thieving is of course absolutely forbidden by God, and by the Catholic Church. according to ordinary moral law, if a man has in his possession any property to which he has no just title, he is bound to try to find the owner, and restore that property to the owner. If he cannot find the owner, he is obliged to restore its value to the poor, or to some charitable work. And when I speak of possession without a just title, I make no mention of the means by which the possessor obtained the goods. He may discover that goods given him by a friend were originally stolen. Now the Bulla Compositionis merely allows a possessor of goods to which he can establish no title in law to retain those goods, on condition that he distributes so much in alms. The amount to be distributed is not a shilling. There is a definite percentage based on a sliding scale according to the value of the goods in question. In other words, Catholics are permitted to retain such goods, provided they distribute so much in almsgiving. Those who profess to be so shocked and scandalized by this practice, would retain the goods, and not think any more about it, let alone try to satisfy conscience by giving a percentage away in charity. For you must note carefully these points. They are most important. Before any Catholic may use the privilege known as the Bulla Compositionis, and retain the goods after distributing so much in charity, two conditions are essential. Firstly, the Bull is invalid for him, and cannot be used, if he has stolen any goods with the intention of getting his possession of the goods confirmed by acquiring later on a Bulla Compositionis. Now how can it be called the Thieves' Bula, when anyone who does steal in view of its use cannot avail himself of it? Secondly, the Bulla Compositionis may be used only provided the possessor of goods without a just title has honestly made every endeavor to discover the lawful owner, but without success. If the lawful owner can be discovered, the goods must be handed over to him, and the Bulla Compositionis becomes absolutely inoperative. If a thief stole a watch from you, he would know that it was yours, and would be obliged to restore it to you. There would be no other way out for such a man. The Bulla Compositionis avails only when the rightful owner cannot possibly be found, despite all advertising and personal efforts. As I have said, where non-Catholics would retain goods whose owner they could not find, and have no scruple in doing so, Catholics are told by their Church that they must give away in charity a certain percentage of their value. And anti-Catholics twist this into the calumny that the Church issues a Thieves' Bula permitting any stolen property to be retained; and declare that the amount to be given away in charity is the price by which any thief can purchase such a document. It is hard to know whether authors who publish such statements are actuated by malice, or merely subject to ignorance. But even if we put it down to ignorance, they are guilty, because such ignorance could be dispelled by the least attempt at verification of the facts, a verification rightly expected of men who write of subjects with which they know they are not very familiar.

Heaven

**965. Some people say that we shall all have the same degree of happiness in heaven. Is that true?**

No. God will render to everyone according to his works. One who loves God ardently, and tries daily to please Him, bearing countless trials and crosses bravely because they are God's holy will, and very seldom offending God through human frailty will have a much higher degree of happiness in heaven than one who has led a sinful life, and only at the end perhaps turns to God and barely secures the salvation of his soul. Our Lord said, "In My Father's house there are many mansions," thus hinting at various degrees of grace and glory and happiness in heaven. It is quite certain that not all will be equal there. Those who have lived better lives here on earth will be nearer and dearer to God in heaven, and correspondingly happier for all eternity.

**966. If we expiate our sins in purgatory, will not that make us equal in heaven?**

No. Purgatory is proportioned to the evil we have done, heaven to the positive good we have accomplished. It is quite possible for a soul to have more purgatory and be higher in heaven whilst another has less purgatory yet will be lower in heaven.

Thus a man who lived sixty years could easily have done more good and more evil than a young man who died in the twenties. I say that this is possible. Allowance must always be made for God's special graces, and the intensity of virtues and vices which can easily offset the differences in years.

**967. The brain-power of babies is not developed, and that of the aged failing, when they die. Will they remain like that, or will all get the same level of intelligence in heaven?**

Before answering this question, we must carefully distinguish between the brain and the intellect of man. The brain is a material bodily organ which the soul of man uses, just as any other organ, for the purpose of his composite life in this world. Now the soul is a spiritual being endowed with a spiritual intellectual faculty, just as God, or the angels, have the spiritual power of intelligence. And just as the soul can exist without the body, so its intelligence can be operative without the brain, once it is released from the restrictions of union with the body. The material brain, therefore, belongs to the body; intelligence belongs to the soul. Now we may proceed further. When the soul is released from the body by death, it no longer derives its knowledge from sense-data, nor does it require the brain as a material organ of thought. It receives its knowledge, either by God infusing necessary ideas, or by the immediate intuition of God's own essential and infinite perfection and truth. In purgatory, it will receive infused ideas according to its relative necessities. But in heaven, all the souls of the blessed will have the same intuitive vision of the full truth in God. Yet whilst the same range of truth will be known to every intelligent soul, capacity to appreciate that truth and to rejoice in it will vary according to merit and virtue during one's life of probation on earth. All this applies to separated souls of whatever age, prior to the resurrection of the body, to which the brain as a material organ belongs. At the resurrection, it is the common opinion of Catholic theologians that the bodies of all, whether of children or of the aged, will rise in a state of perfect development, yet wholly changed and spiritualized in character, even though essentially the same bodies as those in which we served God during life. If we can speak of brain-power in such risen bodies, all will attain the same level of development.

**968. If so, do all attain the same level immediately after death?**

The attaining of an equally developed material brain as a bodily organ cannot occur immediately after death, but will occur at the general resurrection of men's bodies. The attaining of an equal level of intelligence as far as the purely intellectual faculty of the soul is concerned does not occur during the stage of purification in purgatory, but occurs only when the soul is admitted to the very Vision of God in heaven, a Vision which is of course possible before the general resurrection of our bodies. But even in heaven, whilst the object known is the same for all, so that all intelligences are on the same level from that point of view, capacity to appreciate that object will vary according to one's meritorious service of God in this life. The extent of one's knowledge and the intensity of one's knowledge are two different things. Two men can equally have read ten books. But one's powers of comprehension and appreciation might be much greater than the other's. In heaven, this difference in power of penetration will depend, not upon grades of knowledge in this life which do not necessarily make men better men, but upon goodness of life and the degree of virtue and love of God attained.

**969. Is heaven God alone, or will we be happy in the society of friends and relatives also?**

Essentially, heaven is God alone, for He is the bond of union with all other beings. But contact with God does not exclude contact with our fellow creatures. Such relations with others will be richer and closer in God. We shall possess our loved ones as never on earth. Earthly companions will be recognized, loved and enjoyed. Grace does not destroy nature. It perfects nature. And since we are social beings by nature, there will be a social happiness in the Communion of Saints in heaven. But God gives us all this in giving us Himself. Seek God, and attain your eternal union with Him, and all the rest will be added. Of course, in all the mutual relationships of created beings in heaven, material interests will be entirely spiritualized.

**970. If a mother and daughter die, and go to heaven, will they know one another there, or will they be unable to see one another?**

They will undoubtedly know one another and be happy in each other's company forever, even as both are happy in God's eternal company. We believe in the Communion of Saints, and that means in the common union of Saints. All who die in God's love and friendship will be united in heaven, and will appreciate that union. And the noble love of a mother and child, which is but a reflection of God's love, will have its own special joy in eternity.

**971. Will men and women still fall in love with each other in heaven, or will there be no sex attraction there?**

There will be no sex attraction in heaven, and men and women will certainly not fall in love with each other in any earthly sense of the word. All in heaven will love each other for purely spiritual reasons according to their union with and in God. Sex attraction will therefore cease with this earthly life. Our Lord Himself simply said, "In the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven." Matthew XXII., 30. We know that God has implanted in bodily human nature two strong attractions or appetites, the appetite for food, and the sex attraction. But it is obvious that both are chiefly concerned with life in this world. The hunger appetite is to induce people to eat, or in other words, it is to keep the individual alive. Sex attraction is intended for the purpose of keeping the human race alive. Now just as the necessity of taking food is confined to this earthly existence, so that the individual who attains heaven and lives by the principles of a purely spiritual life will no longer experience hunger for material food, so also the sex attraction which is ordained to the propagation of the human race on earth will cease with the conditions of earthly life. After all, sex attraction is but a means to an end, and is based upon a difference, not of soul, but of material formation. When the end in view is abrogated, so also will be abrogated the means to that end. And above all we must note that the body itself will not remain subject to the conditions of its present material nature. St. Paul tells us that we bury a natural body, but that it will rise a spiritual body; that such as are heavenly things, so will be those who are heavenly; that we shall not be wholly changed, but that we shall certainly be changed, the mortal putting on immortality.

**972. If there will be sex appeal, will it be as the Moslems understand it in the sensual sense?**

There will be no sex attraction at all in heaven. There will be a sex differentiation insofar as both sexes will be represented according to the conditions of a heavenly and spiritualized destiny. But the difference between the sexes will not lead to individual attractions as a means to happiness any more than the difference between human beings and angels. Each will find such happiness in God, that no additional happiness will be sought save in God as represented in others. We will find admiration in God's work, and in all God's ways. There will be no love in heaven apart from one's love of God. Any love there for individuals considered apart from God is inconceivable. In other words there will be no love of others for their own sakes, but all will be for God's sake. The Moslem idea of love in the sensual sense is absurd. Love is an inclination or attraction awakened within us by something that appeals to us. If a thing appeals to our merely bodily nature, the love will be a blind sensitive longing. If man's intelligence enters into it, we shall have love as a sentiment or passion, our sensitive nature reacting under the intelligent perception of what we think to be good. But there is a still higher love possible to man, not in virtue of his sensitive bodily attractions only, nor in virtue of his composite nature consisting of both body and soul. Even naturally there can be a love almost entirely of the soul, consisting in the will to benefit others independently of sentimental or sensual love. And this is the highest and noblest love of all. When man is perfected in heaven, all lower and imperfect forms of love will be eliminated, and that will mean the elimination of love or sex appeal in the sensual sense of the word.

**973. When husbands and wives meet in heaven, will they still love each other?**

I would say that any truly spiritual and supernatural element in their earthly love will persist, but that the elements of the purely natural passion of love will not persist.

**974. Will second marriages be recognized in heaven?**

Marriage is a contract until death separates the parties concerned. It is not a contract which is operative for all eternity, though of course it will remain forever true that, if a man was married twice during his earthly life, he was married twice. But in heaven conditions will be entirely different from those we know on earth, and there will be no matrimonial bonds there. Thus in St. Matthew XXII., 28, we read that the Sadducees tried to show that the resurrection will be absurd on the score that if a woman had several husbands successively on earth, all would claim her simultaneously in the resurrection. But our Lord told them that they were mistaken precisely because they took it for granted that the same condition of things must prevail after the resurrection. "You err," He said. "For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married; but shall be as the angels of God in heaven." The state of marriage is ordained essentially to the propagation of the human race on earth. And as there will be no further propagation of human beings in heaven, so there also the state of marriage will not exist.

**975. As there is no pain in heaven, what do we mean when we say that our Lord goes through the bitter agony of His passion again when we offend Him?**

Firstly we mean that our Lord still takes the same view of sin as He did when He endured such fearful sufferings in order to expiate it. It is true that, in His glorified and risen humanity, He can no longer experience the actual sufferings of His passion and death. But he who commits sin does a thing which warranted such sufferings, and which would cause that same dreadful experience again had not our Lord already endured it. Jesus can still point to His passion and say to us, "See what I think of sin." And the man who would deliberately sin with that before his eyes manifests the will at least to inflict that agony and passion upon Christ once more. But besides the fact that sin would inflict such actual suffering upon Christ now, if it could, and besides the fact that it means an evil of which He takes the same view now as He did then, sin accomplishes much present injury to Christ. It tarnishes His glory, defiles the members of His body which is the Church, robs the crucifixion of its fruits, makes His sufferings unprofitable, and His blood of no avail. Where it finds faith, it sows unbelief; purity it defiles; humility it turns to pride; trust to despair, and love to hate. If He could appear to Saul, even after His resurrection and ascension, and complain, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" much more could He say to every Christian who sins, "Why betrayest thou Me?" All these, and other considerations into which I cannot enter now, justify St. Paul's words that those who sin crucify again to themselves the Son of God, making Him a mockery. Elementary devotion to the passion and sufferings of Christ inspires the resolution to avoid that which was the cause of those sufferings, sin. And if one does not, every sin he commits increases his responsibility for the passion of Christ, and is a present dishonoring of Christ.

**976. To my mind, the whole notion of seeking eternal happiness is based on selfishness.**

Does unselfishness demand that we seek eternal misery? Was man made for that? If you say that we should be indifferent as to whether we attain happiness or misery, I reply that equally we could not have been made for that. Such a notion is an obvious violation of reason. As a matter of fact, the Christian hope for eternal happiness is not really selfish. God could not have created us save in order that we might attain perfect happiness, and we owe it to God Himself to try to attain the destiny for which He created us, and thus fulfill His purpose. And the really Christian motive is to work for God's glory, knowing that our own happiness will result, rather than for our own happiness, knowing that God's glory will result. We thus love God more than self, and that rules out selfishness. If anything is to be regarded as a by-product, it is not God's glory, but our happiness. We do will our own good because we are obliged by God to do so. But we first love God in Himself, and then self in God; or rather, if you wish, God even in self.

Resurrection of the Body

**977. Christians say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." What does that mean?**

It means that eventually, when God wills it, all human bodies will come forth from the graves, being reformed, and occupied once, more by the souls which previously animated them. Thus in John V., 28, Jesus says, "The hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of God. And they

that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." This general resurrection will take place at the end of the world when Christ comes to judge mankind.

**978. By the resurrection, do you mean that a person will come out alive with a new body from the grave in which his dead body was placed?**

Not all dead bodies have been placed in graves. Some have been buried at sea; others have been cremated. By the resurrection I mean that the bodies of the dead will be restored, in whatever way they were disposed of. They will be not so much new bodies, as renewed bodies, endowed with spiritualizing characteristics unknown to them in this life. As St. Paul says, "It is sown a natural body; it shall rise it spiritual body . . . Behold I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again; we shall be changed, yet not wholly changed. This mortal must put on immortality." When you ask whether I believe this, I say yes. For God has revealed that it will occur. And no difficulty presents itself. The God who can create, can certainly restore. And it is no more remarkable that man should be restored body and soul, to a renewed existence than that he should have come in the first place from complete non-existence. If we are going to talk of the incredible, it is more incredible, that your body should exist now whereas once it did not exist, than that it should re-exist after having existed as a matter of fact. The question, "Can it be?" does not really arise. The one question is. "Will it be?" And God says that it will be. I am certainly prepared to accept God's word for it.

**979. As the atoms composing the human body constantly change, how can a soul attain the particular body it had on earth?**

As my soul animates this body of mine, so the very idea of resurrection demands that the same soul will re-animate this body once more. Now it is true, as you say, that when a man dies the atoms and chemical elements composing his body are dissipated, and recombined in new vegetable and animal forms. However, my repossession of my earthly material body does not demand that it resumes the whole of the same identical matter which it employed during the whole course of its earthly life. If the resurrection did demand this, it would be impossible. What is necessary is that something of the matter possessed by my body at some time during life be assembled. After all, I have spoken consistently of my body for over forty years. The increase of the quantity of matter as I grew from boyhood to manhood in no way affected identity. Through all biological variations of matter I have ever retained my identical body. And in the resurrection I shall have that identical body in at least the same sense as that in which I have retained it during the constant biological and chemical changes of life in this world. Let us not forget, concerning the resurrection of the body, that it is in the order of supernatural mysteries even as the intimate life of God which is faintly indicated to us by the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The resurrection, therefore, involves much above the powers of natural human reason, though it in no way violates reason. Any apparent conflict with reason will be due to extravagant claims in no way derived from the actual texts of Scripture.

**980. How is a resurrection possible when bodies have been cremated and their ashes scattered to the wind? And what of those that have been eaten by wild animals?**

The possibility of the resurrection of the body is no more staggering than the possibility of its coming into being in the first place. Is it easier to get being, or to get it back? Custom makes the first seem easy; lack of present experience makes the other seem impossible. The objection from cremation, or the devouring of human bodies by animals is too superficial to merit much discussion. The matter necessary for the reconstitution of the body in an eternal life need not be wholly identical with the atoms of matter constantly changing in us now. In any case, no one knows just what matter is. Scientists, if anything, are tending to dematerialize it. One thing is certain. We can safely leave the management of all this to God.



**981. I have heard many foolish things about the second coming of Christ.**

There are many foolish people who believe their own foolish guesswork about it. But it is a fact that there will be a second coming of Christ to judge all mankind.

**982. As the second coming is taught in the Bible, I presume that Roman Catholics also believe in it.**

You can be quite sure that all that is really taught in the Bible is also taught by the Catholic Church.

**983. Do you believe that there will be a sudden catastrophic change in the existing order of this universe?**

Yes. Christ's second coming will be sudden and unexpected, and it will be a shock to the existent order of the material universe.

**984. I know that Christ predicted His second coming, but I do not see how we can expect that second coming at all in the light of experience.**

Since the second coming of Christ has not happened yet, it can hardly be a matter of experience in the strict sense of the word. But surely you see the obvious Fallacy in the argument that a thing will not happen because it has not yet happened. Meantime, whilst the second coming of Christ cannot be a matter of experience in the strict sense of the word, it is yet a matter of experience that it will occur. The Jewish religion was a long Messianic preparation; the Gospel is the doctrine of the Christian era; the future will bring its own fulfillment. Christ in person was not a matter of experience for the Jews who lived in the days of the preceding prophets.

Yet Christ came as predicted. And Christ in turn made many predictions concerning Himself and concerning His Church, as well as concerning His second coming. Every prediction made by Christ which we could reasonably expect to have been fulfilled by now has been fulfilled. And this fulfillment already indicates a truth and a power which give certainty of the fulfillment of what remains to be done for the whole plan of God to be realized.

**985. Did not Christ Himself wrongly think His second coming about to occur in the immediate future?**

No.

**986. Christ said, "I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God." Luke IX., 27.**

What does the expression Kingdom of God mean in this text? Christ uses that phrase at various times in various senses. When He said, "Do penance for the Kingdom of God is at hand" He referred to the initial stages of the Church He was about to establish. When He said, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church, and I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," He identified the notions of Church and Kingdom. When He said, "My Kingdom is like a net holding good and bad fish," He referred to His Kingdom as de facto existing in this world, i. e. His Church through the centuries. Finally, when He speaks of His Kingdom in the sense of its final triumph and of His coming He blends it with mention of the Angels and His coming in clouds of glory. Which of these senses Christ intends must be judged by the context. In the passage from St. Luke, clouds of glory and Angels are not mentioned. Kingdom of God is meant in the same sense as My Kingdom is like a net holding good and bad fish, i. e. His Church in this world. In St. Luke IX., 26, Christ says, "He that shall be ashamed of Me, of Him the Son of Man shall be ashamed." His continuity of thought is clear. "I am come to preach and establish the Kingdom of God, do not think I shall fail. Some of you standing here will not see death till you see the Kingdom of God." Christ

did succeed in establishing the Church, His Kingdom in this world and the prelude to His Kingdom of eternal triumph. Within thirty years of Christ's death the Kingdom of Christ had spread throughout the Greco-Roman world and many who heard Christ lived to see the spread of His Kingdom and its solid establishment. Christ said, "Many standing here shall not taste death till they see the Kingdom of God." Many saw it.

**987. The same verse in Matthew XVI., 28, is definitely linked with the second advent, described in the preceding Verse 27. For there Christ says, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He will render to every man according to his works."**

Verse 27 certainly refers to the end of the world. But Verse 28 is not connected with Verse 27. St. Matthew in his fragmentary account, gives the saying, "Amen I say to you there are some who stand here . . ." etc., after he records the preceding words. But St. Matthew's recording these words immediately after the preceding text does not mean that Jesus uttered them immediately after the words of that text. We know by critical investigation that He did not. The words in Verse 28 are a quotation of the same thought given by St. Luke, which I have already explained, and by St. Mark VIII., 39. In both places the words are definitely separated from the place in which St. Matthew records them. The Greek has the imperfect and instrumental sense, "And Jesus used to say or repeat, 'There are some standing here that shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming by means of His Kingdom.' " And they did see the coming of the power of Christ when they witnessed His Kingdom spreading everywhere so quickly after His resurrection and ascension.

**988. Did not the early Christian Church believe that the end of the world would come in their own time? They certainly never expected men to be living on earth in 1945! Was not that a grave error?**

No official teaching of the early Christian Church included the doctrine that the end of the world would come at any particular time. The official teaching of the Church was neither more nor less than the article contained in the Apostles' Creed, "He ascended into heaven .... thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." Without any official teaching on the part of the Church, however, did the first Christians believe that Christ would come again in their own days? They did. Christ had purposely left the question of when He would come obscure, and warned men to be ever ready as those who knew not the day or the hour. He had preached definitely the essential truth that He would come some day, and the early Christians, of course, believed that as part of their faith. But they interpreted that essential truth in a kind of formula: Yesterday Adam; today Christ; tomorrow the renovation of the world in God. It was an error to understand tomorrow in the strict sense but it was not an error in a matter of faith.

**989. What is meant by Armageddon?**

The word is mentioned in the Apocalypse, (Protestants call the book Revelations) XVI., 16. St. John gives it as the scene of the final conflict between the powers of good and evil. Some fanatical Bible-Protestants have imagined it as a real place, and have predicted that Christ is about to return to slaughter all His enemies. This dire catastrophe they term Armageddon, and they say that it is imminent. The enemies to be slaughtered are usually those who do not accept the tenets of the particular sect which happens to be misusing Sacred Scripture. Judge Rutherford declares that all who do not join his Witnesses of Jehovah will be the victims. Plymouth Brethren believe that only they will come through safely. Christadelphians declare that Armageddon is for all who are not of their peculiar sect. So Armageddon goes the rounds, glibly quoted by people who have no idea of the meaning intended by St. John when he wrote the passage they regard as their own special message to mankind.

**990. Is Armageddon merely legendary?**

No. But it is symbolical. It is a type, and not a locality. There was a Mt. Megiddo which had been the scene of great and decisive battles in Palestine. There Barak slew the Canaanites, routing completely the enemies

of Israel. The place became a metaphorical expression for any great defeat of one's enemies, just as we say today that so-and-so met his Waterloo on that occasion! St. John gives the symbolical Hebrew compound, Har-Megiddo, or, in modern English spelling, Armageddon, to signify the ultimate defeat of evil by good when the constant war of principles will culminate in the final victory of Christ.

**991. Why does the Roman Catholic Church refuse to preach the doctrine of Armageddon?**

It is implicitly contained in the Catholic doctrine that Christ will some day come in majesty and power to judge the living and the dead. Having stated that fact, the Catholic Church concentrates on our clear duties here and now. The future can then safely be left to God. As a matter of fact, God has not revealed all that is to occur when the end of the world does come. Most of the prophecies of St. John in the Apocalypse will be fully explained only by their actual fulfillment. They are not intended to be clear now, and St. John himself declares that they will be obscure to his readers. God did not give these prophecies to satisfy men's curiosity, but that generations living when they are fulfilled may know that they were predicted, and are part of His plan. Fools who make such prophecies a basis for their own rash predictions, as if God had made them His prophets, only bring contempt on themselves and the Scripture they misuse. The prophecies of the Apocalypse are as obscure to us as the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah were obscure to the Jews. But the good Jew preserved his faith, looked on the Holy Books and all they contained, with deep reverence, and fulfilled the known duties prescribed for him then. And he waited with patient expectation for the consolation of Israel. We Catholics, similarly, fulfill our known Christian duties now, and accept the fact that the prophecies of the Apocalypse will be fulfilled by the final triumph of Christ in God's own good time and as He intends. And that is better than the attitude of people who get lost in their mystical speculations, ignore the clearest teachings of the Gospel, and want to flood the world with a nonsense which is the product of their own imagination.

**992. Am I to believe that Antichrist will get priests and nuns and all good Catholics away from the faith and have the whole world at his feet?**

No. Christ has told us that He will be with His Church all days even till the end of the world. Therefore, it is impossible that all priests, nuns, and good Catholics will ever abandon the faith. It is true that Scripture predicts the coming of Antichrist, and a great apostasy of multitudes from the true Church before Christ comes again. But the exact meaning of these prophecies is very obscure to us, and theologians differ in their interpretations of these future events. Naturally such prophecies concerning the remote future will have difficulties for us, just as prophecies in the past were obscure to the Jews before their realization. The Church has defined no particular interpretation of these predicted events, and we are not obliged to believe in one interpretation rather than another. What we are obliged to believe is that Scripture is the Word of God in the sense in which God intended it. If, therefore, Scripture speaks of Antichrist and a future apostasy from the Church, we must believe in an Antichrist to come, and a future apostasy from the Church. But we freely confess that we do not yet understand the full implication of these mysterious things, and we believe them as God intends them. We do know, however, as I have said, that not all will apostatize from the Church. That fact is safeguarded by a clear prediction of Christ.

**993. What does St. John mean when he says, "Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection. In these the second death hath no power." Revelations XX., 6.**

Obviously there is a contrast between the first resurrection and the second resurrection; the first death, and the second death. Now the first death is that normal separation of body and soul at the end of this earthly life as we now experience it. When the soul leaves the body it is judged at once. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment" says Holy Scripture. If a soul is in God's grace and friendship, it is admitted to heaven either at once, or after due purification in purgatory. Those souls are sure of their eternal happiness. Their death has been followed by the attaining of eternal life, and this is called the first resurrection. Thus St. John, in Revelations VI., 9, says that he saw in heaven the souls of those who were

slain for the Word of God. It is evident that this first resurrection concerns the soul only, and blessed are those souls who depart this life in God's grace and who have attained their salvation. They are already reigning with Christ, until the second resurrection which will include the bodies of all mankind. The second death is the sentence to be passed upon the wicked at the general judgment, following the general resurrection. It will be the living and eternal death of all hopes and aspirations in hell. That is why those are blessed who have part in the first resurrection by departing this life in God's grace, for over them the second death hath no power.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Moral Teachings of the Church

#### Conscience

##### **994. Is a person's conscience supposed to be infallible?**

No. A man's conscience is not always necessarily a true conscience. A man can warp his conscience. And just as he can form a wrong judgment in literature, science, economics, business, or sport, so he can form a wrong judgment as to what is correct moral conduct or evil moral conduct. A conscience is right when it is in harmony with God's law. If it is not in harmony with God's law, then it is an erroneous conscience. And we know by experience that men have often done evil under the impression that they were right. When conscience is in error, however, so that a man does wrong in good faith, we have to ask whether that man is responsible for his lack of knowledge or not. If he is responsible, because ignorant of things he ought to know and was obliged to know, he cannot be excused from sin. But if he is invincibly ignorant, having no suspicion that he is wrong, and no means of finding out that he is wrong, then he would be excused from sin even in obeying an erroneous conscience. But I have said enough to show that the individual conscience is not infallible.

##### **995. I used to think that conscience was a product of environment though I always wondered how my particular environment had produced my particular type of conscience.**

The fact that your moral intuitions were opposed to those your environment should have produced is in itself an experimental proof that conscience is not a product of environment. But, even supposing that environment did dictate what good is to be done, and what evil is to be avoided, the problem would remain. For the basic thing to be explained is why men should think that good of any kind ought to be done, or evil of any kind to be avoided. Before environment can specify the operations of a human tendency, the tendency has to be there. Environment may more or less mould one's conscience. But it cannot create a conscience.

#### Justice

##### **996. Is justice a thing in itself?**

Granted the existence of certain rights, that is just which safeguards and satisfies those rights. And justice is that quality possessed by those who fulfill what is just. Justice, therefore, is a quality in itself, independently of men's ideas on the subject. If the baker has supplied you with bread, the fact that he has supplied you is a fact in itself; and justice is every bit as much a thing in itself as that fact. It cannot vary with any personal dispositions in you. You either pay your debt, or refuse. If you pay, you observe justice. If you do not, you violate justice.

In the end, of course, the rights of men will be traced back to the Tightness of God. And the quality of justice is a reflection in our midst of the justice of God. And as, in the infinite plenitude of His perfection, qualities are not distinct from His very nature, we can say that God is not only just, but is justice. God, therefore, is absolute justice. Justice amongst men is a quality by which they can cultivate a likeness to God, and their justice will be genuine only insofar as it safeguards the rights of God either in His own direct relations with us, or indirectly through the just claims of our fellow beings. And those rights and claims have their own objective value independently of our attitude towards them.

#### Truth

##### **997. Are not men obliged to tell the truth?**

In certain circumstances, they are. In others, they are not, and may even be obliged not to tell the truth. I might know some evil thing concerning you, yet I would be obliged by the very law of God not to tell it to others about you. Whilst, however, I am not always obliged to tell the truth, I am forbidden to tell lies.

##### **998. On what grounds do you hold that it is never lawful to tell a lie?**

On the grounds that a lie is essentially evil, and that we may not do evil that good may come. God Himself forbids lying. We are told that "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." God is truth itself, and lying is falsehood. Therefore he that swerves from truth swerves from God. St. Thomas Aquinas says that God gave us speech to signify what is in the mind. He who speaks contrary to his mind violates the natural moral law itself.

##### **999. Is it not a lie only when harm is done to others?**

No. The harm done to others is but the effect of a lie. It is not the lie itself. The lie itself is the deliberate expression of what one knows to be untrue, whether actual harm to others follows or not.

#### Charity

##### **1000. Does Christianity expect me to love my neighbor when I don't even like him?**

Yes. And it can be done. You must not mix up "loving" with "liking." Likes and dislikes concern your feelings. But love is a matter of the will to benefit another. It is bent on securing the good of another. "Liking" is a pleasure to self. "Loving" thinks not of self but of another's welfare. Thus you can like a person whom you do not love. If, to satisfy the pleasant feelings another awakens within you, you cooperate with him in evil conduct, you do not love him, for you assist in what is to his harm. But if, on the other hand, you do not like a man, yet overlook his faults, will his good and do all you can for his true welfare, then you love that man. In practice you are his friend, even though you experience no friendly "feelings" towards him.

Another thing to remember is this. When Christianity bids you love your neighbor whether you like him or not, it really means that you must let your love of God overflow to your neighbor. You really see, not your neighbor, but God; and without diverting your attention from God, you let your love of Him extend to all whom He thought worth making and loving. Your neighbor may have such faults that you can never get to like him. But you must abstract from those faults, never let your repugnance influence your conduct, and will only his good for the love of God.

**1001. Give me the man who will help those in trouble from pure sympathy, with no thought of the love of God, and no expectation of any reward. For the motive then is entirely unselfish.**

That is one of the most dangerous sentences I have ever read out during these Sessions, and contains more mistakes than I have time to catalog. I will content myself with saying that such principles are injurious to God, to a man's own dignity, and to all his fellow human beings. Likewise the supposition that such conduct is unselfish is wrong, as also the supposition that Christian charity is selfish. Now that is a pretty strong indictment. But let us see.

Firstly, you advocate kindness to others without any thought of the love of God: That is straight out rebellion, because God commands us to love each other for His sake. But, apart from God's command, to cut God out is blasphemy. We are to give up the service of God for the service of man. Protestants began with their cry, "Believe on Christ and be saved." They advocated "Faith without works." Now their successors are crying, "Works without faith." You say, "Give me the man who lives for his fellow men." Do you mean that man comes first, and God comes second? Or will you cut God right out, proudly asserting that "you" do not need

God's help? It is the old, or rather the new cry, "Religion is the opium of the people." Why are you so anxious to do without the help of Almighty God? And since when did the higher motive of love for God render actions worse than when done for the lower motive of love for man? Arnold Lunn well describes your attitude:

"There was an old man of Moldavia  
Who did not believe in his Saviour,  
But erected instead,  
With himself at the head,  
A religion of decorous behaviour."

Secondly, such a doctrine is injurious to a man's own dignity. That is the very thing you think to safeguard. But remember that there is more nobility and dignity in being made for God than in being made for so ignoble a specimen as oneself. It is a degradation to despise God's approval for self-esteem.

Thirdly, such a doctrine is injurious to all your fellow men. In their case also, it is better to love them for the love of God than merely for the love of themselves. You advocate the banishing of Christian motives from charity. But Christianity gave charity to the world. Cut out Christianity, and charity won't linger long. Robbed of religion, men will tend to selfishness, not to self-sacrifice. Experience shows how mad it is to expect a humanity concentrated exclusively on itself to breed unselfishness.

Fourthly, is even the motive you propose unselfish? You speak of "pure sympathy." But what is sympathy? It means "to suffer with." If you see others sad, the sight saddens you. And your own sadness impels you to relieve the distress of another, and you secure happiness in the feeling that the cause of your own distress is removed. It is a case of, "I can't bear the sight of your misery, old chap. Go and have a feed." And the benefactor walks off relieved and smugly self-satisfied.

If you won't admit that analysis, ask yourself why you advocate unselfishness at all. Why "ought" men to be unselfish? It is because it is a moral responsibility towards self, or towards his fellow men, or towards God. If towards self only, then self is subject to no one, but monarch of all it surveys. That is the self-assertion of pride. If it is towards his fellow men, then humanity itself is supreme, and the worship of humanity is the new idolatry to replace the true God. Finally, the supposition that Christian charity for the love of God, and with an expectation of a reward, is selfish, and excludes pure sympathy, is simply absurd. Pure sympathy is present, but sanctified. And selfishness is excluded, because the Christian knows that, although God "will" reward supernatural charity, the essence of Christianity is to love and serve God, not to labor for enjoyment. We love God for Himself, not for ourselves. It would be selfish to work for one's own

happiness, knowing that God's glory would result. But it is not selfish to work for God's glory, knowing that one's own happiness will result. What else could result from serving God? Misery? Christian charity is the only possible law, men loving the God who made them, and letting their love of God overflow to all God's creatures. And the most unselfish people in history were those like St. Francis of Assisi, or St. Vincent de Paul, the very men who loved God most. And any other standard, call it philanthropy or humanitarianism, is an insult to God; injurious to man's personal dignity; and destructive of the welfare of the human race.

#### Catholic Intolerance

#### **1002. Does your Church believe in laying curses on people? If it is God's religion, is God cruel?**

The Church does not believe in cursing people. Her one idea is to bless them. Nor is it God's religion to curse people, though people who deliberately violate its teachings bring anything but a blessing upon themselves. Finally, Catholic teaching insists that God is not cruel and cannot in any way be accused of cruelty.

#### **1003. Whence comes the power of the Church to excommunicate?**

From Christ who said, "Whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven," and "If a man will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen" i. e. outside the communion of the Church, or, excommunicated.

#### **1004. He who breaks God's commandments automatically cuts himself off from God, so what is the use of excommunication?**

By grave sin a man loses God's grace. But the Church as a visible society has the right to give her own declaratory sentence of condemnation and exclusion from participation in the privileges of the Catholic religion until such time as the delinquent repents. And he who is excommunicated not only has to recover God's grace by repentance, but is obliged to submit to any penalties imposed by the Church as a condition of his readmission to the privileges of his religion. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians C.,5, you will read how St. Paul excommunicated the incestuous Corinthian, who after all was already guilty of grave sin and not in a state of grace and friendship with God.

There is an element in God's love which many people overlook. He must hate evil as much as He loves good, both insofar as it is opposed to His perfection, and insofar as it is an obstacle to the union of our souls with Him. God is infinite goodness, light, and stainless beauty; and He must hate sin which is evil, darkness, and corruption. The ideal of holiness and truth has been degraded by those who never associate it with the terrible energy of execration. The Old Testament shows God as rigorous and inexorable in regard to hardened sin and rebellion. The New Testament shows us Jesus as the perfect example of humility, sweetness, mercy, and all that is good. But it shows Him as detesting hardened sin as ardently as He loved good. There was an aspect of horror about Christ, the horror of evil burning in the heart of Jesus as a forgotten lamp in some unknown sanctuary. If horror be missing there cannot really be love nor light, for he who does not see that evil ought to be hated is blind and does not really love good. Read the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, and notice the terror-inspiring condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees by Jesus. If you want the terrible energy which inspires execration you have it there. Notice that the Apostle St. John, the very apostle of love and charity, is also the prophet of God's vengeance in Revelations. And the Catholic Church alone inherits these characteristics. She is accused of being too gentle and easy and merciful in forgiving sin. How often I have had to answer the charge that Catholics can so easily get forgiveness in the confessional! But she is also accused of that terrible energy of execration insofar as she excommunicates hardened and sinfully rebellious subjects. But that is an additional reason for believing in her. The Catholic Church alone excommunicates, according to the commission and power given her by Christ, a power, as I have shown, which was certainly exercised by St. Paul. Other Churches profess to be

mild and kind, and to be horrified by Roman Catholic denunciations and excommunications. But look at the state they are in! They are quite unable to safeguard the truth. The Anglican Church can do nothing with a Bishop Barnes save weep, and wring her hands, and let him go on undermining the whole of supernatural religion. Here in our own midst we find the Presbyterian Church at its wit's end as to what is to be done about a Dr. Angus. He denies the very Deity of Christ, and Presbyterians have to endure it, afraid to excommunicate, neither conscious of possessing the power to do so, nor conscious of how it should be exercised, even did they possess it. The power to excommunicate is a very real power in the Catholic Church, and one of the surest signs of her divine mission

**1005. As a Christian I am ashamed of the history of persecutions, both by Catholics and Protestants.**

No one is particularly proud of past persecutions. But a balanced judgment will view them in the light of the times when they occurred, and not in the light of another age altogether.

**1006. But the Catholic Church was the most guilty, until stopped by the revolt of her own adherents.**

The Catholic Church does not really come into it. Catholics of the time were not guilty of any greater excesses than Protestants. More prominence is given to apparent Catholic intolerance because Catholicism was the religion in possession and Protestants were revolting against it. And the first Protestants had been Catholics, and were traitors to the religion they had professed. They were not as their descendants, who are not responsible for their separation from the Church. At that time, too, heresy was a cause of immense civil disorder and was a crime against the law as well as against religion.

**1007. All through history Catholics and Protestants have given their followers today cause to blush for the cruelties perpetrated in the name of Christianity.**

That is an unreasonable statement. Nothing really done in the name of Christianity can give anyone cause to blush. That many evil deeds have been done by professing Christians throughout the ages I know. But it is unfair to dish up all the misdeeds of professing Christians in the past, and treat them as if they were the natural fruit of Christianity. And it is still more unfair to think that I must share in the responsibility of all the mistakes, and follies and crimes committed in past history by people who professed the same religion as myself. I blame them as heartily as you do. Were I guilty of the same things, you could blame me. But there is no argument in all this against Christianity or the Catholic Church.

**1008. Can you blame people today for wondering if our spiritual leaders have lost touch with the original precepts of Christianity when we look back over the years?**

Yes. I can, and I do. The only reasonable judgment as to whether our present spiritual leaders have lost touch with the original precepts of Christianity must be formed from a study of those original precepts and of the conduct of our present spiritual leaders. You can't conclude that present spiritual leaders have lost touch with Christian precepts because some past spiritual leaders violated them. When you speak of "looking back over the years," remember that you have over 1900 years' history of a Church composed of human beings. It is a vast field to choose from. Good will be found in it mixed with the bad; and bad will be found in it mixed with the good. But prejudice is blind to anything which favors the Catholic Church. It searches for any evil it may find in the pages of past history, and judges the Catholic Church on that, and not on its present merits. Present spiritual leaders are to be judged on things in which they had no say. The Catholic Church is to be condemned on deeds which were not the fruit of her principles. And very often the past evil deeds of professing Catholics are practically taken for granted, no allowance being made for the imperfection of records, no effort being made to get back to the prevailing atmosphere of the times so as to view things in their right perspective, and no care taken to avoid surmising motives without warrant. Instead of "looking back over the years," a man should look at the Catholic religion in itself, and ask whether that religion works evil effects when practiced in his own time and surroundings. I can assure you that it does not. If you got the gift of the Catholic Faith, it would be your introduction to the fullness of Christian truth. And if, having become a Catholic, you lived right up to your religion, no one in the world



would be able to fault you whatever he might find to say about other Catholics, past or present, who are a discredit to the religion they did not allow to influence them as they should have done.

**1009. Do you believe that the Spanish Inquisition existed?**

I know that it did.

**1010. Could you please give me a brief summary of what the Inquisition was for?**

The Inquisition was established to meet a very real need. The Church had the obligation to preserve the teachings of Christ free from corruption. When individual men took it upon themselves, not only to hold erroneous opinions, but to seek to propagate their errors, and destroy the faith of others, the Church had to undertake the defense of her children. She instituted the "Inquisition," or "Board of Inquiry" to trace errors to their source and prevent further dissemination of them. Just as the government has a "Pure Foods Act" to prevent contamination of the food we eat, and has inspectors to enforce the act, so the Church wisely had a "Pure Faith Act," and inspectors to prevent the adulteration of the life-giving doctrine of Christ. And this was most necessary. In Spain, for example, both Jews and Moors had pretended to be Christians, had received baptism, and had even worked their way into bishoprics, their one intention being to undermine both the nation and its religion. The Inquisition detected these false pretences, and the Church expelled them from her communion, whilst the state dealt with them as traitors. It was a wise censorship based on principles acknowledged as necessary by all reasonable people. We admit even now that some censorship of films is required to preserve moral standards from corruption. People may disagree with the way that censorship is handled, but not many deny its necessity. And the same thing applies to the Inquisition. Many of its ways were in keeping with the spirit of the times when it flourished and would not be sanctioned by anybody today. And there were, of course, abuses of it by unscrupulous individuals. But in principle the idea was quite sound.

**1011. Still it is a fact that 300 years ago the Roman Church tortured heretics to make them renounce their heresy and believe in the Church.**

That is not correct history. In the state of society that prevailed then, totally different from conditions prevailing today, the propagation of heresy was an offense also against the civil welfare. It was for the Church to decide as to whether a man's teachings were indeed heretical; whilst the punishment of those guilty of disruptive agitation was left to the state. However we can let that go. The thing to notice is that the authorities were well aware that they could not make any man interiorly renounce heretical opinions against his will, or interiorly accept the teachings of the Church if he did not want to do so. But they could compel individuals to keep their private opinions to themselves, and cease public propagation of their errors. If men personally renounced the faith, and engaged in seditious efforts to undermine the prevailing and legitimate civic order, both Church and state could cooperate to prevent such men from corrupting the faith of others and from subversive activities against the legitimately established order.

**1012; Do you consider that such methods of propagating the dogmas of the Church received Divine approval?**

You are laboring under a misapprehension. The Spanish Inquisition did not exist for the propagation of the dogmas of the Church. It existed to prevent the propagation of heretical doctrines in Spain, and also to suppress sedition against the state. It was, therefore, a mixed tribunal, ecclesiastical officials dealing with religious matters, and civil officials dealing with crimes against the state. As constituted, and from both points of view, the Spanish Inquisition would certainly meet with the Divine approval. But unconstitutional abuses of their powers by the officials themselves would not meet with the Divine approval. That such abuses occurred I do not deny, nor am I called upon to defend them. I condemn them as heartily as you would do, had you also the knowledge of them that I possess.

**1013. Even if you torture a man to death you cannot alter his belief.**

That is true. But the man himself could alter it in matters outside the realm of things mathematically or experimentally demonstrated.

**1014. You may make him pretend to agree with you through fear, but inwardly he still holds to his original thoughts.**

So long as he still holds to his original thoughts outward agreement would indeed be only pretense. And I agree that a man can still hold to his inward opinions despite all external pressure. For a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. This shows how great a force the will is, as well as the mind, in obstinate adherence to one's own opinions. We have all heard of the countryman who saw a giraffe at the zoo for the first time, and said, "I don't believe such an animal exists." Yet, although so long as a man still holds to his original opinions, you will only get a pretense at agreement from him. I maintain that he is free to change his opinions if he wants to in all matters which are philosophically possible, yet not scientifically demonstrated. Though not in all things, in very many things, a man is free to believe what he likes, choosing between probabilities against the truth of which in actual fact there is no demonstrative evidence. However so many beliefs are freely chosen we see every day. There are people who do not believe any good of some particular man. There are others who do not believe any evil of him. It is not that they cannot believe otherwise than they do. It is because they will not.

Persecution

**1015. I was surprised by your justification of the Inquisition.**

I justified it as a tribunal set up to discipline unworthy members of the Church and traitors against the state. But I pointed out that I did not justify abuses of power by some of its officials.

**1016. Torture was one of its main activities for the treatment of both state offenders and heretics.**

Torture was not one of its main activities. Nor was corporal punishment employed as a penalty of heresy as such. Insofar as a heretic was also an offender against the state, he was subject to state penalties. I cannot go more deeply into this question now, but it is evident that you are not fully informed on the subject of the Inquisition and its historical setting.

**1017. The clerics on the Inquisition knew that Christ never intended heretics to be treated like that.**

It is certain that the treatment of heresy was not as you imagine it to have been. But granting, for the sake of argument, that the clerics did behave in an unchristian way, the fact remains that their conduct was not in accordance with their Catholic religion, and they, therefore, deserve censure, not the Church they unworthily represented in such conduct.

**1018. In one of your replies you said in effect that the Catholic Church had never taken life.**

Correct.

The Spanish Inquisition

**1019. Would you define what you mean by the "Catholic Church" in that reply?**

I mean that no one has ever taken human life in virtue of jurisdiction granted to him by lawful ecclesiastical authorities in the name of the Catholic Church.

**1020. Were not the Inquisitors ordained by the Catholic Church?**

They were, but they never received any jurisdiction from the Church to take human life. Their duty was to inquire into the character of the doctrines being taught and propagated by such as were brought before them, and to declare whether that doctrine was heretical and subversive of the Catholic religion, or not. If these ecclesiastical judges decided that the doctrines were false and heretical, the one guilty of spreading such doctrines was informed of the fact, and given the opportunity of retracting his errors, and submitting to orthodox teaching. If he refused to do this, the Inquisitors had no further jurisdiction in the case, but had to leave him to civil authorities acting with the jurisdiction of the state. If the case warranted it, the state imprisoned or executed the anarchist as a traitor to the welfare of the nation. But the penalties were inflicted by officers of the state, and in the name of the state, not by ecclesiastics in virtue of any authority from the Church.

**1021. Christ rebuked Peter for cutting off the ear of a man who struck Him.**

That is true. But taker the circumstances. The time had come for Christ to die for mankind. He would rather be crucified than crucify. And just as He rebuked Peter for protesting against His passion when He foretold it; now He rebukes Peter for thinking to hinder it by force of arms. And this incident is offset by the flogging Christ inflicted on the desecrators of the Temple under other circumstances and on a former occasion.

**1022. The Inquisition had not the extenuating circumstances of Peter's impulse in the heat of the moment.**

The Inquisition, nevertheless, had other extenuating circumstances more than sufficient to justify its existence and legitimate measures. The mistakes, follies, and crimes of individual agents who went beyond their authority I would not attempt to justify. But the Catholic Church was not responsible for those.

**1023. You said once that if a Protestant wants to become a Catholic he has to ask the Catholic Church for the favor. Why the change, when for hundreds of years Rome used curses, prisons, and torture to make converts?**

I deny that the Catholic Church has ever made use of such means to gain converts. She has ever taught that the faith can be forced on no one. But there is a difference to be noted between those who have never had and have never professed the Catholic religion, and those who have had the Catholic Faith. A man who has never had the faith incurs no penalties, and cannot be forced to embrace Catholicism. He never has been a subject of the Church.

But Catholics are subjects of the Church, and therefore subject to her laws. If a Catholic violates the laws of his Church he is naturally subject to the spiritual penalties attached to the violation of such laws. Those penalties are not curses seeking to do harm to the renegade Catholic for time and eternity. They are rather sentences of spiritual deprivation in order to impress upon Catholics the necessity of fidelity to their religion.

When you speak of imprisonment and the stake as means of making converts in bygone ages, you again go astray. In those days people who professed heresy had been Catholics. Having violated the laws of their Church they were subject to her spiritual penalties, such as excommunication; in addition to that they labored to corrupt the faith of others, and to spread doctrines utterly subversive of Christian society as then constituted. And in order to protect its own very existence, civil society had to repress them. Today the state of affairs is entirely different. The descendants of the first Protestants have never been Catholics; and civil society does not incorporate religion. No practice then could render a different practice now

inconsistent. But as regards converting people who have never been Catholics at all, the policy of the Church has always been the same. No one may be compelled in any way to embrace the Catholic Faith. It must be his own free and independent choice. Nearly 250 years before the reformation broke out in Europe, St. Thomas Aquinas described the attitude of the Church towards converts. In his Summa Theologica he writes, "Unbelievers who have never professed the faith are in no way to be forced to embrace it; for to believe must be the choice of a free will. They may be compelled, if possible, not to hinder the spreading of the truth, or not to corrupt the faithful, or not to persecute Christians. And for these reasons Christians have waged war on unbelievers, not in order to force them to believe; for even should they have been victorious, they had to leave it in the power of the conquered to decide for themselves whether they wished to believe or not." That is the doctrine of the Catholic Church today; it was the doctrine of that same Church over 600 years ago when St. Thomas lived; and it has been the doctrine of the Church right through the ages.

**1024. As St. Thomas Aquinas considered the death penalty for heretics not excessive, would he not have approved of the Inquisition?**

In his Summa of Theology St. Thomas says that those who have been brought up in the Catholic Faith, but who abandon the Church and become heretics deserve to be excommunicated by the Church. And in the state of society prevailing in his time, long before the advent of Protestantism, when all were Catholics, they deserved to be put to death by the state as corruptors of the public faith and morals, if they tried to propagate their errors. He declared that forging of false doctrine was worse than forging false money for which the death penalty was then inflicted. But he added that the Church should exercise the role of mercy, and first try to convert her erring subjects, declaring them cut off from the Church only if they were contumacious. Only then were they to be handed over to the secular power for punishment according to the civil law of the times. He did not claim that the Church herself had the right to inflict any death penalty.

**1025. What loyalty betrays you into saying that St. Thomas did not advocate the practice of things he propounded were right to be done?**

Loyalty to the truth. St. Thomas was a professor of philosophy and theology, not concerned with public administrative duties. He took the facts, and laid down the principles governing those facts, showing how far they were justified, and to what limitations they were subject. St. Thomas never devoted his energies to urging that heretics should be put to death.

**1026. Has he not insinuated that frightful things may be done, by saying how they should be done if they were done?**

No. In his Summa of Theology he says this: "The Church, according to the ruling of our Lord, extends her charity to all, not only to her friends, but also to her enemies and persecutors." But he adds that, if one man endangers the salvation of many, then as the common good must be preferred to the individual good, then charity to the many must be preferred to charity towards the individual. Later, in the same book, he deals with the administration of punishment, and there declares that a man who punishes without reason, or beyond just limits and proportion is vicious and guilty of cruelty. But one who takes pleasure in the infliction of suffering just for the sake of making people suffer is a savage beast and a stranger to sentiments proper to normal human nature. St. Thomas, teaching such principles, is certainly no advocate of "frightfulness." He would characterize that as a form of bestiality.

Prohibition of Books

**1027. You admit that Rome has an index of prohibited books, forbidding Catholics to read certain books.**

That is true. The books forbidden are those which are written in order to attack the Christian religion and the Catholic Church, and which are therefore opposed to the faith of a Catholic; and all books which are obscene, filthy, and immoral.

**1028. Is that the Catholic contribution to science?**

No. But it is a scientific contribution towards the preservation of the faith and morals of Catholics, the two most important of all things to be preserved. The contributions of Catholics to science is another matter altogether. And their contributions are legion. I could give you a staggering list of Catholics who have more than demonstrated that Catholic Faith and the scientific temperament go hand in hand.

**1029. Would any truly reasonable person ever dream of imposing an index of forbidden books on others?**

Only the unreasonable would refuse to do so. Wise parents regulate the reading of their children. All intelligent men would wish to prevent the diffusion of ideas they consider useless, wrong, and harmful. Even those who object to the idea of the

Catholic prohibition of certain books would like to prohibit books advocating such restrictions. There come to my mind some remarkable words of A. C. Benson, a non-Catholic, in his book, "The Thread of Gold."

Speaking of Milton's "Paradise Lost," he says that he read it with anger and indignation. Milton, he says, gives a wicked and abominable notion of God, and he declares his conviction that the book has done a great deal of harm. Then he adds: "I would no more allow an intelligent child to read it than I would allow him to read an obscene book.... The hateful materialism of the whole thing is patent. I wish that the English Church could have an Index, and put "Paradise Lost" upon it, and allow no one to read it until he had reached years of discretion, and then only with a certificate and for purely literary purposes." Reasonable people therefore certainly agree with the principle of forbidden books.

**1030. Are Catholics forbidden to read any literature viewing Catholicism in a different light?**

If the literature merely does that, Catholics are not forbidden by their Church to read it. They are forbidden to read all filthy and scurrilous literature opposed to Catholic and Christian standards of morality; and they are also forbidden to read all straight-out or camouflaged attacks on their faith. Moreover, if any particular Catholic finds any particular book a source of serious danger to his own personal faith or morals, he is forbidden to continue reading it. If a man tastes a drink and has good reason to suspect that it contains arsenic, he is certainly forbidden to go on drinking it with the clear possibility of suicide ahead of him. And just as he is bound in conscience to take ordinary precautions to preserve his bodily health and life, so he is bound, and still more seriously, to preserve his spiritual welfare and attend to the interests of his soul.

**1031. If you advise Protestants to read Catholic books, why forbid Catholics to read Protestant books?**

The cases are not similar. I said that a man who has good reasons for doubting as to whether he has the truth or not should try to find the truth. But Catholics know that they have the truth; and they can never have good reasons for doubting this.

Their Church is not a mass of contradictions and divisions, nor in the least uncertain in its teachings. And the unity, holiness, universality, and historical descent from Christ and the Apostles through all the centuries of the Catholic Church, are so obvious that the truth of their Church is clear to them. One

who has the truth doesn't have to seek for it; nor does one who knows what is right read hosts of books that he knows to be wrong for the sheer joy of wasting his time. Meantime the Church, conscious of her own truth, forbids the reading of books by her subjects which could endanger their faith not because she fears that the books might be right, but lest her less well-instructed members might fail to see where they are wrong. And Catholics trust the judgment of their Church in which they have a divine and supernatural faith given by God, and gladly obey her wise laws. But I deny that any Protestant can have a similar certainty, whether in kind or degree, that his own religion is right.

**1032. Catholics claim that their religion is a divine revelation. But other religious bodies claim that also.**

Correct; and therefore all cannot be right. But it does not follow that all are wrong.

**1033. Which one are we to accept?**

The one that can prove itself right.

**1034. This can only be examined scientifically, i.e., by considering the arguments for and against each one.**

A scientific solution of the problem does not require that. A man would act quite scientifically if he decided to take first the claims of the largest body of believers in a coherent religion, and study the credentials of the Catholic Church. Granted satisfactory proof of the claims of that Church to be the one true representative of God in this world, he would have no need to study the claims of any others. A man who secures demonstrative proof that the world is round is not obliged in the name of science to suspend his judgment until he has pondered over all the possible arguments men have used to prove it flat!

**1035. The Catholic Index does not permit people even to consider the case.**

It would be wise to find out something about the Catholic Index, and to discover what it does forbid, and what it does not forbid, before making sweeping and silly statements about it. If one is desirous of being scientific, he should at least try to secure the available facts about a given subject instead of basing statements on ignorance, guesswork, and prejudice. The study of comparative religion is in no way forbidden by the Index. For a Catholic, of course, the study of comparative religion is one of academic interest only. He is quite certain of the truth of his own position and knows that other religions which conflict with the Catholic religion are erroneous. But he may study other religions without the least intention of adopting them just as one could study the customs of Australian Aborigines without any notion of adopting those.

**1036. So we have no basis for coming to the conclusion that "A" is the Revelation of God and that "B" is not.**

If "A" and "B" are contradictory, is not the proof of "A" a sufficient basis for the rejection of "B"? If I were to prove that God has revealed the Catholic Church to be infallible, and I proved it to your own complete satisfaction, would it then be unreasonable for you to accept her condemnation of all other religions? You might say, "But I don't accept the Catholic Church as infallible." That is not the point. You are arguing that there is no reasonable basis for a judgment unless one examines all religions. I maintain that if one which excludes all the others is sufficiently proved to be correct and infallible in its teaching, it affords a reasonable basis for the rejection of all others without further inquiry into their merits. One may consider their peculiar doctrines from curiosity if he wishes. But there is no need of such a study in order to attain the truth.

**1037. Let us even assume that God is omniscient, and that we find in Revelation that God said "Censor." Even then the true scientist must go against Him.**

No true scientist would talk like that. For no true scientist abandons reason. "If" God is omniscient, and declares that there should be a "Censor," then the true scientist will admit that it must be correct that there should be a "Censor." He may, or may not, submit to the Censor. But that concerns obedience, a totally different matter. One thing the true scientist would never do. He would not admit that God knows all things, and then deny that He knows what He is talking about in some particular thing.

**1038. Religion is destructive of liberty and broadmindedness since it imposes ideas upon us from childhood at a time when we find it very difficult to examine those ideas and discard what is false.**

In that case, all definite teaching on any subject at all should be withheld from children. You seem to think that, in order to keep people broadminded, it is necessary to keep them emptyminded. Perhaps you argue that, if children are not taught to believe anything, they will be broadminded and unintelligent enough to believe everything, or just to believe nothing! You fear that the child may not be able to detect what is false amongst the ideas put before it. Therefore it must not be taught any true ideas about religion. Would you advocate that?

**1039. Only a foolish man would dogmatically assert that he was right and the other fellow wrong unless he had studied both sides.**

If a man came along to you with a large volume in which he claimed to prove that the earth was flat, would you be foolish in asserting that you were right in believing it round, despite your not having read his book and studied his arguments? Would it be unreasonable for you to say, "I know for certain that the earth is round, and if your book is to prove it flat I know for certain that its argument is fallacious, and that it would be a sheer waste of time to read it?"

**1040. Your Church's attitude seems to be that one should maintain he is right and refuse to read or discuss anything that might tend to lessen his faith.**

Considering that Catholic Faith is faith in the very knowledge and veracity of God Himself, the Catholic is certainly obliged to maintain that the teachings to be believed by Catholic Faith are right. And he knows with absolute certainty that any

doctrine or position opposed to the Catholic Faith is wrong. Meantime, since the Catholic Faith is a most precious gift from God, one who possesses it is also obliged not to endanger it, but to safeguard it in every possible way.

**1041. Such an attitude seems narrow and senseless.**

Only to one who does not understand the teaching of the Catholic Church as to the very nature of Faith. If you understand what Catholics mean by Faith, you would say, "Well, I have no faith in that sense of the word. But if you Catholics believe that by faith you are accepting what God Himself has declared to be true, I don't blame you for refusing to believe that other and opposed doctrines could possibly be true."

Liberty of Worship

**1042. A lot of people fear that persecution would come if the Church had the power.**

I know they do. But such a fear is not justified. As a Protestant I used to entertain similar fears; but now, as a Catholic priest, with a full knowledge of the spirit of the Catholic Church, and of her theology and canon law, I realize that the more Catholic-minded people become, the less any thought of persecution would enter their heads.

**1043. Protestants say that the Catholic Church still regards them as heretics.**

Some Protestants may say that. Certainly not all do. Multitudes of Protestants are not sufficiently interested in their religion to bother as to whether it is right or wrong; and still less interested as to the views of the Catholic Church concerning it. Consequently they say nothing on the subject, their conversation being dictated by other interests altogether. Those who are sufficiently interested in the subject may say that the Catholic Church regards them as heretics. But such a statement, as it stands, can be misleading. It would be better to say that the Catholic Church regards all forms of Protestantism as heretical. If you say, "But those who profess heretical forms of religion are heretics," the Church replies that only those who know their Protestantism to be wrong are guilty of heresy if they continue to adhere to it. Those who know no better, and are quite in good faith are not guilty of the sin of heresy.

**1044. They then say that Catholics teach that heretics should be punished, even by death if necessary.**

The Church has never taught, and Catholics do not believe that even willful heretics should be punished by death for the sin of heresy. And if this be so even in the case of one who knowingly and willfully professes heretical doctrine, how much less true it is of those who are in quite good faith and not personally guilty of the sin of heresy! The true attitude of Catholics towards Protestants has been clearly set forth by Pope Pius IX. Writing on August 10, 1863, he said, "There are those who live in error, and who are strangers to the true Faith and Catholic unity through no fault of their own. Far be it from the members of the Catholic Church to exhibit any enmity towards them in any way. Rather let them fulfill all the duties of Christian charity towards them, above all to the poor, the sick, and those afflicted in any way amongst them."

**1045. As far as civil law will allow it, is your Churches attitude towards non-Catholics the same now as it was in the Middle Ages?**

It is, and it is not. It is, insofar as she pities those non-Catholics who have never belonged to her, being brought up in an alien faith through no fault of their own; and insofar as she condemns those who have been Catholics, but who have abandoned her through heresy, schism, or infidelity. On the other hand, the attitude of the Catholic Church towards non-Catholics is not the same as it was in the middle ages, insofar as she would not sanction a procedure with them now which she sanctioned then when the whole civilized world was Catholic.

**1046. If not, why has the attitude of your Church changed?**

Because world-conditions have changed, completely altering the relationship of non-Catholics toward the Catholic Church. Firstly, the non-Catholics of today have never been her subjects. In the Middle Ages heretics were her own rebellious children. It is surely easy to understand a change of attitude towards those who have never been her subjects from that toward those who have been her subjects.

Secondly, in the Middle Ages, Church and state were inseparably linked. It is difficult for us today to conceive the extent of their interpenetration. For example, so closely were they connected that the Moors in Spain, seeking to undermine the nationality of the Spanish people, feigned conversion to the Catholic Church, and even worked their way into bishoprics. The Spanish Inquisition was a mixed Tribunal, holding temporal authority from the King, and ecclesiastical authority from the Church. Such conditions prevail nowhere in the world today. Thirdly, the spirit of the age in these matters at least has changed. There is plenty of barbarism still in the world, and even amongst peoples professing a high standard of civilization. But at least men have grown out of the idea that religious errors are best countered by force. Ideas must be met with ideas. To hit a man who doesn't agree with you may make him see stars, but it doesn't make him



see any light. However I have said enough to show that the changed relationship of non-Catholics to the Church; the altered national conditions; and the greater enlightenment of mankind today (in certain directions) are sufficient to account for a different method of dealing with non-Catholics.

**1047. On what principle would you exempt "heretics of descent" who labor to propagate their faith from punishment you consider justly merited by heretics of defection?**

On the principle that "heretics of descent" have never known nor professed the Catholic religion, and may be not only absolutely sincere in their beliefs but also sincere in their conviction that it is their duty to propagate them.

A "heretic by defection" has known the Catholic Faith, but has abandoned it; and even though he comes to a stage of sincerity by self-persuasion in due course, his defection from the Church in the first place was due to a guilty neglect of duty and deliberate insubordination to the divine authority of the Church. But even the "heretic by defection" could not and should not be treated in these days, when the conditions of society are so very different, just as in the ages prevailing prior to the advent of Protestantism, when all Europe was Catholic. The Church could, of course, invoke the spiritual penalty of excommunication from her fold. But no one would say that public repudiation of the Catholic religion today is simultaneously a crime against the state. Consequently secular penalties would be quite out of place and simply an anachronism.

**1048. If ours became a Papal State, would all be compelled to accept Catholicism, or suffer death?**

No. Catholic theology teaches that if any adult is compelled by force to receive Baptism without any interior intention and desire to receive that Sacrament, such a Baptism is absolutely null and void. On our own principles, where would be the sense in compelling people to be baptized into the Catholic Church? Canon 1351 in the Catholic code of Canon Law is worded as follows: "No one who is unwilling must be forced to embrace the Catholic faith."

Forbidden Societies

**1049. Does the Catholic Church condemn secret societies?**

The Catholic Church clearly distinguishes between lawful secrets and unlawful secrets. And she applies this distinction to societies as well as to individuals. A society may have its secrets. Any family is a secret society in this sense for many things are lawfully kept secret by its members. They are not obliged to tell their private affairs to everybody. But a society that obliges its members to keep secrets unlawfully in defiance of lawful authority is condemned.

**1050. Is Freemasonry condemned as a secret society?**

Masonry is condemned as an unlawful secret society. Upon the Continent of Europe, above all, Masons solemnly undertake to keep secret matters which are most dangerous to the public good. And the Church, of course, had Continental Masonry chiefly in mind when she condemned it. In fact Masonry was secretly plotting many schemes aimed at the very destruction of the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church could not but forbid Catholics to join such a society. Masonry in English-speaking countries is milder in its attitude towards the Church, but even so, the Masonic oath of secrecy is still unlawful, because the man who takes that oath has no guarantee that he is not binding himself to secrecy in unlawful matters. He may be told that, in taking the oaths, he will be asked to do nothing against his conscience. But any man of normal mentality would ask, "Whose conscience?" He has no guarantee that he is not handing his conscience over to be adjusted to what others think right. No man may do that. Masonry is, therefore, condemned as an unlawful secret society. I have its ritual, with its asterisks and blanks, and a good deal of literature of Masonic origin, and no man, in my opinion, can take upon himself such obligations. Other good men may

persuade themselves otherwise, but Catholics, who act on the principle that the Catholic Church is the true guide as to what is morally right, cannot do so.

**1051. What would be the position of a Catholic who joined the Masonic Order?**

Such a Catholic rebels against the divine authority of his Church; rejects the Catholic Church as the guide of his moral conduct; commits a grave sin of disobedience; is excommunicated, and deprived of all right to the reception of the Sacraments and to Catholic burial. If he does not want any of his Catholic privileges, and is indifferent to his eternal destiny, he won't worry about these penalties. But if he has any faith left at all, he will worry. And he will be able to escape the penalties, and be restored to the communion of the faithful only provided he reports of his violation of the laws of the Church; resigns altogether from the Masonic Order; and promises to fulfil his ordinary Catholic obligations in the future.

**1052. Is the Toc H a religion?**

Toc H is a Society founded during the war years of 1914-18 to bring the soldiers together into a Christian fellowship of consolation and mutual kindness; and in that way to bring a "touch of heaven" into the hell of their lives. After the War, there was a rebirth of the idea in civilian life, and houses were established where all classes could meet, and lose their sense of loneliness in friendly company with one another. The Society was formed definitely, however, under Protestant auspices; and although it does not claim to be a religion or a new sect, it could not but take upon itself a religious character, and that Protestant, in a vague interdenominational spirit. So we find Protestant clergymen prominent in the movement, and religious elements that practically compel us to regard Toc H. as a Protestant religious organization devoted to humanitarian and philanthropic purposes.

**1153. Can a Catholic lawfully be a member of Toc H.?**

I know of no express decree of the Church forbidding Catholics to join the movement. The question, therefore, must be solved on general principles. It goes without saying, of course, that a Catholic may cooperate in any non-religious humanitarian work. But it is a different matter when an organization is religious in character, sponsored by Protestant clergymen, blending prayer and devotions with its activities, and exhibiting, even though not an anti-Catholic, at least an un-Catholic atmosphere. A Catholic would not be free in conscience to join such an organization. And as Toc H. is of such a character, I do not see how Catholics could lawfully become members of that society. Were a Catholic to ask me personally whether he might join, I would certainly say no.

**1054. Toc H. originated during the early days of the War, providing a place where a man out of the line for a few days might rest in more pleasant conditions.**

Correct, and I have nothing but praise for it from that point of view.

**1055. Many hundreds of men had cause to bless that Club.**

I agree.

**1056. Many Catholics availed themselves of a temporary respite at Talbot House, and Catholic padres put no ban on its use.**

That also is true. For, although it was an Anglican establishment, its chief concern then was to ameliorate the lot of soldiers at the front, and hospitality was dispensed by all religious organizations to men of all Creeds solely for the sake of social benefits. Whilst Talbot House did provide religiously for Anglicans, that was a purely optional matter. Bishop Neville Talbot, one of its founders, says in his book

on the subject, "Talbot House was the ideal Church Institute. Obtruding upon no one, but dominating everything, was the Chapel." But, in those days, the humanitarian aspect of the Institute was the chief thing, its religious character being secondary. Now that circumstances have changed, the religious side is beginning to assert itself more and more.

**1057. In the old days the Club was for the benefit of the soldier.**

That is as I have said.

**1058. Today its aims are no less worthy and religion in no manner enters into its organization.**

When my reply on the subject was published last year, Mr. R. L. Watson, Toc H. padre of Adelaide, answered my remarks by declaring that Toc H. existed for social good, but that its avowed purpose is that "good can triumph over sin under the inspiration and salvation of God"; that it "aims at the reconciliation of man to man, and the reconciliation of man to God," that it wants to show that "the Gospel cannot be divorced from a Church"; that its meetings finish with short family prayers; and that it is "interdenominational" in its scope. So the movement tends more and more to take upon itself a Protestant religious character. A prominent member of the Toc H. Institution, who later became a Catholic, lamented the fact that what was originally intended to be a purely social organization was Protestantized some time after its foundation by Anglican clergymen! But that was to be expected, since it was founded by an Anglican clergyman, and after its war purposes were over, the tendency to emphasize the religious aspect was almost inevitable. In commenting on my previous reply, the Adelaide padre of Toc H., the Rev. R. L. Watson, declared that the late Catholic Archbishop Spence of Adelaide had stated that he saw no reason why Catholics should not join. I wrote to Catholic authorities in Adelaide for information about this, and they replied that on two definite occasions he had declared that no Catholic could join the movement, and that a Catholic who did join could not be admitted to the Sacraments until he had severed membership with Toc H.

Cremation

**1059. Is not the Catholic prohibition of cremation a mere point of discipline, not enforceable as the law of God?**

The law forbidding cremation is a precept binding in conscience, and is enforceable within the Church. For members who accept the spiritual authority of the Church, rebellion against that authority involves sin and spiritual penalties no one with a spark of faith would wish to incur. Thus any Catholic joining a Cremation Society and giving it his active support is excommunicated: and any Catholic definitely asking for cremation cannot receive the last Sacraments unless he cancels the request. Such penalties are indication enough that the Church makes her disciplinary law an obligation under pain of grievous sin. The Church has divine authority to regulate the belief and conduct of her members, not only in matters directly concerning faith and morals, but in all things indirectly affecting the spiritual welfare of her subjects. And she regards the prohibition of cremation as necessary to the safeguarding of that spiritual welfare of her subjects. And as guide, she is the judge; not the subjects.

**1060. It may be Canon Law. But is all Canon Law binding under pain of sin?**

The Church certainly has legislative power given her by Christ in the words, "Whatever you bind upon earth, is bound in heaven." And obedience to that legislative power is included in Christ's words to His Church, "He who hears you, hears me; and he who despises you despises me." Using his authority, St. Paul made many regulations according to his own discretion, and insisted upon obedience to them. He was exercising the very same power as that which the Catholic Church exercises today. . And the Canon Law of the Catholic Church certainly obliges under pain of sin. In the prefatory Apostolic Letter sanctioning the New Code of Canon Law, Pope Benedict XV. wrote as follows-"Having invoked the assistance of divine grace and with the plenitude of Apostolic power, we promulgate this present Code and decree that

henceforth it shall have the power and authority of the law for the universal Church." And Canon 13 distinctly says that all Catholics throughout the world are bound by the general laws of the Church. The prohibition of cremation is a general law, obliging all Catholics, throughout the world, in conscience.

**1061. It is all very well to say, "Obey the Church." But I think the Church exceeds its authority in entering into the domain of science when it forbids cremation.**

The forbidding of cremation to Catholics does not involve any entry of the Church into the domain of science. Nor has the Church exceeded its authority in forbidding Catholics to be cremated. Christ gave to the Catholic Church a complete mandate to attend to all matters of religious significance. He said to her, "Whatever you bind on earth is bound also in heaven." And as religion extends to the complete human personality, including both soul and body, the Church certainly has the right to prescribe the religious ceremonies for the final disposal of the body, and to demand that the method of disposal will be in accordance with her religious rites.

**1062. Why should she dictate the method of disposing of dead bodies which are often masses of contagious disease germs?**

I have given the reason why she may dictate methods of burial. Here you try to show that she is trespassing on the domain of science. But science does not say that the dead must be cremated. Nor does science say that a person who has died of a contagious disease, and who has been buried in the earth, is a menace to the living. In fact, science has been employed in the most rigid tests, both of earth and seepage from cemeteries, always yielding negative results. The idea that normal earth burial affords no protection against contagion is not scientific, but due to an overdeveloped imagination.

**1063. How and why did cremation originate?**

For centuries before Christ, cremation was practiced side by side with earth burial amongst pagan peoples. But from the very beginning Christians repudiated cremation, and consecrated the use of earth burial. All Christians sanctioned and adopted this method so wholeheartedly that the Church had no need to make express laws on the subject. In the eighteenth century, however, rationalistic and materialistic enemies of the Christian religion tried to revive the pagan practice of cremation, chiefly because it was against the Christian custom, and it seemed a practical and imaginative way of attacking the idea of any future life. At first it made little appeal. But towards the end of last century the spread of unbelief weakened opposition to it; whilst the growing superstitious reverence for everything that pretended to be scientific, disposed many people to welcome a method which talked about hygiene and social progress. When, about 1880 cremation societies began to be established and government legislation was sought in various countries to render the process legal, the Catholic Church forbade Catholics to have anything to do with it.

**1064. Cremation is not opposed either to the belief or the worship of true Christians.**

Take the belief of Christians. A study of anthropology shows that in all ages religious belief has been closely associated with the disposing of the dead. And from the very beginning Christians adopted earth burial. They believed in immortality, and the very word cemetery chosen for their burial places means in Greek a dormitory or sleeping ground. As Christ was buried and rose again, so our dead are buried until they also rise again with Christ. Through the ages the Christian Church has blessed and sanctified "God's Acre," to which relatives may go to kneel and pray for those they loved, and whom they are to meet again in a happy eternity. But whilst our cemetery suggests a dormitory in which our departed ones but sleep until they awake to their new life in Christ, cremation symbolizes annihilation and the materialistic idea that all is over at death. "No wonder Catholics oppose cremation," said the Italian Freemason Ghisleri. "They have good reason to do so. Our crematoria will shake the foundations of Catholic doctrine." Take worship. The whole liturgy of the Church is adapted to earth-burial. And it is part of Christian worship to be buried in the Christian way, in consecrated ground. The Church reverences the dead who have been anointed in Baptism and whose bodies have been the temples of the Holy Ghost during life. Nor can the Church be expected to

change her sacred liturgy from time immemorial to suit the fads of the times. Take the nobler instincts of Christian people. A Crematorium is but an incinerator under another name. We build incinerators for refuse; and humane instincts rebel against the burning of a loved mother as so much offal. We have no desire to adopt the attitude which says, "Let us get rid of her. Away with her as rapidly and completely as possible." Cremationists in France at least have acknowledged that cremation does not appeal to the nobler instincts of men. "Our fight," they say, "is not with clergy and legislators; it is with the people themselves." Of 73,000 cremations in France between 1889 and 1904, but 3,500 were cremated at their own previous request. Over 69,000 were cremated without having expressed any desire to be cremated, and at the instigation of others. The very rite exhibits repugnance. Relatives depart, leaving the body in the hands of people who have no interest whatever in the mortal remains confided to them. And the end is not "God's Acre," but a pigeon-hole of ashes; ashes which are posted in Europe with the products of commerce and industry. In fact a certain Professor Moleschott has recently calculated the value of human ashes as a fertilizer for fields, which will contribute to the welfare of the living. And Sir Henry Thompson in England, has worked it out that if all the dead in London were cremated, we would have 200,000 pounds of ashes yearly. Human instinct and Christian reverence revolt against such treatment of the dead, and the system which can lead to such a barbarous outlook.

**1065. Since religious rites are so often associated with cremation, can it not be said that it is a form of Christian burial?**

No. All we could say would be that some non-Catholics who are cremated have their cremation preceded by certain non-Catholic religious rites. But that does not make it Christian burial. Meantime, so far as Catholics are concerned, cremation is not only not burial, but no Catholic religious rites are ever associated with cremation. However non-Catholics may regard it, therefore, no Catholic could regard cremation as a form of Christian burial.

**1066. I was very much opposed to cremation, not understanding it correctly till recently I was at a relative's cremation.**

Your impressions are due rather to what you did see than to what you did not see.

**1067. I was astounded by the reverence and beauty of the service.**

The external religious service would not be less beautiful at an ordinary burial.

**1068. It was most consoling; and there was nothing whatever to offend or hurt the bereaved one's feelings.**

That depends on the bereaved one's outlook. We Catholics do not view death quite like others.

**1069. Also isn't it much better to see a beautiful tree marking the place of a loved one's ashes, rather than the hideous tombstones we see in cemeteries?**

Tombstones and cemeteries are not hideous. Cemeteries are the most peaceful spots on the face of the earth; and tombstones amongst the friendliest things I know. Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" awakens more beautiful thoughts than anything a crematorium could ever inspire. And that one's body should be reduced to a fertilizer for any kind of a tree is not a very appealing notion.

**1070. If cremation symbolizes annihilation, so does earth burial.**

Earth burial does not, in the symbolism accepted by the mass of mankind through all the centuries both before and since Christ. But cremation does symbolize annihilation, with its rapid and complete destruction of the last visible traces of those whom we knew and loved in life. Atheists and materialists were not slow

to perceive this significance. And they were responsible for introducing this revival of a pagan custom into Europe, in order to impress on people in an imaginative way that there is no future life and that we perish utterly like cattle. It is significant that the idea was first mooted during the French Revolution in 1796, that Revolution which enthroned a prostitute upon the Altar of Notre Dame Cathedral, to be worshipped as the goddess of reason. The first Crematorium in Europe was built about 1880, and the influence of the godless has been the chief force behind the movement. The Catholic Church forbade cremation, and the godless at once made that an additional reason for propagating their new devotion to incinerators.

**1071. I resent your assertion that the funeral service of cremation savors of annihilation of the soul.**

I said that the modern movement in favor of cremation was introduced by men who professed atheism, and unbelief in immortality; and who hoped by cremation to foster in an imaginative way their doctrine that all is over at death. The idea was revived by the atheistical elements in the French Revolution, and was supported by the godless Freemasonry on the continent of Europe. A circular issued by the Freemasons in France in favor of cremation says, "The Roman Church has defied us by condemning the cremation of the body which our society has propagated with such excellent results. The brethren of the lodge should therefore employ all means to spread the use of cremation. The Church is merely seeking to preserve amongst the people the old beliefs concerning the immortality of the soul, and a future life, beliefs overthrown today by the light of science." That statement shows one of the motives prompting French Freemasonry. These men want to destroy belief in immortality and a future life; and one cannot blame the Catholic Church for refusing to accept their mode of disposing of the dead.

**1072. May not one do with the body what science says is best?**

Science does not say that cremation is best. Some people say that science says so. But they are wrong. Meantime, whatever others do, Catholics may not do what the Catholic Church forbids.

**1073. The world must progress, and improve on the old methods.**

Not all new methods are better just because they are new; nor is all so-called progress genuine progress.

**1074. Earth burial may take one hundred years of slow, corrupting decay with necessary pollution of earth, air, and water, whereas cremation accomplishes "dust to dust, ashes to ashes," within an hour in a most hygienic way and without danger to the living.**

It would not matter whether nature took two hundred years or three hundred years to pursue her own work in her own way. Neither the dead nor the living are affected by that. But the living are conscious of the implied attack by cremation upon their most sacred beliefs; the violation of their form of worship; and the inhumanity of the violence done to their dead. As far as hygiene and danger to the living are concerned, there is no difference between earth burial and cremation. There is no necessary pollution of "earth, air and water" in earth burial. There is not an atom of proof that residential areas in the vicinity of cemeteries are less healthy than other localities. And the most highly qualified specialists have shown that the earth and the sun between them are the greatest of purifying agencies in existence. They have proved by tests that water-seepage from cemeteries contains no deleterious elements, and that the air is not contaminated by any gases reaching the surface. Dr. Martin, a French expert in these matters says that the living, vicious, sick or diseased, pour out germs and bacteria incomparably more repulsive, dangerous, and even murderous than all cemeteries put together. If we want real hygiene, perhaps it would be better to slaughter the whole human race, and let the last man suicide. Then no human beings will be exposed to any danger of contamination!

**1075. I think to stand by an open grave and see a loved one put down into the earth is horrible, and mediaeval.**

You must not think that a thing is wrong because it is mediaeval. Mediaeval architecture, and painting, and music, and philosophy, and liturgy are all amongst the most beautiful things in the world. There is much more modern ugliness than mediaeval ugliness. As for the earth burial of a loved one being horrible, it is all a matter of viewpoint. Personally I prefer that the body of one whom I have loved should be buried in God's good brown earth, in ground that has been blessed and consecrated to Him, and left to the gentle absorption of nature in nature's own way; rather than make use of an incinerator dignified by the name of a crematorium, as if the body were, as you put it, but an old garment for which no one has any further use.

**1076. Cremation seems a far better way than earth burial hygienically for the disposing of an old coat (so to speak of the physical body) which the soul has done with.**

There is no particular advantage, from the viewpoint of hygiene, in cremation. Hygiene is the science of the preservation of health. Now earth burial is no danger whatever to the health of the living. That is scientifically certain. And the health of the body of the dead person cannot be in question. Meantime, though you profess to be a Christian, you do not speak in a Christian way when you speak of the physical body as an old garment that the soul has done with. That is not the Christian view. Listen to these words of a great Christian Saint on this subject-St. Augustine. In his book on "The Care of the Dead," he writes: "The bodies of the dead are not to be despised and thrown away; and above all the bodies of faithful Christians. For the soul uses the body in all its good deeds during life, in the service of God. The body is much more intimately united with the soul than any garments with the body; in fact the body is part of man's very nature. Therefore the bodies of the just have always been buried with reverence and piety, and with religious ceremonies."

**1077. Cremation obviates being buried alive.**

By substituting being burned alive! You may keep your substitute. If a person be not really dead, and consciousness did return, the shorter period of suffering in that infernal furnace would make up in intensity for the duration of asphyxiation in a state of semi-coma. One case is no better than the other. And there is another little matter of which you have not thought. In earth burial, we bury a man on the supposition that he is really dead. But when you agree that he may be alive, and that it would be better to cremate him, you advocate the more rapid killing of a living person. In other words, you suggest that it is better to murder him. Cremating a man on the supposition that he is dead is not so bad. But to cremate him on the supposition that he is possibly alive, and with the intention of killing him violates the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

**1078. Might not Catholics themselves prefer cremation?**

It is quite possible that even a Catholic might entertain a preference for cremation, through concentration upon some particular aspect which might seem to favor it. But, even were this so, the Catholic is prepared to sacrifice his preferences and submit to the laws of his religion. Our obedience is not based upon our approval or otherwise of the laws put before us, but upon the authority of the one commanding us. This applies to all true obedience. An obedient child obeys its parents because the command expresses the will of those parents, and the parents have the right to dictate its conduct. The fact that the child might prefer to adopt some other line of conduct does not give it the right to disobey serious commands. So, too, we Catholics, and I include myself, obey the legislation of our Church because it is the legislation of our Church. For we know that our Church has received authority from Christ to regulate our conduct in all matters of religious behavior. And the disciplinary law of the Church forbidding cremation imposes a serious obligation upon us, demanding our implicit obedience to it.

**1079. To worship properly, is it necessary to do so in a Church?**

Not always, but certainly sometimes. Man is not only an individual being. He is also a social being. And to worship God properly man must do so both in his individual, and in his social capacity. He can worship God properly as an individual by private prayer. But he cannot worship God properly in his social capacity unless he joins in collective worship. Of course, all that is a matter of general principle only. If one is a Catholic he knows that he cannot worship God properly save in accordance with the obligations of his religion. As an individual, therefore, the Catholic must, besides praying, receive the Sacraments. And he must also fulfill the duty of public or social worship by attendance at Mass on Sundays. Those are the obligations of the true religion. As a Protestant you would scarcely appreciate that. But still you should be able to grasp the difference between the obligation of private worship, and that of public and collective worship.

**1080. My everyday religion is an earnest endeavor to be honest, and to help others less fortunate, often at personal loss; still it suits my way of thought.**

You therefore reject the Christian religion. Even as a Protestant, you have drifted pretty far. I do not mean to speak unkindly. But you must admit that what you call your everyday religion could be that of a good pagan. A man who professed complete unbelief in Christ could earnestly endeavor to be honest, and to help others even at personal inconvenience. He would be completely irreligious, for His one effort would be to retain his self-respect and be kind to his fellow man. But God would not enter into his scheme of things, nor would the man enter into any relations at all with God. And since religion inspires and regulates our relations with God, your "everyday religion," as described, is not religion at all. Again, you justify your attitude by saying that it "suits your way of thought." Surely you can see that a Christian is one who adjusts his life to the teaching of Christ. His way of thought is the law for a Christian.

**1081. I am still convinced in my mind that, if only one goes about trying to be good and to do good, God will notice the fact and judge accordingly.**

It is certain that God notices all things, and that He will judge accordingly. But what will be His judgment? On the standard you give, Christ need not so much as set foot in this world. You reduce yourself to the level of those who have never heard of Christ. God notices that fact, and will judge accordingly. You have been baptized as a Christian. Having received that Sacrament, how will you justify before God your neglect of the other ordinances of Christ? Christ said, "I will build My Church, and if a man will not obey the Church, let him be as the heathen." But you obey no Church. As the very central act of worship to be offered in His name and on behalf of His people to God, He instituted the Sacrifice of the Mass. You repudiate the necessity of attending and assisting at that Sacrifice. I cannot go through all the other obligations of Christians. But I have said enough to show that, if you still believe in Christianity, you do not fulfill Christian obligations. If, on the other hand, you no longer believe in Christianity, you owe it to yourself to know just on what grounds you have rejected it.

**1082. Will you tell us the real reason why Catholics fill up their Churches four or five times on Sundays?**

I will do so. Let us take it step by step.

Catholics believe in God.

They believe that worship and public acknowledgment is due to God in strict justice.

Being Christians, they believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God has taught us how to worship God and that it is to be done chiefly by assisting at the Sacrifice of the Mass, as far as public worship is concerned. They believe that Jesus Christ established the Catholic Church, and that the Catholic Church speaks with His authority. And when the Catholic Church says that all Catholics must fulfill their duty of worshipping God



by attending Mass on Sundays, Catholics the world over do so in a spirit of obedience to the authority of the Christ in whom they believe. They go because God is God and because they owe this service to God. As they know it is a sin to refuse to pay what they owe the baker for the bread with which they nourish their lives, so they know it is a greater sin to refuse to pay what they owe to God for the life that bread nourishes. And as God is God whether they feel like going to Mass or not, they go whether they feel like it or not. These reasons apply to priest and people alike. The Catholic Faith is a reality in their lives. They believe in God and the worship due to Him. They know it is a sin to refuse this supreme religious duty. They don't want to sin thus against God. So they go to Mass.

Here then you have the reasons why Catholics are so faithful—even to filling their churches 4 or 5 times over on Sunday mornings. And it is to the credit of the Catholic Church that she can inspire such fidelity to God and such a sense of religious duty. In fact, she could not do it, if Christ were not with her. It is a work of God's grace.

### The New Psychology

#### **1083. Do you regard psychology as a science?**

Yes, within its proper sphere. Its duty is to observe, arrange, and classify facts, making allowance for all the facts of human personality, including free will. But psychology does not mean determinism. Determinism is a mere theory, and a very dangerous one as well as being false. It is unscientific to deny free will, and philosophical nonsense.

#### **1084. As a science, what has psychology to do with the Church?**

The facts of psychology as such have no more to do with the Church than physics or chemistry. But insofar as those facts of psychology have intimate relationship to human souls, they indirectly concern the Church; and when people wrongly interpret those facts to the moral and spiritual ruin of souls, then the matter becomes of direct importance to the Church. Many psychologists use language in the name of their science which can lead only to scepticism and atheism in their most unblushing forms. They go beyond the sphere of their science, and the Church rightly condemns them.

#### **1085. What is the Catholic view concerning practical psychology?**

All depends upon what you mean by "practical psychology." By whom, and by what methods, it is to be applied. There is no Catholic view concerning "practical psychology" in itself, and as a merely natural means of improvement. But there are very strong Catholic views concerning what many people understated by "practical psychology." Psychology can be divided into two great divisions — that of rational psychology, and that of practical or experimental psychology. One subdivision of experimental psychology is called medical psychology, and its method is called psycho-therapy, or the healing of the mind of the patient by the mind of the practitioner. No one can doubt the connection between mental states and certain physical and moral disorders. And it is a fact that psycho-therapy has wrought many cures. These cures are not due to magic or any superstitious elements. They are due to the use of his own mind and will by the patient, under the direction of one capable of inducing in him a completely changed mental outlook. No Catholic, therefore, could condemn the practice of psycho-therapy in itself. We would have to condemn, however, any abuses in the name of psycho-therapy. And abuses are certainly present in that form of psycho-therapy which is known its Freudian psycho-analysis.

#### **1086. To what extent may Catholics make use of "practical psychology"?**

They may make the fullest possible use of it, *provided it remains practical psychology*, and does not, through misinterpretation and misdirection, *trespass on the province of religion and morals*. Unfortunately it *often* tends to do this; and above all is this the case with psycho-analysis. Though psycho-analysts are gradually improving their system, their *principles* and *methods* are *not yet sound by*

any means. And Catholics should *avoid psycho-analysis* at least for the time being, unless absolutely sure of the Christian and moral principles of their analyst.

**1087. I have heard a lot recently about practical psychology and have attended two lectures on the subject.**

I would have to know what form of practical psychology you mean, and the character of the lectures before I could comment upon the wisdom or otherwise of your attendance.

**1088. My husband and I think it might help us in the management of our young children.**

It is impossible to deny the value of a knowledge of sound practical psychology for such a purpose. And there are many excellent Catholic books on the practical training of children. But whether the lectures you have been attending are sound in principle and practice I do not know. Yet from *remarks* in your letter, I *doubt* it.

**1089. The psychologist maintained that no child is born rebellious or vicious in any way. How does that fit in with the fact of sin?**

All depends upon what the psychologist meant. If he wishes to *deny* that *original sin* has left us *all subject to moral weakness*, and that heredity intensifies this liability in many, *then he is wrong*. If, however, he admits this liability, but merely denies that it is necessary to yield to it, then he is right. Some children are more liable to be rebellious and vicious than others by inherited temperament; but certainly this can be counteracted by suitable education, and careful formation.

**1090. He said that, in nine cases out of ten, it is due to wrong handling and upbringing that the hospitals, asylums, and prisons are so crowded.**

Heredity is responsible for many mentally and morally weak characters, even though it does not always result in deficiency. This is due to the fact that it has not been countered by a sound environment and a formation directly adapted to children according to their individual needs. It is not possible in any given case to say how much in one's character is inherited, and how much is due to environment. But it is a fact that environment is very important. For people are really but pre-disposed in one way or another by heredity. It is domestic and social environment which is the greatest moulding force, apart from the influence of divine grace and the *self-training* of *each one's personal free will*.

**1091. Don't you think that, in many cases, so-called sinners are not entirely responsible for their actions?**

I do. And I agree with your well-chosen words, limiting your statement to many cases, and *diminishing* rather than destroying moral responsibility. For in many cases sinners are entirely responsible for their evil conduct. But Catholic theology acknowledges that heredity and environment can diminish moral guilt.

#### Psychoanalysis

**1092. Does the Church approve in general the study of books on psycho-analysis?**

No. In the first place, no Catholic could adopt the general theories and practices advocated by the psychoanalysts. When it comes to the question of studying their writings and teachings, the Church could do no more than sanction such a study by those whose professional duties require such a study. The Church could not approve of a layman's reading of these works through morbid curiosity. Many writers on psycho-

analysis seem sex-mad. They drag in painful illustrations of sex abnormalities, treated not in technical language, but in a captivating popular style calculated to secure sales-and sin. Many of these writers manifest such perversion of mind that they would be fit subjects for treatment by their brother analysts. In general, the study of psycho-analysis must be classed as a useless and dangerous procedure for the ordinary layman, and one not fit for a Christian.

### **1093. What do you think of Freud's theories?**

As a system, Freudian psycho-analysis must be rejected as false and most pernicious. The study, as such, of unconscious psychological processes can be very useful. But psycho-analysts have fallen into absurd exaggerations, and their pretense to furnish a new basis for all human activities in art, education, morality and religion must be utterly rejected.

Even as a therapeutic treatment of neurosis psycho-analysis is dangerous. The discovery of the harmful element in psychic life does not mean a cure. Often a complete re-education of the patient is necessary. The Catholic confessional has all that is good in psycho-analysis, but with safeguards unknown in this pretended new science.

Freud simply inverts psychology, making the unconscious and the instinctive more important than conscious and rational life. Most loathsome is his over-emphasis of sex. For him, the most sacred truths of religion, the highest aspirations of the soul, the purest devotion and heroism have the same source as crime, perversion, and the most brutal impulses of the lower animal nature.

His theories would mean the end of freedom and morality. Man is but a bundle of impulses, according to him, and is determined by blind instinct in such a way that he is not the responsible author of his conduct. Few theories so degrade man to the level of the brute beast. My opinion of Freud's theory, then, is that there is nothing in it of any great value, whilst there is much in it calculated to do immense harm.

### **1094. The psychologist told me that 75 per cent of those who come to be psycho-analyzed are Catholics. I wonder why this is?**

I wonder "if" it is. I am inclined to regard the statement as an exaggeration calculated to allay the possible reluctance of a Catholic to adopt the treatment. It is my duty to warn Catholics against doing so. What have we against that particular form of psycho-therapy which calls itself psycho-analysis? Firstly, it is far from emancipated from the essentially materialistic and un-Christian philosophy of Sigis-mund Freud. Whatever be its empiric value to nerve specialists, criminologists, and educators, this value is more than offset by the abuses and errors associated with the practice as a rule.

Secondly, psycho-analysis as commonly expounded, overinsists upon sex-complexes, as if they were the foundation of human nature itself. Many psychoanalysts are rectifying and eliminating this overinsistence; but it is still a factor to be reckoned with. Thirdly, psycho-analysis tends to regard intelligence as subservient to instinct and emotion; whereas reason must control, and not be controlled by lower impulses.

Fourthly, psycho-analysis is largely deterministic in its outlook, denying free will and moral responsibility, attributing conduct too easily to unconscious forces beyond our control.

Fifthly, it makes no allowance for sin as a moral evil. It inculcates the falsehood that self-restraint is unnatural and harmful. Any self-indulgence is justified if it will seem beneficial to the patient. "Do it-and forget about it," is better than an internal struggle against temptation, according to many psycho-analysts. This is directly opposed to the doctrine of self-denial taught by Christ.

Finally, it is folly to put oneself into the hands of anybody who claims to be a psycho-analyst. The analyst wants to get at the contents of the supposedly subconscious mind, in order to drag ideas and emotions to the

conscious surface. He requires a self-revelation from earliest infancy, and by a process of transference of discovered complexes, seeks to free the mind from obsessions and the trammels of the past. Without great care, the procedure can lead to the moral ruin of the soul. Even for psycho-therapy, leaving out psycho-analysis on Freudian principles, a German psychologist demands that the practitioner have the wisdom of an experienced priest, the analytic ability of a lawyer, the pedagogic capacity of a good teacher, the trained reasoning powers of a philosopher, and the medical knowledge of three physicians. If these are the requirements of a good practitioner of psycho-therapy, where does the average psycho-analyst come in? And is it too severe to say that Catholics may not submit to psycho-analysis unless they are at least sure of the Christian and moral principles of the analyst whose services they seek?

#### Deterministic Philosophy

**1095. If I can prove a thing to be scientifically true would you accept it?**

Yes. For if indeed a thing can really be proved scientifically true, then that thing is a fact. And there is not a single fact in any order of knowledge which in any way could conflict with the Catholic religion.

**1096. Do you admit that the universe is governed by absolutely rigid and invariable laws?**

No. One factor in this universe is the free will of man which can result in many unforeseen variations. And, of course, allowance must be made for God's own direct intervention in certain cases with results beyond our normal expectations. Your further questions show that you believe neither in free will nor in the possibility of God's intervention apart from ordinary natural laws. You believe in the theory of absolute determinism. With that I will deal in due course. But let me say here that modern physics, or rather physicists, are tending more and more to abandon the old deterministic and mechanical view of the universe, and to hold that it is constituted on an ultimate indeterminism which undermines all possibility of predicting with certainty its future behavior.

**1097. Is the human will free, if we can predict with absolute certainty what a given man will do under certain circumstances?**

It could be. To disprove free will, it is useless to talk of a given man. If you could predict with absolute certainty what every man would do under certain circumstances, then free will would not exist. Such universal absolute certainty would argue to a necessity of action in a given direction. But no one can predict with absolute certainty what all men will do. Granted a perfect knowledge of the heredity, education, environment, and circumstances of every man in a given group, it is certain that members of that group have the power to choose contrary to all your expectations and predictions. For they have free will. You want to deny that power of free will. You must ask yourself why. For that happens to be your choice against the evidence. You need not disbelieve in free will. If you disbelieve, it is because you desire to disbelieve. You shut your eyes to evidence and fact, and cling blindly to a theory that suits you. Again, ask yourself why.

**1098. As a scientist, I have to work on the hypothesis that human actions are the result of antecedent conditions. I can't make allowance for the unknown factor of free will.**

That free will exists is not an unknown factor. What a choice a free will may make is unknown to you, but that does not affect your science. You may work on the hypothesis that human actions are the result of antecedent conditions, but keep in mind that it is only a provisional hypothesis. Though you can never be absolutely certain how men will act, you can form a fair estimate of practical value how men will most likely choose to act. But you cannot get beyond that probability. Statesmen, diplomats, educationalists, salesmen, and all businessmen work on the principle that a certain motive or stimulus will as a matter of fact sway the will of others in a certain direction. But that does not make them determinists. They recognize that human behavior is very largely automatic and indeliberate. But they know that in any given instance

the expected may not result, owing to the further deliberations and a contrary choice on the part of those they hope to persuade.

**1099. I have to teach science as I know it.**

I am sorry to hear that you are a teacher. The children entrusted to your care are indeed in a sad plight. Your theory of determinism, involving the denial of free will, and of all moral responsibility, is no more than a theory. And because such a theory can have none but the most dangerous consequences in practice, the Church rightly condemns it. So do all right-thinking people.

**1100. Human beings have no freedom of choice. All their decisions are as necessary as the exploding of a bomb.**

You are talking nonsense. A bomb does not deliberate as to whether it will explode or not. It experiences no inner conflict between motives, and has no conscience indicating one course of conduct as right and another as wrong.

**1101. If we knew fully the character, heredity, environment and all the external and internal circumstances of a given man, we could predict infallibly what he would do. That shows that he is not free.**

Granted all the knowledge you postulate, you could not predict infallibly what the man would choose to do. It's all very well for you to say so easily, "That shows he is not free." But before any value attaches to that, you have to show that you can infallibly predict in all cases what all men will do. You have not done so, and cannot do so.

**1102. If we cannot make that infallible prediction in practice, it is only because we do not know all the factors bearing upon a given individual.**

Rather than admit free will, you prefer to fall back on your own ignorance. But because of some imagined force in the unconscious make-up of individual men you are denying a fact of which we are conscious. It is bad enough to base a certain assertion upon what you confess you don't know. But it is worse to fall back to a position which is quite beside the point. Free will, by definition, is a characteristic of the conscious self. To delve into the unconscious is to sidestep the sphere in which free will can alone operate. Free will is a psychological fact. And you must adjust your conclusions to that fact of experience.

**1103. An astronomer who meets with new phenomena arguing to an unseen planet does not cry "miracle," and refuse to examine natural factors in the usual way.**

There is no need here to introduce the idea of miracles. Free will itself is a natural, and not a miraculous factor. In any case, the behavior of the astronomer does not imply that he refuses to believe in miracles. Rightly he must exhaust all possible natural explanations first. A psychologist, too, may put on one side the idea of free will for the purposes of his science in order to estimate probable behavior, and study the most likely influence upon behavior. But for that it is not necessary to deny or disbelieve in free will. We can say that normal people will normally choose to act in normal ways. But we cannot say that they have not the power to choose otherwise.

**1104. Many people are held responsible for criminal acts and punished who are not really responsible.**

That is true. But it does not prove that nobody is ever responsible for criminal acts. And it is no argument at all against the fact of free will. There are many people sick in hospitals. That does not prove that there are no healthy people in existence.

**1105. We would be better employed in scientifically investigating causes of delinquency than in saying that criminals are deliberately responsible and punishing them.**

You have jumped from the irresponsibility of some criminals to the irresponsibility of criminals in general. That's a very bad lapse in logic. Also we have not to choose between scientifically investigating causes of delinquency and declaring criminals responsible. We should scientifically investigate the causes of delinquency; declare abnormal types of men to be abnormal, estimating their guilt according to their degree of abnormality; and declare quite normal men to be deliberately responsible if they indulge in criminal conduct, and punish them accordingly.

**1106. A proper education demands that the new generation should be given a wider outlook.**

If you impart your outlook to those entrusted to you for their education you will only contribute to their ruin, and the ruin of society. The determinist who teaches that man has no self-governing powers but that he is a mere piece of mechanism compelled to do all that he does do, is teaching a doctrine, not only fundamentally untrue, but one that is horribly degrading. Teach moral responsibility and you teach a great force for good. The consciousness of free will and of the duty to avoid evil has made human character. But the more a child is taught to regard itself as the plaything of irresistible forces the less that child will resist seductive temptations.

**1107. People should know how to interpret their conduct and that of others in the light of inherited tendencies and past experiences.**

That is true. But they should not be taught that they will find the whole explanation of their conduct in such elements, and that they have no real freedom of action. In his book "The Rediscovery of Man," Dr. Henry C. Link holds up to just ridicule the idea that a man can transfer his responsibility to his glands or his grandfather or to intercranial pressure, compulsions, complexes, or to that spectral warehouse of moral and temperamental junk called the subconscious mind. Too much of this talk tends to permit people to regard themselves as victims of circumstance rather than as their own agents and guardians. They will make no conscious effort, but will simply acquiesce in their vices. Your doctrine will make criminals, not cure them.

**1108. The new knowledge will give people a kindlier outlook on those previously believed to be criminals.**

Determinism is not new. And it cannot rightly be called knowledge. It is nonsense. If you deny all moral responsibility, as you do, then there is no such thing as deliberate crime. There is only mental or physical disease. Those we call criminals can't help themselves, and are more sinned against than sinning. Logically, according to you, we should rather compensate the poor victim of such disabilities than punish him as a criminal.

**1109. What is the use of discovering principles if we do not apply them?**

You surely do not imagine you have discovered a "principle" by denying free will! Certainly there is every reason why a believer in determinism should not attempt to teach it. For according to him, those who believe in free will are compelled by sheer necessity to do so. They cannot do otherwise. Why waste time trying to force views upon them which they are predetermined not to accept? It is an absurd and useless apostolate. Meantime those who do believe in free will should certainly prevent your teaching your absurd philosophy to others. A child should not be taught to ask, "How far have I been a victim of my unconscious tendencies," but, "How far, by conscious and deliberate action, have I brought myself into my present state? And what must I do to eradicate the evil?" Only thus will you help to build character and make a real contribution to the education of the young in any true sense of the word.

**1110. It is only that our actions are determined that we can give a certain kind of training that will turn out certain kinds of men.**

The same kind of training given to an indiscriminate lot of subjects has never yet turned out the same kind of men. From the same families, environment, colleges and universities, the most diverse types have resulted. That all our actions are determined is as absurd psychologically, as the astrological assumption that all born on a certain day are subject to the same conditions.

**1111. You seem strongly opposed to determinism and the new psychology.**

Determinism, or the denial of free will, is a by-product of materialism: and for once I am inclined to agree with Voltaire who said that materialism is the most enormous of all absurdities, and the most revolting folly which has ever entered into the human mind. In the driftage from virtue and from obedience to God's laws, men wanted a philosophy which would deliver them from the uncomfortable sense of sin or interior guilt. So they denied free will and moral responsibility altogether. Then the determinist philosophers came forward with a variety of explanations to comfort people when things go wrong. You can blame environment, heredity; or that poor old scapegoat, the sub-conscious. In fact, you can blame almost anything except yourself. The popularity of psycho-analysis is based on the same motive. They are all, more or less, escapist subterfuges to get away from the uncomfortable thought of human responsibility.

**1112. Is there any definite proof that determinism is wrong?**

The proofs of freedom of will prove determinism wrong, and those proofs are from considerations both intrinsic and extrinsic to man from the philosophical point of view; whilst from the religious point of view, freedom of the human will is a fact revealed by God. The Christian who denies free will denies his Christian religion.

**1113. I have no religious prejudices. I am a free thinker.**

There is no need to reject religion in order to escape religious prejudices. It is right to abandon prejudices. It is wrong to abandon religion. As a matter of fact you are a bundle of irreligious prejudices. Meantime, why do you call yourself a free thinker whilst, in the same breath, you deny free will? Like all determinists, you cannot be consistent. You cannot even describe your own opinions without contradicting yourself. On your own principles, you cannot think freely. In the end, of course, those who proudly proclaim their belief in free thought yet deny free will merely wish to be able to think wrongly without being accused of doing wrongly. Their free thought enables them to declare that they have no duty to God; and their denial of free will affords self-excuse for evil conduct which they calmly say they cannot help doing.

**1114. That is not to say that I have no moral standards.**

What do you mean by moral standards? If there is no free will, there is no morality. It is as absurd for you to talk about an immoral man as about an immoral volcano. Or do you hold that you are determined in spite of yourself to behave as if determinism is not true after all? Personally I would say that you are deliberately determined to believe your own system to be true though you know that it isn't.

**1115. I accept the facts of psychology.**

No one could blame you, did you really do that. But you do not accept the facts of psychology. One of the facts of psychology is free will. And you reject that. I have told you that many scientists reject a deterministic explanation even of the physical universe. Most modern philosophers, in common with all men of common sense, reject psychological determinism. They believe absolutely in the existence of human free will. They know quite well, by their own perfectly reliable inner experience, that before acting there are various courses open to them, and that they are free to choose one way or another; having chosen, they know that it was a voluntary decision, and that they can reverse that decision at any moment. After such deliberate actions, they know that they are responsible. They take credit to themselves if they made a good choice. And after evil actions they experience remorse, and blame themselves. It is in an effort to escape this last uncomfortable experience that people adopt determinism. They desire to do evil

comfortably. They have no other reason for their system, in the ultimate analysis. The denial of free will is one more instance of the wish being father to the thought.

**1116. Statistics prove that, where religion is most strongly practiced, there crime is most prevalent.**

That verdict is absurd on the face of it. For if religion is strongly practiced, the laws of God are observed, and they exclude crime. If crime is prevalent, those guilty of crime are not practicing their religion.

**1117. The fear of God breeds delinquency, and delinquency breeds crime.**

Reverence for God has never yet bred delinquency.

**1118. Christianity is supposed to be uplifting; but like cure-all patent medicine, it fails utterly in practice.**

You have a slightly wrong notion of Christianity. It is not a thing you drink like a patent medicine, and then wait for results. Christianity gives to men the power to lift themselves above their evil inclinations provided they correspond with its principles and graces. And Christianity has not failed in practice where men have not failed to practice it. Its success has been very real wherever men have yielded to its influence, and in proportion to the extent in which they have been willing to allow it to influence them.

#### Sterilization

**1119. What is the Church's attitude towards sterilization of the unfit? Is it usurping the power of God over life and death, like birth-control and the killing of incurables, or is it a lawful endeavor to safeguard national health, like the prevention and cure of disease?**

The practice of sterilization of the unfit is absolutely forbidden by the Catholic Church as unlawful and gravely sinful. The Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" withdraws from man all jurisdiction over innocent life and forbids all notable mutilation of a morally innocent human being. Sterilization is a grave injury to a human person, depriving him of a power as integral to human nature as the power of sight or speech. The State did not give these powers, and can no more remove them than it can amputate the hand of a pickpocket thief. The State can segregate a thief for a long or short period, but it has not the right to mutilate him. And the unfit are not even guilty of a crime by being unfit. Sterilization also renders marriage quite unproductive and therefore deprives such men of their natural rights to the offspring of marriage.

The State exists to protect its innocent citizens, not to injure and mutilate them. Anyway, sterilization is wrong in itself, and it is not lawful to do evil that good may come. No idea of safeguarding national health can justify evil means. As a preventive measure the State has other and lawful means, such as segregation and education. But sterilization is really an impossible measure in practice. It would not attain desired results.

It is not a cure, for the trouble is more psychical than physical; and if anything, it stimulates crime, merely removing fear of consequences. Despite sterilization we shall always have the degenerate with us, even as we shall always have the poor despite all our philanthropic legislation. Other difficulties abound.

The degree of mental or physical degeneracy cannot be determined. In less serious cases there will always be a doubt. In more serious cases, we have the disconcerting fact that heredity does not obey invariable laws. Nor can we deprive a man of a right now because of a possible future abuse of that right. And the Catholic Church rightly says that sterilization is an unlawful measure forbidden by the law of God.

#### Marriage Legislation



**1120. You have often spoken of the attitude of the Catholic Church to marriage, but I can't see what religion has to do with marriage.**

Since marriage is most intimately bound up with the life of humanity, religion has very much to do with marriage. Marriage is a Christian Sacrament assuring to the propagation of the human race conditions worthy of a religious man; or, if you wish, of a religious humanity. How could religion fail to be concerned with those rites of nature which provide the Church with children to be redeemed and saved?

**1121. Is not marriage merely for a work of nature? Its functions cannot serve a religious purpose.**

Marriage is for a work of nature, but nature is not without God. It is included in the religious plan of the world, and man should employ it in the path to his real destiny, which is supernatural. Your assertion that the functions of marriage cannot serve a religious purpose might seem a reverent attitude; but it is really irreverent. Nature is God's work. Christ has adopted humanity, and all its natural processes. And if any function could seem to be opposed to religious ideals, there above all is necessary the sanctifying influence of a Sacrament. The Holy Spirit intervenes between Christians and makes marriage a religious function and part of that organized life of which Christ is the head, and the Holy Spirit the very soul. So the Catholic Church, without false shame or puerile timidity and shyness, but with the dignity of a true mother, blesses the marriages of her children as well as their souls.

**1122. By her restrictive laws the Church may lose some of her adherents, should they resent them.**

From the point of view of the Church, those who have so little religious spirit that they are not prepared to obey the laws of their Church, would not be much loss. But if we consider, not their loss to the Church, but the loss of the Church to them, I must say that nothing they are likely to gain will compensate them for the religion they abandon. No human being can take the place of God in a soul.

Furthermore, if by laws relating to marriage the Church is going to lose adherents, would you say that she ought to change those laws in order to keep them? If so, where will you stop? Other people find other laws awkward. If they threaten to leave the Church, is the Church to alter or abolish those laws in order to keep such people? Would such people be worth keeping? Surely legislation must depend upon the authority and wisdom of the legislator; not upon the whim and caprice of the subject. It is not upon our own terms that we are members of the Catholic Church, but upon her terms. That is the only possible position for one who has faith in the Catholic Church as the authorized spiritual agent of God in this world, and who has a spark of the virtue of obedience to God's will.

**1123. In the event of cousins wishing to be married, would the Church object?**

Yes. The ordinary laws of the Catholic Church forbid the marriage whether of first or second cousins. These laws form an ecclesiastical regulation from which a dispensation can be given by competent authorities where reasons sufficiently grave to warrant an exception are presented. But the normal thing is the law, and not the dispensation from the law. And the law of the Church is opposed to the marriage of cousins.

**1124. Don't you think it is unfair to prevent the marriage of cousins, if they love each other?**

The mere fact that they have fallen in love with each other is not a sufficient reason for permission to marry. What would be the use of making an impediment to marriage if it had to be swept aside whenever those affected by it wanted to marry! First cousins would not want to marry unless they thought they loved each other; and if love is to be a sufficient reason for marriage despite the impediment, then there would be no impediment in practice, and all first cousins who wanted to marry could do so. Love is not its own law. It is a sentiment or a passion which must be controlled according to the dictates of reason and conscience. Many a man has fallen in love with a woman he is not free to marry. If she is already married, there is an impediment from the mere fact that she is already subject to the bond of marriage to somebody else. Will

you say that it is unfair to prevent the single man going off with another man's wife if he loves her? Surely you can see that love cannot be its own law, justifying whatever it wants to do. And as previous marriage is an impediment, so consanguinity is an impediment. Just as a man who loves another man's wife must realize that he can't have her, and must try to get over his infatuation, and bestow his affections elsewhere, so first cousins must realize that they cannot marry, and divert their attentions from one another to other prospective and eligible partners. It's no use saying that they can't learn to love others. Experience is against that.

**1125. Why does the Church forbid first cousins to marry?**

The Church has good and solid reasons for the law. The general good of society is not promoted by the formation of isolated groups bound together by close intermarriage. Again, individual and domestic morality is better safeguarded if young people of opposite sexes who are thrown much into each other's company owing to bonds of close relationship are conscious that marriage is out of the question, so that they will not foster any movements of attraction for one another apart from that of the relationship already existing between them. Finally, the physical and mental welfare of future children is better safeguarded by the avoiding of close intermarriage. All things else being equal, the chances of healthy offspring are much greater when those who marry are not already blood relatives.

**1126. Are ill effects more likely to happen when blood relatives marry than in other cases?**

Though allowance must be made for exceptions, the possibilities are all that way. In fact, I would say the probabilities. Whilst it is always possible for defective offspring to result from other marriages, it is more than probable when close blood relatives marry. Why it is so, it may be difficult to say. But experience teaches us that the closer people are to the same stock, the less wise it is for them to marry. It is a fact that healthy offspring requires the accession of new blood. We know that inbreeding is bad even amongst animals, resulting in stunted growth. Even apart from blood relationship, it is better for people of opposite types to marry than those of similar type. But blood relationship complicates things still further, and the danger is greater as the relationship is closer. Such unions often result in children who are subject to physical and mental weaknesses, if not to epilepsy, defective sight, the misery of deaf-mutes, or to various nervous diseases. Not normal, but abnormal hereditary defects seem to be transmitted and intensified by such unions. Nature itself has implanted an instinct in men against close intermarriage. I do not say that all the evils I have mentioned always result. There are exceptions, when the couple are both healthy and of sound stock. But the exceptions are exceptions. And when first cousins marry, even though the worst does not happen, some ill effects result to the offspring in ninety cases out of one hundred; if not in the first generation they will in subsequent generations. The Catholic Church, therefore, has wisely made the law that first and second cousins may not marry, and she is reluctant to dispense from it, and the more reluctant where the couple are first cousins. I might add that the Church has other reasons also for the impediment, for the prohibition of marriage checks loose morals between those thrown much into each other's company by the bond of relationship; and also promotes social welfare by extending marriage outside the circle of relatives.

**1127. Is it possible to get a dispensation from the Catholic Church to marry a first cousin?**

It is possible, under certain circumstances. But it must be remembered that laws are not made by the Church for the purpose of granting dispensations from them. They are made to be observed. Dispensations, therefore, are necessarily the exception. Normally the law is upheld, as a dispensation without a reason involves immorality in him who grants it and invalidity in the marriage itself. And, where marriage is concerned, the law forbids first cousins to marry. As Catholics, we should make the mind of the Church our own, and be eager to see whether we can possibly observe her laws rather than to see whether we can possibly get a dispensation from them. They are not made lightly, by any means! I certainly would advise first cousins to renounce altogether the prospect of marriage one to another. As long as they entertain hopes and thoughts of possibility, they will continue to dwell on the prospect and foster their mutual affection. But if they make up their minds definitely that marriage is out of the question they will find it easier to let their thoughts run in a different direction. If death took one of them, the other would find some other

marriage suitable with little or no heartburning. Sentiment and emotion are kept alive by the entertaining of hopes. My advice to first cousins would be that they should refuse to entertain the thought of marriage and that they should make up their minds to look elsewhere for a life partner.

**1128. Does the Catholic Church sanction marriage with a deceased wife's sister?**

The law of the Catholic Church forbids such a marriage. In Catholic law, when a man marries, a diriment impediment arises forbidding later marriage with her blood relatives within the first and second degrees. Unless a dispensation be obtained from the impediment, such a marriage would be null and void.

**1129. Why does the Catholic Church object to such marriages?**

Firstly because husband and wife are so intimately united that they practically become one person. And, as a man has sisters by blood relationship, his wife's sisters become his by affinity, and he should treat them as sisters, not as unrelated persons.

Secondly, his very marriage to one girl in a family is most likely to bring him into frequent and intimate contact with other members of her family. There may be, not only daily association, but even the necessity of dwelling under the same roof. If marriage is out of the question, even after the death of his wife, there is ever so much less danger of such a man allowing an affection for her sisters to develop, or permitting familiarities forbidden by the respect and reverence he should entertain towards relatives. The very danger of this through their being thrown so much into each other's company shows the wisdom of the Church in forbidding such marriages. The consciousness of this makes a man almost instinctively banish all thoughts of those displays of affection, and exchanges of love and embraces, which enkindle the passions, and lead to thoughts of indulgences permissible only to married people. Those not free to marry are not free to indulge in those usual approaches to marriage, and the legislation of the Church is wisdom itself in the interests of morality, and Christian reserve and modesty.

**1130. Please explain the attitude of the Church towards mixed marriages.**

The law of the Catholic Church prohibits the marriage of a Catholic with a non-Catholic. Bishops and priests therefore have the duty to advise Catholics strongly not to contract mixed marriages.

Her reasons are many and serious:

1. There is the danger to the faith of the Catholic.
2. There is the probability of domestic discord.
3. There is danger to the faith of the children.
4. The Catholic education of the children often involves great difficulty, even granted that they are baptized Catholics.
5. Even in the ceremony itself, the Catholic Church is naturally reluctant to admit to her rites those who are not members of the Church. If, however, despite these obstacles, a Catholic in the judgment of the Church has good reasons for marrying a non-Catholic, above all in countries where a non-Catholic population predominates, the Catholic Church will grant a dispensation from the prohibiting law. But she grants this dispensation only on the following conditions:

1st. The non-Catholic must be willing to receive instruction in Catholic teaching whether he intends to become a Catholic or not. It is not fair to let a Catholic marry a non-Catholic when that non-Catholic knows nothing of the other's religious obligations.

2nd. The marriage must take place according to Catholic rites and in no other way.

3rd. The non-Catholic must give a promise in writing that he will in no way attempt to persuade the Catholic to give up her religion, but that he will give her full liberty to practice it.

4th. Both parties must promise in writing that all children without exception will be baptized and brought up in the Catholic faith. In brief, because of the great dangers attaching to mixed marriages from a Catholic point of view, the Church forbids them. Granted sufficiently grave reasons, she will dispense from her prohibition, but only on condition that the marriage is safeguarded as far as possible from the dangers she foresees by the promises I have mentioned.

**1131. Are you prepared to tell your listeners about the Ne Temere Decree?**

There is no earthly reason why I should not. The words "Ne Temere" mean "Lest Rashly." They are the opening words of a decree of the Catholic Church, made applicable to all members of the Latin Rite in 1908, by which the Church seeks to diminish rash and foolish marriages by her own subjects. In order to exercise stricter control over so important a matter, the Church decreed that, after 1908, no Catholic of the Latin Rite could contract a valid marriage except in the presence of a Catholic priest and two witnesses. Prior to the application and promulgation of the Ne Temere Decree, if a Catholic contracted marriage outside the Catholic Church, the action was a gravely sinful violation of Catholic regulations, but the marriage was recognized by the Catholic Church as a valid and sacramental marriage in this country. The Ne Temere Decree declared that henceforth the condition of even a valid and sacramental marriage for any Catholic is that the ceremony takes place according to Catholic rites. Before the decree, therefore, if a Catholic married outside the Church, the marriage was unlawful, but valid as a sacrament in this country. After the decree, such an attempted marriage is both unlawful and invalid in the eyes of the Catholic Church. And that means for anyone with the Catholic faith that the marriage is invalid before God and in conscience, whatever may be the attitude of civil law and society toward it.

**1132. No human being has the right to make such laws affecting the marriages of other people.**

The Queensland Marriage Act of 1864 declared that no marriage would be deemed valid unless celebrated between 8 o'clock in the morning and 8 o'clock in the evening. If the state can thus legislate in the matter for civil purposes the Church can certainly do so for ecclesiastical purposes. And it makes no difference whether validity is made to depend upon the hour of 8 o'clock or the year 1908. The one difference between the two cases is that, in this matter of the Sacrament of Marriage, it is the legislation of the Catholic Church which binds before God rather than the legislation of civil authority.

**1133. What right has the Roman Church to make such a law as the Ne Temere Decree in 1908? It's only a man-made law.**

Firstly, the law was not made only in 1908. An already existent law was applied to our country in that year. Secondly, had it been made in 1908 that would not prove it a man-made law as you intend it, that is, as having human authority only. When men make a law, the value of the law depends upon the value of the authority vested in the men. If a man tries to make a law in matters over which he has no jurisdiction, his supposed law obliges nobody. But the Catholic Church has received jurisdiction from God to legislate as she thinks wise concerning the Sacraments, and marriage being a Sacrament, her legislation obliges Catholics in conscience. It is not a man-made law. It is the Church of Christ legislating in the name of Christ. For to that Church He said, "He who hears you hears Me, and he who despises you despises Me."

**1134. Is it correct to say that, if two Catholics marry before a Protestant minister or a civil magistrate, there is no marriage at all?**

It is correct to say that those two Catholics have contracted marriage according to the requirements of civil law, but that they have not done so according to the requirements of the laws of the Catholic Church. Civil society will therefore accept them as married; but their Catholic religion will forbid them to regard themselves as married in the Christian sense of the word, or as entitled in conscience to live as married people.

**1135. If a Catholic marries a non-Catholic before a Protestant minister or a civil magistrate, is that no marriage at all?**

The same answer again applies. State law will regard these people as married. But, according to the laws of the Catholic Church no marriage of a Catholic complies with the requirements of validity unless that Catholic marries before a Catholic priest and two witnesses. And that applies whether the Catholic marries a fellow Catholic, or a non-Catholic.

**1136. Three years ago a Catholic man married a non-Catholic woman at a registry office.**

In doing that a Catholic violates a very grave law of the Catholic Church, and is not justified in regarding himself as married according to the requirements of God. In conscience, therefore, he is obliged to get the marriage rectified according to the laws of the Catholic Church; and until he does so, he is not morally free to claim marital privileges.

**1137. Now the Catholic Church does not recognize such a marriage.**

The Catholic Church does not recognize such a marriage as valid and binding before God, nor as giving any right in conscience to dwell together as husband and wife. But the Church does recognize the fact that, in the eyes of the state, such a matrimonial contract in a registry office gives rise to a legal bond between the parties. And, in civil law, unless that legal bond be cancelled by the state itself, a further attempt at marriage would be bigamous.

**1138. Could the woman marry another Catholic in the Catholic Church, if she were to obtain a civil divorce?**

From the standpoint of the laws of the Catholic Church, abstracting from all other factors, such a marriage would be possible, granted a civil divorce. The ecclesiastical authorities, of course, would require proof of the different religions of the parties to the registry office marriage, of the non-rectification of that marriage subsequently according to Catholic requirements, and of the civil decree of divorce given by the state. But I have said that all this is from the mere standpoint of the laws of the Church. For there are other aspects besides the question of law. If a Catholic man thought that he could marry a non-Catholic in the registry office, and later, should he tire of her, get a civil divorce, and so be free in conscience to marry again without any further responsibilities, he would be very much mistaken. He would, of course, commit a grave sin in the first place by marrying outside the Church. But he would also do a grave injustice to the non-Catholic woman which could be repaired only by marrying her properly according to the laws of the Catholic Church. In the case you give, however, the woman apparently does not want the first marriage put right. The Catholic man has evidently treated her badly since the marriage, even as he did in its celebration. And if the state thinks she has sufficient reason for a civil divorce, and grants it, she would be free to remarry, after verification of all the facts, even according to the laws of the Catholic Church. Such cases are rare, but they do happen. And each such case is a warning to non-Catholics against marriage with any Catholic who is prepared to violate the laws of his Church in so serious a matter. A girl should remember that, if a man won't be true to God and to his conscience, there is little likelihood that he will be true to her.

**1139. Why in a mixed marriage is the marriage ceremony performed in the Sacristy and not in front of the altar?**

In order that the Church may manifest the fact that she disapproves strongly of mixed marriages. Marriage is a Sacrament and the Sacraments are confided to the keeping of the Catholic Church. The Church is not even certain that the non-Catholic party has been baptized correctly, and is less certain that he or she is in a state of grace. The Catholic party may go to confession first; the non-Catholic does not. We know how the Church regards bad communions or bad and sacrilegious confessions. But is she to be heartbroken over these, yet indifferent when there is risk of profanation of the Sacrament of Marriage, welcoming mixed marriages with no sign of disapproval?

**1140. Who first decreed that mixed marriages should not take place in the Church, before the altar?**

Pope Pius VI., in 1782.

**1141. Surely this practice would tend to embitter the non-Catholic against the Catholic Church and would make him feel that he was not being accepted in the eyes of God.**

It should bring home to both Catholics and non-Catholics that mixed marriages are not really acceptable in the eyes of the Catholic Church. The marriage is valid, but the non-Catholic, not being a child of the Church, has no reason to be bitter on being refused those privileges reserved to children of the Church. If the non-Catholic desires the full privileges of a child of the Catholic Church, let him receive instructions in the Catholic religion, and if, after those instructions, he feels that he should become a Catholic, let him become one.

**1142. Whilst this law is in force, there will always be difficulties for both parties.**

The strict law is meant to make difficulties for both parties in a mixed marriage, so it's little use urging that. Remove the law, and you remove one of the things which makes Catholics think twice before they allow such an alliance with non-Catholics to develop.

**1143. A non-Catholic girl, being more sentimental than the man, resents not being married before the altar.**

You are thinking only of the non-Catholic party's feelings. But two come into the case, and you should take into consideration the attitude of the Church of Jesus

Christ towards His Sacraments. The non-Catholic party does not resent her exclusion from a marriage before the altar nearly so much as the Church resents mixed marriages.

**1144. Because of this she often induces the man, if his Catholic faith is weak, to go to another Church,**

That, of course, is to be lamented where it occurs. But I don't think you could have any disciplinary law without some human being or other making it the excuse for rebellion. It is as if a motorist, when told that there is only one-way traffic in a given street, were to reply petulantly, "All right. If I can't go both ways in this street, I won't drive in it at all." But you couldn't expect the traffic laws to be changed because of that. And as I have said before, if the man's faith is so weak that he would go off to another Church to please such a girl, then he is the last to whom the Church should grant a dispensation for a mixed marriage. Such a marriage will endanger his own faith in any case, and his promises to bring up the children as Catholics would be practically worthless.

**1145. Don't you think the law should be repealed, so that fewer marriages would take place with non-Catholic rites?**

I do not agree that the law should be repealed. Abolish that law, and though the number of Catholics marrying outside the Church might be diminished to a certain extent, the number of mixed marriages would

greatly increase, with their consequent danger to the faith of the Catholic party and to that of the children. By this law the mind of the Church is kept constantly before Catholics, whereas otherwise they would think lightly of entering into such alliances. Meantime a Catholic who would marry outside the Church because of such a law has so little love for his religion that he would not be much of a Catholic whatever concessions were made in his favor. There is some reason in granting concessions to good Catholics. But why should the Church make concessions to the less devoted section of her children?

**1146. Do you think it just and fair to refuse marriage in front of the altar to a Catholic girl who is marrying a non-Catholic man?**

It is quite just and fair. The Church is quite justified in manifesting her disapproval of mixed marriages by not granting those full privileges which are the right of Catholics only. If a Catholic girl brings one, who is a complete stranger to the Catholic religion, justice does not demand that the Church should make as much of them as if both parties were her own subjects. Nor is it fair to ask the Church to admit to her Sacraments one who is of another religion. You speak as if the Church had no duty to safeguard the reverence due to her Sacraments, and as if the contracting parties were alone to be considered. But a just and fair new makes allowance for all concerned. As a matter of fact, in strict justice, the Catholic Church has no obligation to grant a dispensation at all; and if she does so, those who are thus enabled to marry should be grateful for that concession rather than resent not receiving further favors.

**1147. I have heard of mixed marriages taking place before the High Altar in a Catholic Church.**

That is quite possible. By way of exception to the general law, the bishop in each diocese has the power to dispense from the usual procedure, if he thinks there are sufficiently grave reasons for doing so.

**1148. Does not this give reason for the idea that money speaks all lan-guages in the Catholic Church?**

Not in the least. I made no mention whatever of money. I said that the law of the Church empowers a bishop to dispense from this particular regulation concerning the celebration of mixed marriages. There is not the slightest trace of justification for concluding, "Therefore he uses this power to dispense in favor of the wealthy who can pay for the privilege, and not in favor of the poor who can't." People cannot argue that because an official possesses certain powers, therefore he abuses those powers!

**1149. Would you be kind enough to explain the "sufficiently grave reasons"?**

The "sufficiently grave reasons" are not set out definitely in the law. They are left to the judgment of each bishop. The only way to ascertain a knowledge of them would be to write to each bishop in the world, and ask him what in his prudent judgment, would be a justifying cause for dispensing from normal procedure. Of one thing I can assure you. Not a single bishop would include in his list the conditions, "Provided the parties are wealthy." Perhaps I could give you a slight hint as to the lines along which a bishop would think in such matters. The Catholic Church strongly discountenances mixed marriages. The normal law forbidding their celebration with full Catholic privileges is intended to discourage them. Now in places where Catholics are very numerous, and the opportunity of marrying a fellow Catholic readily occurs, there is much less excuse for a mixed marriage than in a place where there are very few Catholics, and non-Catholics are greatly in the majority. In the latter case a bishop could be much more lenient in his application of restrictive laws than in the former case. And his leniency would be quite impartial, and entirely independent of the financial state of the parties concerned. Nor, even if the parties were wealthy, would any charge be made for the dispensation to be married in the Church, should such a dispensation be granted.

**1150. The Catholic Church decrees that the non-Catholic party to a mixed marriage must renounce absolutely the religious upbringing of the children in any faith other than the Catholic faith.**

That is so. But keep in mind the fact that marriage is essentially a two-party contract. And in the case of a mixed marriage it is inevitable that, if the non-Catholic does not renounce the right to dictate the religion of the children, then the Catholic would have to do so. And any denial that the non-Catholic should have to do so is, on the same principles, an assertion that the Catholic should have to do so. And that, of course, means deadlock.

**1151. If it is wrong for Catholic parents to rear their children as Protestants, how can non-Catholics be forced to see their offspring trained in a faith foreign to them?**

That is a fairly complex question, and I will make the answer as clear as I can.

Firstly, your admission that the Catholic faith is foreign to a Protestant means equally that the faith of the Protestant is foreign to the Catholic. That clears away any nonsense about our being "one Church" after all. Now secondly, and granted that, there can be no question about its being wrong for a Catholic to rear his or her children as Protestants. For if a man be a Catholic his very religion includes an act of divine faith in the Catholic Church as the one true Church of God. Non-Catholics have not this conviction. But that is not the point for the moment. The point is that the Catholic has to say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" just as he has to say, "I believe in Jesus Christ Our Lord." Both propositions are in one and the same Apostles' Creed. Now, if a Catholic does believe that his Church is the one true religion, and the one way in which God demands that He should be worshipped and served, it should be clear that no Catholic could in conscience agree that any of his children should be deprived of the true religion; nor could he say, "God will be worshipped and served by me in the way He wishes, but not by my children." To that I think you will say, "Right. I see the Catholic position. But why is not the same thing true of the Protestant party from his standpoint?" In other words we come to the second part of your query.

**1152. How can non-Catholics be forced to see their offspring trained in a faith foreign to them?**

Firstly they cannot be forced to do that for the simple reason that they cannot be forced into a mixed marriage with a Catholic at all. If they are not agreeable to the Catholic upbringing of their children, they can easily avoid that by not marrying a Catholic. But, you will say, what if they do choose to marry a Catholic? I reply that, if they choose to do so, they also choose to agree to the condition that all children will be Catholics. When children arrive, such Protestants cannot say that they are "forced" to see their children brought up in a foreign faith. They freely agreed to that. But we must follow this out to the end. If a Catholic could not freely agree that his children should be Protestants, how can a Protestant freely agree that his children should be Catholics? To that I can merely say that all depends upon the convictions of each given Protestant. If a Protestant firmly believes that the Catholic religion is false and evil, and that his own religion is the one true religion, then he cannot in conscience agree that his children will be brought up in what he believes to be a false religion. He would be obliged before God to refuse agreement that all children will be Catholics. But as the Catholic is obliged in conscience to refuse marriage unless the promise is given, the marriage would have to be abandoned. It is better for two human beings to part with each other than to part with loyalty to conscience in such a matter.

If, however, a given Protestant, does not believe the Catholic religion to be false, and is not convinced that his own is the one true religion, but believes that one religion is as good as another, then he personally will have no conscientious objections to his children being brought up as Catholics. He promises that they will be, and neither violates his own conscience nor asks the Catholic to violate hers.

**1153. The non-Catholic man makes a pre-marital promise, bartering away the spiritual direction of his children.**

If he believes that he is gravely violating his conscience in doing so, he ought to refuse to do so; and the marriage should be abandoned. If, however, he has no particular convictions on the subject, and feels that he can with a good conscience allow his children to be brought up as Catholics, then he may sign the promises. In that case he does so willingly, and is rather exercising what he believes to be his rights than



bartering them away. If, according to your own principles, he thinks that the worship of the one God justifies the participation in any religious forms of worship, then the fact that the children will be brought up to worship that one God would justify him in allowing them to be Catholics.

#### Birth Prevention

**1154. Is Catholic opposition to birth control an article of faith, or a temporary form of penance which a less prudish age will forsake?**

Catholics must accept the condemnation of contraceptive birth-control without reservation. If they fail in this matter, they cannot say that it is not a sin. They can but confess that they have sinned. The Pope has definitely and irrevocably declared contraceptive birth-control to be intrinsically wrong, and declares that to be the authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church. Catholics, therefore, are not free in conscience to declare contraception to be moral and permissible. Nor will the Catholic Church yield in any way on this point whatever the character of future ages outside her fold, whether you choose to envisage those ages as "less prudish" or "more pagan." Protestants once claimed to be the champions of morality against the lax doctrines of Rome. That was ever an idle pretension. But today we are beginning to see things in their right colors; the Catholic Church standing rigidly for morality; non-Catholic Churches significantly silent, or openly yielding to the demands of popular vice.

**1155. Is it not reasonable to think that contraception will be tolerated later, as Galileo's theories today?**

No. Nor are the cases in any way parallel.

**1156. Where is birth control forbidden in Scripture?**

It is rather grimly hinted at in the case of Onan as recorded in Genesis XXXVIII., 10, for Onan was struck dead by God. And Scripture describes his contraceptive practice as a detestable thing. However, it would not matter in the least if there were no concrete reference to birth control in Scripture. Scripture gives the general principles of morality, and lays down clearly the obligations of marriage. Birth control by contraception is immoral of its very nature, being but reciprocal vice; and violates the Christian obligation of marriage. No sane person would deny the immorality of one's becoming a cocaine fiend. Yet that is not mentioned in Scripture. The natural moral law existed before a line of Scripture was written, and still exists, being in no way abolished by Scripture.

**1157. If birth control by contraceptive means be condemned as against nature, how defend hair cutting, or nail clipping, or certain operations on animals?**

We certainly say that contraceptive birth control is against nature. But to understand our position, you must realize that we are speaking of the natural moral law. Man is never allowed to violate that. No one suggests that a thing is morally wrong merely because against physical nature. The physical laws of nature, and the moral laws of nature, are different laws, governing different orders of being. Physical laws of nature say that, if you throw yourself over a precipice, you will be killed. The moral law of nature tells you that you must not do it, that you have no right to do it, and that it would be a grave sin to decide to do it. This moral law allows a man to cut his nails, but does not allow a man to cut his throat. His nails grow by physical law, and he has the right to regulate their growth because they do not involve a function essentially connected with life itself. And life itself belongs to God, together with man's right use of those functions ordained of their very nature to life. Physical nature has endowed man with nails that grow and passions that make their presence felt. Yet any man with a moral sense at all can see the difference between clipping one's nails to avoid the physical inconvenience of their length, and curbing one's passions to avoid vicious habits of self-indulgence. Clipping one's nails is neither moral nor immoral. Controlling one's passions is definitely moral. Operations on animals do not come into the question. Morality is possible only with rational and therefore morally responsible beings. Animals in themselves are not endowed with moral rights or

obligations. And man certainly has rights over animals which he does not possess over himself. Vegetative life and animal life are at the disposal of man. Human life is not. We may kill and eat animals lawfully. We may not kill human beings for such a purpose. And since we have dominion over the very life of an animal, we may, for good reasons, restrict or regulate that life. We do not thereby violate any moral order, but merely exercise a lawful control over physical nature, even as we do in the order of vegetative life by grafting the branch of one fruit tree on to the trunk of another to which it does not naturally belong. There is no parity, therefore, between animal life and human life in the order of morality; nor is there a parity in man himself between nails which have no essential relation to the propagation of life, and functions ordained to this necessary purpose.

**1158. If men are blessed to kill one another in war, how can prevention of life not yet existent be looked on with horror?**

No blessing on the eve of a battle is meant to sanction war as such. At most it is to commend to God individual participants, and what is at least believed to be a just cause. Nor is the predominant intention one to kill fellow human beings. The intention is to secure the triumph of right over wrong by means of arms, when all other means have failed. You take it for granted that it is necessarily immoral to take part in war. I have repeatedly shown that this is not so. But where, in certain circumstances, participation in war for a just cause is lawful, no circumstances can arise to justify contraceptive birth control. The immorality of such birth control is not measured by its relationship to non-existent life. Killing in a just war is not to be ranked as murder. But even if it were ranked as murder, no one suggests that contraception is murder. Non-existent life cannot be murdered. Our quarrel is with the means adopted to prevent life. It is lawful to avoid children, by abstaining from actions intended by God to result in children. It is not lawful to avoid the responsibilities of marriage by the use of contraceptive means. The very act of indulging passion and deliberately frustrating God's natural laws by any artificial methods is immoral. Such conduct is a sin not differing from solitary vice save by the fact that it is mutual, often including a grave sin against charity insofar as one persuades another to violate conscience in so serious a matter.

**1159. Should druggists be allowed to sell articles that prevent conception?**

No one should be allowed to manufacture, sell, or distribute articles intended for such a purpose. People are not only forbidden to do evil. Others are forbidden to cooperate with them in the evil they wish to do. If a man wanted to get a ladder from you, and you knew that he wanted it in order to burglarize a house, it would be morally wrong for you to assist him, just as it would be morally wrong for you to commit his crime. The prevention of conception by artificial means is every bit as opposed to God's law as any other violation of the commandments. And those who supply such artificial means are morally guilty of cooperation in the sin.

**1160. Is it wrong to use such things?**

It is, definitely. The use of such things is opposed to the natural moral law, and is most offensive to God. And the penalties attached to such practices are most marked, both in guilty individuals, and in guilty nations. Such practices prove to be, not a blessing, but a curse, even in this life. Worse still will be their effect in the next life, when those guilty of them meet God in judgment.

**1161. If it be wrong to use such things, why is it so?**

Because it is opposed to the natural moral law, and also to the commandments of God. By such practices people indulge in actions obviously intended by God to result in children, yet they deliberately block that result, and nullify God's purpose. Again, all will admit that solitary indulgence in the vice of impurity is wrong and immoral. This is rightly termed a "vicious habit." Yet birth control by artificial means is simply mutual cooperation in this very habit. God Himself inflicted death on Onan for the prevention of conception, and Scripture describes Onan's action as a "detestable thing." The incident is given in Genesis, XXXVIII., 10. By such practices the human race is exposed to self-annihilation and marriage is degraded to

a state of legalized self-indulgence in sensuality for its own sake. The health of the wife is endangered; her dignity is forfeited? mutual respect is destroyed, and often the end is the divorce court.

**1162. Lord Horder, an overseas visitor to the B.M.A. Conference, says that science has produced both services and disservices, and that it has not succeeded in controlling the stress and strain imposed on the nervous system.**

With every word of that all people, I am sure, would agree.

**1163. He adds that a healthy nervous system does resist these things a good deal, and that we must try to produce the right kind of human being, fighting against a lowering of general resistance, and of nerve tone. This, he said, leads us to the subject of eugenics.**

With the purpose of eugenics no one can quarrel, if by that purpose we mean the physical, mental, and spiritual improvement of the human race. But when those who speak of eugenics propose means which are disgusting in themselves, and an outrage on human dignity, we must object. The Catholic Church supports sound eugenics, in the sense that knowledge of heredity must be used for the improvement of the quality of the human race. Many of the impediments to matrimony are precisely for this purpose, prohibiting unsuitable people from contracting marriage. Unfortunately, however, eugenic enthusiasts have abandoned Christian standards, urging wholesale violations of morality and of the laws of God by advocating contraceptive birth control, sterilization of those whom they choose to regard as unfit and even euthanasia or the popping of cripples, old people, and the mentally afflicted into the gas oven. If those who are a danger to the welfare of the human race ought to be asphyxiated, then, on their own principles those who advocate these things should be the first to be gently but firmly eliminated.

**1164. Lord Horder said that we are getting back to preventive medicine, of which the study of heredity and the new science of genetics may become the basis.**

Prevention, of course, is better than cure. But the study of heredity and the so-called science of genetics have a long way to go before they can become a basis for preventive medicine. Heredity is still a mystery, with a baffling variation in its laws. There is no certainty that the children of the wise and cultured will be even normally intelligent, whilst geniuses have often arisen from quite insignificant parents. Impressive talk about the "new science of genetics" might be justified if only genetics were a science. It is certainly not that. It is only a bundle of theories, some of which are plausible, and many of which simply ignore the moral law. Now the moral law is as essential to the welfare of mankind as any physical or biological laws. And violations of the moral law will be found even more detrimental to human welfare than violations of physical law.

**1165. "I entirely disagree," remarked Lord Horder, "with the view that legislation to prevent birth control is long overdue."**

I wonder whether Lord Horder would entirely disagree with our legislation to prevent the importation and indiscriminate distribution of opium, cocaine, and other harmful drugs? Yet these things affect the individual good rather than the common good. Birth control, however, is directly opposed to the common good. Side by side with the report of Lord Horder's utterances, which you have sent me, is a report of Sir Ralph Cilento's address on Australia's population problems. "Australia," he says, "mirrors the decline in birth rate in Western Europe most alarmingly. We cannot preserve our frontiers unless we can effectively occupy the land we claim. On the present figures, Australia will reach stalemate at no more than 8 1/2 millions, and the solution will be immigration or ultimate invasion." So far, then, as our country is concerned, legislation against the importation or manufacture of contraceptive appliances and drugs is

much more necessary than legislation against opium, morphia, and cocaine. And such legislation is long overdue. Lord Horder comes from overseas to tell us not to make legislation against national suicide. Such advice from one who talks of preventive medicine is simply absurd, and opposed entirely to the warnings issued by Sir Ralph Cilento at the same B. M. A. Congress. I was in Melbourne during that Congress, and heard many comments from responsible and thinking people concerning the contradictions appearing daily in the press, as the utterances of medical men were recorded.

**1166. Lord Horder gave, as his reason, the fact that you can never make people moral by prohibitions.**

That is a most remarkable statement.

Firstly, I would ask whether Lord Horder admits that people will be moral only provided they avoid contraceptive birth control. If so, and birth control is immoral, by what right does he advocate birth control? This can only mean that he abandons what is moral for what he thinks to be expedient. I have already shown, of course, that what he thinks to be expedient, is most inexpedient for this country. But, quite apart from that, the idea that, not what is right, but what is useful may be the criterion of our conduct is simply abominable.

Secondly, I would ask Lord Horder how far he would push his argument against legislation on the score that people can't be made moral by prohibitions. Will he say that no legislation against evil and pernicious things is justified at all? Why have legislation forbidding the violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal"? Lord Horder would reply, "Well, such legislation won't make people moral. It won't turn a dishonest character into an honest character. But such legislation is necessary at least to stop the dishonest character from exercising his predatory instincts, and damaging other people." To him, then, I would reply that, even though legislation against birth control appliances and drugs will not turn sensual and immoral people into virtuous citizens, such legislation is necessary to lessen their opportunity of doing immense harm to Australia. It is ridiculous to say that, because people will be immoral in any case, we should not attempt to introduce legislation calculated to stem the tide of immorality, and make indulgence in vice at least more difficult. The more people are inclined to a vice, the more necessary is legislation to restrict their opportunities to indulge in it.

**1167. Lord Horder next asks, "Are we never to grow up, and get biological control?"**

In advocating birth control, Lord Horder is not advocating biological control; he is advocating biological frustration. He speaks of biological control as if the animal body were man's complete nature, making no allowance for the dictates of any higher and intelligent powers. Or rather, he seems to regard the body as independent of man's personality, and a thing to be used as other separate objects in this created world. But the body is part of man's personality. The biology of man includes all elements in the complete living man, body and soul, and true biological development demands a balance in all faculties. Man's intelligence must rule blind passion by self-control, not abdicate in favor of the irresponsible beast. Like the conductor of an orchestra, the mind of man must coordinate perfectly all the impulses of that marvellous instrument called the body of man. Introduce into this temple of art an unclean brute beast, and what becomes of reason? Contraceptive birth control weakens the flesh, poisons the blood, tangles the nerves with disorderly destructive and spasmodic violence, and renders those guilty of it less and less fit to be parents at all. Lord Horder urges us to grow up, and get biological control by abolishing all prohibitions of birth control. That is not biological control. It is national death. Lord Horder's words have a familiar ring about them. God once gave a prohibition under a threat of death to two rather important people.

A gentle devil from the netherworld urged them to grow up and become even as gods, to ignore all prohibitions, and to take what seemed so good and alluring and delightful. They did so, and it meant death. And those egotists who have so little understanding of the divine honor of parenthood, who dam up at its source the river of life, and refuse to their anaemic country the blood it so needs will bring upon that country the same penalty of death.

**1168. Lord Horder continued, "We have taken control of the physical conditions in the world,, of chemical conditions of the sea and air. Are we never to have control of ourselves?"**

I would that men did learn control of themselves in accordance with God's laws. But Lord Horder talks as if there were no God, and as if men were responsible to no one but themselves. God ordained all lesser creatures to be at the service of man, and gave man dominion over them. But man was to serve God, and be subject to God. Man is not his own master, to do as he pleases with himself. And the fact that man has dominion over the physical, chemical, and even animal elements in this world, is no argument in favor of a right to regard himself as subject only to his own whims and fancies, and independent of God, and of the moral law. This, in reality, would be a monstrous denial of humanity and a ludicrous attempt to change the human race into a herd of animals. To Lord Horder's petulant question, "Are we never to have control of ourselves?", I reply that God has not yet renounced His right to control the moral conduct of man, and that God's commandments still hold good. The independence of God, and the autonomy of man which Lord Horder demands for the human race is a rebellion and a usurpation which is bound to end in a dreadful catastrophe, not only in this life, but for many unfortunate souls, in hell.

Celibacy

**1169. Why doesn't the Roman Catholic Church allow its priests to marry like the Protestant ministers?**

Speaking as a priest I simply say that we do not want to marry like Protestant ministers. Surely you don't suggest that we ought to marry just because they do. If you are moved by pity for us then it should be your consolation that it is we who are the sufferers, and not your Protestant ministers. But now, why does the Catholic Church exact celibacy whilst Protestant Churches do not? It is not because priests believe marriage to be evil. It is that they may be able to devote themselves more completely to the work of Christ, and the welfare of souls. Christ Himself did not marry, and He said clearly that it was good to renounce marriage, for the kingdom of heaven's sake. And He added, "Let those who can do so, do so." St. Paul also taught that one who remains single for the sake of complete consecration to God makes a better choice than one who chooses marriage. And he said, "I would that all were like myself — unmarried." And he gives as his reason, "He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided." As you like Bible, chapter, and verse, you will find that in 1 Cor. VII. verses 7 and 8, and 32 and 33. If celibacy, as the New Testament teaches, is the higher ideal, from whom could the Church expect that higher ideal if not from her priests? There are many practical advantages also in the Catholic law on this subject; but they are secondary. The main point is as to whether celibacy is right or wrong in itself; and, according to the New Testament, it is not only right, but the better choice.

**1170. Our ministers get married, and have children.**

That is true. But, together with many other ideals, the Protestant reformers threw away the ideal of celibacy, and lost all real understanding of the supreme invitation of Christ to renounce all things, even the consolation of wife and children, in order to follow Him. And there is no reason why the Catholic Church should abandon the ideal because the Protestant Churches have done so. The celibacy of the clergy has been the Christian ideal from the very earliest ages of the Church. When the disciples asked our Lord whether He expected men not to marry, our Lord replied, "Not all men will refrain, but those to whom it is given. He that can do so, let him do so." Protestantism abolished the difficult things, and followed the easier path of the senses rather than the higher road of the spirit. But in the Catholic Church the high ideals of Christ remain to this day. Recently a young priest died, and after his death some notes he had written prior to his ordination were found, and they contained these beautiful words, "I am to be a priest, living for Christ only. I must not only renounce marriage. I renounce all the tenderness women can show, and which gives such charm to the life of a man. All such consolations, so dear to the human

heart, are excluded by my vow. Once the sacrifice is made, not one of those sweetnesses must ever be desired. The life of a priest must be a solitary one — alone with God." If you object to such ideals, and the Catholic standard of celibacy for the priesthood, I will gladly answer any particular difficulties that occur to you. But the fact that Protestant ministers choose to marry, just as other men who have no desire to rise above ordinary levels of human life, is no reason why the Catholic Church should be contented with the same lower standards.

**1171. You seem to canonize virginity.**

St. Paul himself says that the virgin who marries does well, but the virgin who does not marry does better. The context shows, of course, that he intends the renunciation of marriage for the love of Christ, and the resolution to share one's heart with no one save Him. Though we speak highly of Christian marriage, the dignity of marriage which plants the tree of life, does not prevent the higher dignity of the single state. Humanity needs not only fruit; it needs flowers. Some are called to live the life of the soul, and to leave the fruits of earth for the flowers of heaven.

**1172. The celibacy of priests and nuns seems so useless socially.**

Whatever you may think of its results, the practice was advised and exemplified by Christ Himself. But the practice is far from being socially useless. It is most useful to marriage itself, which it tends to purify and ennoble in those called to the married state. It keeps an ideal before our Catholic people which inculcates due reserve and rebukes excess. And it is a remarkable thing that the Church which sanctions Convent life, and priestly celibacy, is the one Church which stands most firmly for the sanctity and stability of Christian marriage. Again, the voluntary renunciation of priests and turns frees them from lower interests, and enables them to devote themselves to higher and more spiritual pursuits. And the more who do this, the greater the social benefit.

**1173. Why should a priest shirk family responsibilities, and lack experience of the needs of ordinary people?**

A priest does not shirk the responsibilities of a family. He gives up the prospect of a personal family, but makes all mankind his family. Had I the obligation to devote myself to a wife and family, I could not give anything like the time I do to all who claim my attention in their spiritual needs. But besides these, and other urgent considerations, the Holy Eucharist and the Mass demand celibacy. Those who have lost the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and who do not understand the Mass, are scarcely likely to appreciate this point. But every Catholic heart understands that such contact with God at the Altar demands reserve, and that virginity is every bit as fitting and suitable to a priest as to Mary, the Mother of Christ. Meantime a priest experiences the needs of the ordinary people, through his spiritual duties towards them; and above all as their adviser and consoler in the Confessional. Few in this world have so wide an experience, and the very abnegation of the priest adds immeasurably to his power.

**1174. Did not the Roman Church make the law of celibacy only in the Thirteenth Century?**

The Apostolic Constitutions, certainly written before the Council of Nice which was held in 325, gives the law that at least no priest could marry after his ordination. A man already married could be ordained — but if a single man were ordained a priest, he must remain single. The first Papal decree on celibacy which we can trace is that of Pope Siricius in 385. The wording of his decree is as follows:

"All of us who are priests are bound by a strict law to dedicate both body and heart to sobriety and chastity by virtue of our ordination." He does not pretend to be making a new law, but quotes an already existent law. Five years later; in 390 the second Council of Carthage used these words. "Previous Councils have decreed that bishops, priests and deacons must be continent and perfectly chaste, as becomes ministers of God. Therefore, as the Apostles have taught, and with them the whole of antiquity, let us also observe chastity." Any priest who offended by attempting to marry was to be degraded and expelled from his office. All this is before the close of the fourth century.

**1175. Was not St. Peter a married man?**

Yes, that is correct. He was a married man when our Lord called him to the Apostolate. But he left his wife, with her consent of course, to follow Christ. Thus in St. Math. XIX., 27, "Peter answering said to Him 'Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee.' And Jesus replied, "Everyone that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My Name's sake shall receive a hundredfold and possess life everlasting."

**1176. Is the ideal of a married clergy as primitive and as Catholic as that of a celibate clergy?**

There never was and there is no Catholic ideal of a married clergy. Celibacy is the Catholic ideal and anything less cannot be the ideal. A married clergy has never been anything more than tolerated, as in cases of necessity when single men who would adopt the ideal were not available. But even here St. Paul gives restrictive legislation, insisting that such married men as were to be chosen, must not have been husbands to more than one wife. I Tim. III., 2, 12. Twice-married men were excluded. Aiming always at the ideal, the Church soon ordered such married men as were ordained to practice continency from the day of their ordination; and finally she ruled out a married clergy altogether as far as the Western Church is concerned. Eastern Churches which have sought union with the Catholic Church and which already had a married clergy, are being led gradually to the ideal of celibacy also.

**1177. An Anglican minister told me that the ideal of a married clergy was just as primitive. There must be something in it.**

There is nothing in it. In fact, it is a self-evident absurdity. A celibate clergy is a non-married clergy. Now when you have two contradictories, married and non-married, one of them will be the ideal, or there's no ideal. If a married clergy is the ideal, then a non-married clergy is not the ideal. If a non-married clergy is the ideal, then a married clergy is not the ideal. Only an Anglican who wants to placate simultaneously High Church advocates of celibacy, and Low Church married ministers could possibly talk nonsense about both being the ideal. I call it nonsense, because if you were asked whether it would be better to go upstairs or downstairs, you would be talking nonsense if you said that it would be better to do both simultaneously. One or the other could be the better thing. But not both. So a married "or" a celibate clergy can be the ideal, but "both" cannot be. It would be better for Anglicans to say straight out that a married clergy is the ideal, and condemn celibacy as a lower standard; or else to say that there is no ideal on this point, and that marriage and celibacy are equally good. But it is suicidal for an Anglican to speak of "the primitive ideal of celibacy," with most of the Anglican clergy married.

**1178. Were the English priests celibates at the time of the Norman invasion and before?**

Yes. The Venerable Bede records the explicit instructions of Pope Gregory the Great; when he sent St. Augustine to convert England. The Pope, insisted that those who took Sacred Orders must renounce marriage. That law of celibacy existed right through the ages in England until abolished by Parliament under Edward VI. when the Church of England accepted Protestant standards from the Continent. Henry

VIII., of course, despite his break with Rome, still insisted on the celibacy of the clergy in the schismatic Anglican Church he created.

**1179 Many people say that the celibacy of the Catholic clergy is opposed to the law of nature, and consequently wrong. How should one reply to them?**

If they are Christians, it should be enough to quote the example and teaching of Christ. Or, if they insist that He, as God, must be excepted in his personal life, you could quote St. Paul, who advised other's to remain as he himself, unmarried. If, however, the objectors are not Christians, you will have to discuss the question from the aspect of purely natural law. You could first ask them, not merely to say that celibacy is opposed to the law of nature, but to prove their position. If you wait for them to do so, the discussion will go no further.

But you could go on yourself to show that celibacy is not opposed to the law of nature.

Firstly, you could point to all those to whom marriage, from one cause or another, is quite impossible. Are they all to be guilty of violating the law of nature?

Secondly you could analyze the supposed law in itself. Some laws directly men in an individual capacity. Others concern them in a social capacity. Now not every individual in society is bound to fulfil general laws of nature for the general welfare of society. For example, it is a law of nature that every living individual must eat if he is to preserve his own life. But the life of the human race is preserved provided sufficient numbers in general marry and beget children. And this general law of nature is not violated by the abstention from marriage by some, whether by necessity, or by voluntary choice. It might be noted that in England there are over two million more women than men. Does the law of nature demand polygamy, or does it sanction the single state in given members of the population?

**1180. Does the Roman Catholic Church think its priests and nuns are inhuman?**

No. You must remember, of course, that no Catholic man or woman can ever be compelled to become a priest or a nun. If Catholics wish to marry, they are quite free to do so. But if they make that choice, they are, not free to become priests and nuns. All that the Church says is this, "There is no obligation to become a priest or a nun. That's a matter of free choice. But if you do become a priest or a nun, you must renounce all thought of marriage, and take a vow of purity and chastity for life." All Catholics know that beforehand; and if they choose such conditions, then it is they themselves who have chosen not to marry. Does it follow that the Church thinks its priests and nuns to be inhuman? No! It is one thing to be inhuman; it is quite another to rise above normal human tendencies and inclinations and to live according to supernatural and spiritual ideals. Those who do not think this possible simply ignore the fact that it is done by thousands; and they quite forget the power of divine grace. One can love God, and spiritual things, so much that one has no desire to indulge natural cravings for human love and affection, or to seek those pleasures of the senses afforded by earthly love making. Such a love of God, and of spiritual things, does not make one inhuman. It merely lifts to a higher than a merely human level.

**1181. Doctors say that it is not possible for man to live alone and remain normal.**

As in any other profession, so in the medical profession there are unscrupulous men who have no conscience, and who do not hesitate to violate the truth in order to say what they think their client would like to hear. But all truly great and honourable medical men denounce such quackery and ignorance. Let me quote some of them, and from various countries. Dr. Toth, professor at Budapest University writes, "It is absolutely untrue that a chaste life even in the least degree is injurious to health. Not a single earnest medical work by an author who would be ready to face a challenge to his writings says so. Not a single medical man of good repute would undertake to prove that any sickness was caused by moral purity."



Dr. Farel, the distinguished psychiatrist of Zurich writes, "I have never come across a psychosis having its source in a chaste life, but have diagnosed countless cases caused by sexual excesses."

Dr. Rossier, a French authority, says, "I assert without reservation that chastity cannot be injurious to health. I warn everyone that other advice by doctors is erroneous and harmful." The Second International Health Congress at Brussels unanimously resolved, "Youth must be taught that not only has chastity no harmful effects on health, but that it is unqualifiedly commendable." The medical faculty of the Norway University gave out the public statement: "That sexual continence is harmful to health is, in our unanimous opinion, utterly false and in direct opposition to all our professional experience. We do not know of any impairment of health which could have its source in an absolutely pure and moral life."

The Italian physiologist, Dr. Mantagezza, says, "Never yet have I seen a disease which originated in a chaste life. By continency the memory becomes keen and enduring, thought vivid and fertile, the will strong, and the character steeled into energy." Eulenberg, professor of psychiatry in Berlin University says, "No one could fall ill, or become affected by nervous ailments merely because of sexual continence. This often-heard allegation I regard just as empty and nonsensical chatter." And he adds that the belief that continency and celibacy are harmful is accepted with alacrity by men of loose morals, and, alas, tacitly endorsed by dishonourable medical men. And he says that this idea does untold harm, encouraging lawless indulgence, and that "against it no protest can be too loud and too frequent."

Max Gruber, professor of medicine at Munich University, writes, "There is not the shadow of evidence that continence is injurious to health. Those doing hard mental or physical work feel at the very fullest exercise of their strength how much continence heightens their ambition and working ability. This was known to the athletes of ancient Greece, and is known to the sportsmen of our day, to research workers, scientists, and creative geniuses." Dr. Paul, of Karlsruhe, says, "No conscientious physician has ever come forward with an opinion that a healthy man should satisfy sexual instinct in order to maintain good health." I have a few dozen more of such quotations from medical authorities. But I have said enough to show that continence and celibacy do not mean abnormality either mentally or physically. And that in any man, whether a Catholic priest or not.

### **1182. Why are Greek Orthodox priests allowed to marry, and not Roman Catholic priests?**

Because the Greek Orthodox Church is a schismatical Church which does not accept the legislation of the Catholic Church. Also it is not able to inspire or exact the same ideals of all its clergy. Those Greek Orthodox priests who belong to Greek monasteries must, of course, adopt the higher ideal of celibacy. But the parochial clergy are not obliged in the Greek Church to rise to the same heights. On the other hand, Catholic priests are not allowed to marry because the Catholic Church insists that her priests give their undivided interest to their spiritual work, that they more closely imitate Christ their Master, who certainly never dreamed of marriage, and that they put into practice the ideal expressed by St. Paul, "I would that all were as myself, unmarried."

### **1183. Has the permission granted by the Synod of Ancyra in 314 A.D. to marry in the East been superseded by any law of the Church since? Does it still operate to allow priests to marry?**

At various times there have been many modifications of the legislation of Ancyra; modifications undertaken by the various Uniate Churches themselves. These churches are gradually leaning towards the complete acceptance of celibacy, just as it prevails in the Western Church. Though the Holy See has not imposed the discipline of the Latin Church upon them, they are gradually imposing it as an obligation upon themselves. At present, the Uniate Churches do not allow marriage after ordination as deacon or priest. If candidates marry before such ordination, they may be ordained. But if they are single when

ordained, they must remain single, In other words, the general law for the Eastern Uniate Churches is that marriage beforehand is not an impediment to ordination as a priest; but ordination as a priest is an impediment to any subsequent marriage. This applies to simple priests only. Bishop's must be chosen from the unmarried only, having observed strict celibacy all through their priestly lives. These are the general principles. There are slight variations in different Uniate Churches which space will not allow me to give in detail. Today the great majority of priests in the Uniate Churches do not avail themselves of the right to marry before ordination. They voluntarily choose to remain single. and being ordained as single men, adopt celibacy as the law of their future lives. The time will certainly come when these Eastern Uniate Churches will wish to have the full discipline of the Latin Church in regard to celibacy extended to them also.

**1184. Were any of the priests of the allied churches married, and living with their wives from 1909 till now, whilst officiating as priests in the Church?**

Yes. As far as the New Testament is concerned, celibacy is advised by the sacred writers as the better thing, but it is not imposed as an obligation. Rome has made it an obligation for all priests of the Latin rite. But the Holy See has not imposed this disciplinary obligation on the Uniate Churches. Their own discipline in this matter has been sanctioned by the Holy See.

**1185. Why does the Pope allow priests of the Uniate Eastern Churches to marry, contrary to the law binding Catholic priests of the Latin rite? Why the distinction?**

The Pope does not allow priests of the Uniate Eastern Churches to marry. Once ordained a priest even in the Uniate Churches, subsequent marriage is forbidden. If a single man is ordained a priest, he must remain single for life. However it is lawful for one who is already married to be ordained a priest in the Uniate Churches, and to continue in the married state. Why this different law for the Uniate Churches? For many reasons. The law of celibacy is the ideal, but it is a matter of ecclesiastical discipline. And disciplinary laws are imposed according to the discretion of those in control of the Church. The Western or European Catholics have ever been subject to Rome, were educated according to right ideals, and naturally accepted the full discipline of the Church. But many of the Uniate Eastern Churches were for long periods separated from Rome by various Eastern heresies, and returned to unity with Rome only after having contracted habits rife amongst Eastern heretics. The Pope insisted that, on returning to the unity of the Catholic Church, they should renounce all heretical elements, and accept everything essential to the Catholic Faith. But in disciplinary matters, he did not desire to impose the full severity of Western regulations suddenly, preferring to lead them gradually to an appreciation of the higher Latin ideals. Provided the Eastern Churches are prepared to accept all the essential things, there is no reason why they should be excluded from the unity of the Church. And granted their submission, it is but reasonable to make allowance for their previous customs, and patiently wait for them to grow into the full discipline of the Church gradually. Of recent years this growth in the direction of a full acceptance of celibacy is most pronounced.

**1186. I would like to ask a few questions about monastic life.**

You are welcome to ask any questions you please concerning any phase of Catholic doctrine or practice.

**1187. Do you deny that monasticism appeals not only as a refuge for the spiritually minded, but also as an escape from the uncertainties of the times for those disinclined to face them?**

It is possible that a man who knew little or nothing of what monastic life demands would think of it as an escape from such troubled prospects. But if he entered for such a reason, it would not be long before he would leave the monastery. If he did not, superiors themselves would give him no option, but would refuse to allow him to make his profession, and would dismiss him as having no vocation for monastic life,

**1188. Is it not a haven for the disconsolate?**

I am afraid not. The disconsolate need diversion, and monastic life is the last place in which to seek diversion. The vow of poverty merits the renunciation of private and personal cash; the vow of chastity excludes consolations of human affection; the vow of obedience curbs the indulgence of one's own sweet will. The discipline and silences from 5 am. until 10 at night. Alternating between work, study, and regular spiritual exercises would develop into weariness and boredom in no time for one who entered without a high spiritual ideal, a strong will and, above all, a happy and bright disposition. Melancholy gloomy, depressed. And disconsolate people should never dream of monastic life. Probably their application to enter would not be considered; and if they did manage to enter, they would not last.

**1189. Does not monasticism provide food and shelter for those indolents who would otherwise have to earn their living?**

No. A man enters a monastery in order to live a spiritual life, renouncing the pleasures and possessions the world can offer. He will enter either in the capacity of a lay-brother, or with the intention of becoming a priest. Every moment of the day is mapped out for each class, whether in manual work or study. I myself was engaged in commercial life when I became Catholic. It is over twenty years now since I entered monastic life; and from experience I can say that I have worked harder and much longer hours than ever I had to do for my boss in commercial life. Subjects who enter monasteries have a long probation before being admitted to permanent vows, and indolent applicants are soon discovered and dismissed as not suitable.

**1190. In the Middle Ages the Church offered the cloistered life to men of culture and genius, leaving ignorant and coarser men to multiply.**

The Catholic Church did not offer the prospect of a cloistered life only in the Middle Ages. From earliest times she has sanctioned celibacy and a single life for the love of Christ. Again, she has opened the doors of monastery and convent to all types. It is a mistake to think that those with little culture or education were denied the privilege. And it is also a mistake to think that all cultured and lofty-minded people entered religion. Plain rough men found a home in the cloister. Intellectual and cultured men more often than not remained in the world. But let us proceed.

**1191. So the ferocious, rough, dull, and stupid were left to breed the Church's potential stock.**

That is not so. Your statement implies that all cultural people entered the cloister, and that none but the rough and stupid remained in the outside world. I have shown you that all types were represented in the cloister whether as cultured priests and theologians or as humble lay-brothers. And all types also remained proportionately in the world. And always they were the few who felt called to the not ordinary life in the religious orders. Normally, and in all classes of society, the average man or woman remained amongst those who marry and are given in marriage.

**1192. Was this policy deliberate? If not, the Church authorities could not have foreseen the results.**

Don't mix up celibacy with any ideas of merely natural policy. The Catholic Church saw an ideal set by Christ and by the Lady Mother of Christ. She discerns the spirit of the Apostles. Arid when God's grace inspired individual Christians with the desire to consecrate themselves entirely to God renouncing earthly affections and interests, she sanctioned their aspirations by instituting the religious orders and cloistered life. Her sanction and encouragement were, of course deliberate. Nor were those in authority fools. They were thinkers. And they did foresee the results. But the results were not as you imagine them to have been. Firstly, many of those who became cultured, refined, and highly endowed with learning, did so through the influence of the monastery they entered. They would not

have done so had they remained in the environment from which they came. And the world benefited by the attainments their vocation alone made possible.

Secondly, if you think that the Catholic sanction of celibacy must have such evil results, experience is against you. Remember that, by the very nature of things, the members of the religious orders, and the clergy of the Catholic Church at any given period must be the children of those who did not adopt celibacy. And if Catholic practice meant that the cream of mankind was entirely swept into the cloister leaving only the dull, stupid, rough, and uncultured to multiply, then a full thousand years of the policy ought to leave the Catholic Church utterly decadent and her present clergy brainless. Each generation should leave what you call her "potential flock" less fitted to produce intelligent subjects for her priesthood. Yet the Church has grown, according to the latest figures to 435 millions; never has she had so many priests; and I venture to say that the Church has never had a higher general standard of culture and learning amongst her clergy than at present.

**1193. Did Christ, at any time prior to His public ministry, live in a monastery?**

No. But He lived according to the conditions that are essential to monastic life by the observance of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Monasteries did not come into existence until long after the time of Christ. In the early Church many fervent Christians, inspired by the example of Christ, and desiring to imitate Him more closely voluntarily renounced this world's goods by choosing a life of poverty, abandoned all thought of human affection and marriage by vowing their lives to God alone in chastity, and tried to practice complete self-renunciation by a spirit of obedience to lawful authorities in the Church. Great numbers went off to live alone in remote places as hermits; and later on, for the sake of mutual edification and discipline, groups vowed to the same type of life began to form communities, and build common dwelling places called monasteries. It is literally true that the monasteries did not make the monks, but the monks made the monasteries. The inspiration of the desire of such complete consecration to Christ, however, was derived from the express invitation He gave to leave all things in order to follow Him, and from the example He Himself set of perfect poverty, chastity, and obedience.

**1194. When and why was the convent system instituted so that nuns could be shut away from the world?**

From Apostolic times individual Christians renounced marriage and worldly interests, devoting themselves to purely spiritual things and the close imitation of Christ. At first they did this in their own homes. Finding it difficult in such surroundings, many of them became hermits, retiring into solitude to give themselves without distraction to prayer and meditation, together with manual work.

In the third century St. Anthony in Egypt grouped a number of such hermits together who agreed to live a community life where all, having similar interests, would be of mutual assistance in serving God. Thus the first beginnings of monastic and convent life arose in the third century insofar as the mere grouping together of pious people is concerned. Why was the system instituted? To enable those drawn to such a life of prayer and virtue by God to find a suitable environment and to have the company and help of others similarly inclined. The nuns are not "shut away" from the outside world. Desiring to renounce the outside world, they leave it. To speak of nuns being shut away from the world suggests that it is against their will. If you decided to leave New Zealand in order to live in Australia, would you like people to ask you why you were banished from New Zealand?

Euthanasia

**1195. What constitutes a vocation to convent life?**

The very essence of convent life lies in the total consecration of themselves to God on the part of those who enter upon it. Now it is the law that, to attach ourselves to God, we must detach ourselves from things less than God. It is the rule that the more people love created things the less they will love God. The human heart is so limited that to concentrate its interest upon one object is to divert its interest from others. Now there are three quite natural loves which tend to divert us from the supernatural love of God. There is the love of earthly goods; the love of fellow human beings, and the love of self. To leave her soul free from such entanglements, therefore, the nun renounces earthly goods by the vow of poverty; all the human affections and passionate attachments of earthly love by the vow of chastity; all love of self and devotedness to self-interest by the vow of obedience. But this liberation of the soul is only that the soul may give itself entirely to God, and live for Him alone.

A vocation to convent life is therefore a call to abandon earthly interests in property, human affections, and self-will, and to consecrate oneself completely to God, and to a spiritual life.

***1196. How does one know that one has such a vocation?***

One may have a good probable sign by the special influences of God's grace giving a growing interior appreciation of the vanity of all earthly and temporal things, together with an increasing desire to seek holiness and virtue, and to love God alone. But even without this special personal experience, the Church says that any Catholic girl who can comply with the conditions of admission laid down by the rules of convent life may apply for admission provided she believes that she can serve God better in religious life than in a worldly and secular career. Our Lord offered, not a special, but a general invitation to otherwise ordinary people when He said. "If anyone wishes to follow Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me."

So, from her point of view, it really depends on the average Catholic girl herself as to whether she will decide to enter the convent or not. But, of course, a girl must not only be willing to enter a convent. The convent authorities must be willing to accept her. The Superiors always retain the right, therefore, to decide as to who are suitable, and who are unsuitable for admission to their particular order.

**1197. Poor innocent nuns should not be kept cooped up in convents, entering without knowing what is before them.**

It would be wrong to lock up innocent women in convents against their will and also if they did not know what was before them. But that is not the case with convents. Every girl in the convent has begged the sisters to allow her to enter with them. Every girl who is accepted is obliged to undergo a preparatory stage without any vows for some six months, and then another twelve months' novitiate. During those eighteen months without vows, she is told of all the obligations of religious life; she follows the rule, and if she finds it too hard, is free to leave at any time without notice. At the end of the eighteen months she is asked whether she would like to go, or make her vows and stay. If she says she wants to stay, she is allowed to take vows for three years only. At the end of three years those vows expire and she is perfectly free to say she has had enough.

But the best thing you could do would be to call at any convent, ask to see one of the sisters, and have a talk with her.

**1198. Different non-Catholics have asked me why nuns wear a ring on the marriage finger.**

The ring, as an unbroken circle, has ever been the symbol of unbroken fidelity. When a woman marries, the wedding ring signifies that she has vowed absolute and permanent fidelity to her husband. Now the nun also vows absolute and permanent fidelity, but not to any merely human being. She rises above all earthly planes, and consecrates herself entirely to God in a spiritual union of soul with Him. And for the purposes of this union. she follows the advice of Christ by renouncing earthly goods, earthly affections, and self will.

So she vows absolute and permanent fidelity to a spirit of poverty and detachment; to the most perfect purity and chastity; and to obedience to lawful superiors according to the will of God. These vows of absolute and permanent fidelity are symbolized by the ring in her vocation, just as fidelity is symbolized by the ring in marriage. The fidelity should be the same in both cases, however different may be the two states in life.

### **1199. Who puts the ring on the nun's finger?**

Whoever presides at the ceremony of Profession. The Church is the visible representative of Christ in this world, and those who desire an official sanction of their consecration to Him must apply to the Church. When the time comes for her religious profession, therefore, the nun assists at Mass, receives Holy Communion, makes her vows, and receives from the bishop the ring as a symbol of fidelity to her consecration to Christ.

### **1200. What is the life, and work of a nun?**

Her life is one of consecration to God by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Covetousness, lust, and pride are three of the greatest forces dragging human beings from God. The soul that would approach God must learn to detach itself from earthly goods, and affections, and self will. A Catholic girl who is spiritually inclined, and whose love of God steadily develops under the influence of divine grace, may quite well feel the desire to consecrate herself entirely to God, and permanently, by entering the convent, and binding herself by vows not to seek earthly possessions, sensual pleasures, or the proud independence which multitudes prize. As a nun, therefore, she is vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience; and within the convent finds her life regulated by the rule directing her daily activities from 5 a. m. until 10 p. m. That rule consists of alternating prayer, work, and community recreations. The work of a nun will depend upon the particular order she enters. It may consist in teaching duties, or in nursing, or in the care of orphanages, or in the management of charitable institutions for the deaf and dumb, or for incurable invalids, or for the aged; or again, they may go off to labour in the foreign missions; in fact their duties may consist in almost any of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy.

### **1201. Nuns could do far more for humanity out amongst people than shut away in convents.**

Firstly, the vast majority of nuns are engaged in teaching duties, nursing, caring for orphans, the aged, and the dying. In these activities they do an immense work for the human race. The time left over from these duties they give to prayer and the service of God, instead of giving their leisure time to dances, theatres, worldly amusements and self-satisfaction. There are some orders, very few, which devote themselves almost wholly to prayer and the worship of God.

Now, if we are Christians, we believe in prayer. St. James says "Pray for one another that you may be saved." Indeed prayer is one of the greatest forces in this world. Tennyson rightly said "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Think of Abraham's prayer for Sodom and how God heard his constant plea for mercy on easier conditions. The Bible teems with instances, and I maintain that you can scarcely do a human being a greater service than to pray sincerely for him. Our Lord Himself gives the instance of Martha and Mary, Martha very busy attending to temporal needs, and complaining that Mary was not helping. Yet Jesus said "Martha, thou art troubled about many things, yet Mary hath chosen the better part."

No. I do not think a nun could do more for the human race than by praying for those fellow human beings who are so forgetful of prayer themselves.

### **1202. I cannot find anywhere in Scripture where Christ instituted the position of nuns.**

It is quite certain that Christ sanctioned the life adopted by nuns. You will admit that He taught the necessity of prayer and of works of mercy. You cannot say that the agreement of the nuns to dwell together in community is opposed to the will of Christ. Two points only could worry you. The first is, whether it is right for a girl to renounce marriage in order to give herself entirely to heavenly aspirations and spiritual things; and secondly, whether it is right for her to abandon even her own father and mother and home in order to do so. Now Christ commended both these things. In St. Math. XIX., 12, Jesus says that there are some who render marriage impossible to themselves for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. And He adds, "Let him who can do this, do it," declaring that it is a gift of God to them which enables them to do it. In the same chapter, V., 29, Christ says, "Everyone that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, etc., for My name's sake shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting." Now the nuns have made marriage impossible to themselves by vow, and have left home, brethren, sisters, father and mother for the love of Christ. And He promises them a blessing for doing so.

### **1203. Which is the nobler state in life, religious life as a nun, or marriage?**

One who chooses the religious life by entering the convent chooses a higher state in life than another who chooses marriage. This is evident from both the conduct and teaching of Jesus and of the Apostles. Jesus was born of a Virgin Mother, and Himself abstained from marriage. The precursor, St. John the Baptist, also refrained from contracting marriage. St. Paul says clearly. "The unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband." 1 Cor. VII., 34. St. Paul, therefore, counsels virginity and abstention from marriage for spiritual reasons as being the nobler and loftier state. Jesus Himself said, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast, give to the poor, and come, follow Me." One who enters religious life renounces this world's goods by a vow of poverty; bodily pleasures by the vow of chastity; and proud independence by the vow of obedience. The soul is nobler than the body, and a life devoted to the good of the soul is nobler than a life which at least includes much attention to bodily interests. Human beings are like the Angels in their souls, but like the animals in their bodies. And that state which seeks affinity with the Angels rather than with inferior animals is certainly the loftier. As I have said, however, apart from these reasons, it is clear from Scripture that the state of virginity for the love of God is better than marriage, and the one who chooses religious life rather than marriage makes the higher choice.

Euthanasia

### **1204. Does not the Catholic Church condemn euthanasia?**

Yes. Deliberately to terminate life either because of sickness or of old age is murder, and a violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," by whatever high-sounding names the process may be called.

### **1205. Is not Sir Thomas More a canonized Saint in the Catholic Church?**

He is.

### **1206. Then why did he advocate euthanasia in his book Utopia?**

He did not do so. Sir Thomas More did not believe in Utopia, nor for a moment did he intend it as an expression of his own ideals. To think that is to misjudge him, and to misapprehend the purpose of his work. The book was a rebuke to his own age. In it he describes an imaginary country which had no knowledge of the Christian religion. He sets down just what he thinks non-Christians would do at their very best. And he agrees that, if his Utopians could achieve such a peaceful and progressive society without the help of the Christian religion, what might not be achieved if people with the Catholic Faith would but seek first the kingdom of God and His justice! Naturally, in describing how a people not yet Christian would behave in this direction or that, Sir Thomas More introduced many manners and customs, including the idea of euthanasia, which were calculated to give a sense of reality to his non-Christian Utopia. It is altogether unjust to quote Sir Thomas More himself as favoring a custom he attributes to a society precisely because it is unchristian. In fact, his words are a condemnation of the un-Christian ideals of those modern people who seek to introduce euthanasia. For they are doing the very thing Sir Thomas More predicted that an un-Christian people would do.

**1207. Why cannot a fellow human being, or the state, put a man out of his agony if he meets with a most painful accident, and has no chance of living more than a few hours?**

Because God the Creator, Author of life and death, has refused permission to human beings in this matter. God has said, "Thou shalt not kill." He did not add, "Except when people are suffering and have no hope of recovery." Men may do their best to relieve human suffering and to deaden pain, but they may not take life where God has given them no authority to do so. Apart from this, we must remember that human judgment is often astray in its predictions of death, and the most unlikely recoveries are a commonplace. Many a man is alive today, and glad to be alive, who would have been put to death by mistake, if the law allowed men to destroy those they thought unable to recover. Also, despite all sufferings, the last few hours of which you would deprive an afflicted man could easily be the most precious in his life. Medical men exist to save life, not to destroy it, and they must do their utmost in all lawful ways to save life as long as it exists in the patient.

**1208. In commenting upon the killing of an imbecile child by its mother, a Sydney Protestant clergyman said that the only law she broke was the law of the land, and that he hoped to see the taking of life under such circumstances rendered legal. What is your version?**

The doctrine advocated is dreadful. To kill an imbecile child, or any other innocent child, violates not only the law of the land, but also the direct law of God. And if civil law allowed it, civil law would be opposed to God's law.

In Exodus XXIII., 7, God says, "The innocent and the just thou shalt not kill." Of what crime has an imbecile child been guilty? God alone is the Author of life and death, and no one has the right to deprive another of life unless by a power delegated by God. God does delegate His power to civil authorities in the case of malefactors. But never has He left it to the discretion of private individuals.

The mother in question violated the law of God. How far she was excused from guilt by her lack of knowledge, or by mental strain and temporary insanity, I do not know. But, in itself, the deliberate killing of an imbecile child is murder, even according to the law of God. The parson's hope to see the taking of life under such circumstances rendered legal is one which must never be realized. He has spoken foolishly. Who is to decide when circumstances are favorable? What degree of imbecility is required? Is the murder of unwanted children to go by with impunity on the plea that the murderer thought that perhaps the child would have grown up an imbecile?

When God forbade the taking of innocent human life, He foresaw all possible contingencies. Yet He made His law absolute. He never added "Unless one be an imbecile," or "Unless you think it expedient." He reserves to Himself the right over life and death; and private individuals who, for any reason whatever, take innocent human life, usurp an authority and jurisdiction proper to God, and belonging to no one else. And it is gravely sinful to do that.

**1209. The "Telegraph" recently gave the opinions of several Protestant clergymen on suicide in order to escape pain.**

One justified it straight out. Another hesitantly gave it as his personal opinion that it would be lawful. A third said he could not make up his mind. A fourth thought it irrational. The fifth said that it seems to be against God's law. It is all typical of the very indefinite guidance offered by Protestant Churches where moral problems are concerned. Every Catholic priest would tell you quite clearly that such suicide is definitely forbidden by God. It is a violation of God's supreme dominion over human life. Man is not independent of God, to do with himself, or to do away with himself, as he pleases.

**1210. Reverend Macaulay said that his personal opinion was that he would have the right to take his own life in severe suffering.**

He would find it very difficult to give any foundation for that opinion. He admits that he has not the right normally. Does the advent of pain transfer to him rights which are proper to God? When and where did God say so? And what kind of pain, and what degree of pain is required for this sudden acquisition of dominative rights over the gift of life?

**1211. He said that it seems criminal for a man to be allowed to suffer pain when there is absolutely no hope of recovery.**



To be a criminal, one must be guilty of a crime; and to be guilty of crime, one must break a law. What law does one break by not committing suicide, or by not killing fellow human beings in pain? Again, Almighty God, who could end the life of sufferers by an act of His Will, permits them to live on. Is God to be branded as a criminal? And again I ask, what kind of pain justifies suicide? Physical pain only? Why arbitrarily exclude pain arising from anxiety, worry, disappointment, poverty, starvation-in fact, from any of the ills of life. Where will he draw the line, and why? And does he, a Christian minister, see no benefit in pain as an expiation of sin; as a lesson in detachment from the wealth, and pleasure, and glory of this world; as a special resemblance with a crucified Master; as a source of merit and eternal happiness-for if "we suffer with Christ, so also shall we be glorified with Him." Pain and suffering have made the characters of thousands. When Job was ruined and bankrupt and covered with ulcers, did he take refuge in suicide? The Reverend Macaulay's judgment is reminiscent of Greek pagan philosophy, not of Sacred Scripture and of Christianity.

**1212. Whilst men of standing are very hesitant to express an opinion on this subject, they are not so squeamish about capital punishment.**

The Catholic Church is the only teaching body in this world with any standing where interpretations of God's law are concerned; and she is not in the least hesitant. Suicide to escape pain is absolutely forbidden by God, and is gravely sinful. Do you want to inflict "capital punishment" on innocent sufferers? Is affliction a crime? Cannot you see a difference between a criminal and a cripple? Ought we "not" to be squeamish about treating a cripple as we would a criminal?

**1213. Whilst I regard life as sacred, I cannot understand why raving lunatics and sufferers from painful and incurable diseases are kept alive deliberately.**

If you understood why you regard life as sacred, you would understand why we may not deprive innocent people of life. When you speak of their being "kept alive deliberately," you go further than merely saying that it is lawful to kill them. You suggest that it is sinful and criminal not to kill them. In that case you would be guilty of sin before God every time you meet an incurable sufferer, and neglect to strangle him!

**1214. When we think of what a tremendous cost to the state these people are, we cannot but advocate that they be humanely relieved of further suffering.**

In other words, they should be gently but firmly murdered, though guilty of no crime. The reference to the "tremendous cost to the State" is a pity. It spoils the thought that the sufferings of the poor lunatics are to be our only consideration. We are not asking the lunatics whether they want to die. We are asking other citizens whether they ought to be killed. And our lofty unselfishness seems to be called into question when, with the one breath, we suggest that the mentally afflicted be relieved of their sufferings, and that we be relieved of the taxation necessary to keep them. But enough. Suicide, and the killing off of those whose only fault is that they are afflicted, are both directly opposed to the law of God. And the Catholic Church will never hesitate to say so.

**1215. It is interesting to compare with this the opinion of a standard Roman Catholic authority. In their "Handbook of Moral Theology," Antony Koch and Arthur Preuss express their judgment as follows: "To hasten death artificially by the employment of anesthetics when all hope of recovery is gone can be regarded as permissible only if the drugs employed for this purpose do not entirely deprive the sufferer of consciousness. No man should be robbed of the capacity of acquiring merit in the hour of death."**

That isolated quotation does not do justice to the authorities quoted. Immediately prior to those words, the authors say that it is never lawful directly to cause death. To relieve severe pain, it is lawful to use anesthetics, even though indirectly they may result in the hastening of death. But the intention is to relieve pain. There is no intention to hasten death. This is the famous question as to the morality of an action from which we foresee two results, one good, and one evil. In certain cases such an action is lawful provided we intend only the good result, and that the permitted yet unintended evil result does not exceed in gravity the good to be obtained.

The authors quoted are dealing with the permitted, yet unintended, hastening of death as a secondary result of anesthetics intended to relieve pain. And they declare that the gravity of the evil would outweigh the good to be obtained, if the drugs entirely deprived the sufferer of consciousness.

Now this passage has nothing to do with euthanasia, and cannot be quoted in support of euthanasia. Euthanasia directly intends to kill a patient as a means towards the relief from pain. It intends an evil means towards the securing of a temporal good. In other words, it adopts the evil axiom that the end justifies the means, even though those means be murder. But where euthanasia intends to kill the patient, the Catholic intends only to relieve pain, does not intend to kill the patient, and restricts even the diminution of vitality by saying that, whilst sensitiveness to pain is deadened to some extent, the patient must not be entirely deprived of consciousness and the power of acquiring merit; or, if necessary, of interior conversion by a responsible act of contrition for sin.

#### Vivisection

**1216. I would like you to comment on the enclosed letter, protesting against the conferring of the Cardinal Newman Foundation Prize upon Dr. Alexis Carrel for the invention of the mechanical, artificial heart,**

I will deal with it from the Catholic viewpoint in due course.

**1217. The letter quotes Cardinal Newman's opposition to vivisection, and expresses astonishment that his name could be associated with Dr. Carrel who specializes in vivisection.**

Wrong use has been made of Cardinal Newman's words through misunderstanding, as I shall show later. Also, the protest does not do justice to Dr. Carrel.

**1218. I wish to know how Cardinal Newman's words are viewed by the modern Catholic Church.**

His words are quite in keeping with ordinary Catholic teaching, and I myself subscribe to all that he says. But I deny that the passage quoted can be taken as a condemnation of vivisection with reasonable safeguards against unnecessary cruelty.

**1219. Do modern Catholics intend to protest against wrongdoing, and cruelty, and exploitation of public funds on false pretences in the name of cancer research?**

The Catholic Church, now as always, protests against wrongdoing and any form of wanton cruelty. But we cannot protest against cancer research, and we do not admit that such research is wrong, nor that it involves an exploitation of public funds on false pretences.

**1220. I am very strongly inclined to join your Church.**

It is very important that you ask yourself why. It is possible that you have motives which incline you towards the Catholic\* religion, yet would not in the least justify you in becoming a Catholic. Do not imagine that I want to repel you from the Catholic Church. I would do all possible to bring you to it. But if people want to become Catholics, they must do so, not on their own terms, but with a full acceptance of all that the Church herself demands of us in the name of God. In other words, one who wants to become a Catholic must first believe wholeheartedly in the Catholic Church and all that she teaches. And lurking suspicions that she might be wrong in this or that point of her dogmatic teaching would be a sure sign that one had not received the gift of Catholic faith, and that one was certainly not yet in a position to become a Catholic.

**1221. I can't quite believe in the doctrine of an eternal hell, however.**

Then you certainly have not quite arrived at the stage in which you could become a Catholic. You have to make up your mind as to whether you will accept the Catholic Church as your guide as to what is or is not the teaching of Christianity, or whether your own ideas are more reliable than her official teachings. If you decide in favor of your own ideas, then you cannot become a Catholic.

**1222. Also I can't understand why Catholics don't help more to prevent cruelty to animals.**

That has no bearing on the question as to whether the Catholic Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ, or not. The Catholic Church, of course, condemns as sinful all wanton cruelty to animals. If any Catholics are guilty of such wanton cruelty, then they sin in that matter, just as people sin in other matters. But that

would be no reason for not joining the Catholic Church, which condemns such conduct. At the same time, whilst the Church condemns wanton cruelty to animals, she places no obligation on Catholics to take a special interest in societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals rather than in other good causes. And your own particular interest in this matter should not make you ready to condemn others who do not share your views of its importance, but who devote their attention to other aspects of welfare work in this world.

**1223. There is a growing love for animals, and also a hatred of hurting anything or anybody, so that people don't like the thought of hell even for their enemies.**

No Christian is allowed to like the thought of hell even for his enemies. But that does not justify us in denying the existence of hell and rejecting belief in the veracity of Christ. The growing love for animals, of which you speak, and the hatred of hurting anything or anybody, are quite all right within due limits. But they can easily become excessive and distorted tendencies due to a loss of respect for the dignity of man, and to the growth of effeminacy and degeneration which are destructive of the fortitude and courage required for true manhood.

**1224. We protest against giving the Newman Foundation Prize to Dr. Carrel for his invention of the mechanical, artificial heart, because Dr. Carrel has devoted himself to vivisection in the interests of science and of suffering mankind.**

You are free to hold your own opinion on that subject. But I do not think your protest justified, nor do I think that you advance any sound reasons for your views.

**1225. If Cardinal Newman were alive, he doubtlessly would have refused to recognize with a prize the "inventions" and "scientific results" of Dr. Carrel.**

I do not think that true.

**1226. The noble-hearted Cardinal, as a true Christian, was firmly opposed to vivisection.**

He was opposed to any abuses in the name even of scientific vivisection. But with due moderation and safeguards, he would not have opposed necessary investigations by experiment on living animals.

**1227. Cardinal Newman said: "Does it not make us shudder to hear tell of cruelties exercised on brute animals, or to read them in some chance publication we take up? At one time it is the wanton deeds of barbarous and angry owners, who ill-treat their cattle and beasts of burden; and at another it is the cold-blooded and calculating act of men of science who make experiments on brute animals, perhaps merely from a sort of curiosity, I do not like to go into particulars, for many reasons, but one of those instances which we read of as happening in this day, and which seems more shocking than the rest, is when the poor dumb victim is fastened against the wall, pierced, gashed, and so left to linger out its life. I am not using these distressing words for nothing. What is it that moves our very heart, and sickens us so much as cruelty shown to poor brutes? I suppose this first, that they have done no harm; next that they have no power of resistance. It is the cowardice and the tyranny of which they are the victims which make their sufferings so especially touching."**

I agree with all that Cardinal Newman has there said. But the whole passage is not more than a condemnation of wanton cruelty, and abuses by excess on the part of vivisectionists, above all when the motive is mere curiosity. But Cardinal Newman would not have condemned vivisection undertaken with all possible safeguards against unnecessary pain, when the definite object in view was the discovering of something truly beneficial to humanity, and which might alleviate untold human suffering. Thus, when preaching in the University of Ireland, he said: "We have no duties towards the brute creation; there is no relation of justice between them and us. Of course, we are bound not to treat them ill, for cruelty is an offence against that holy Law which our Maker has written on our hearts. But they can claim nothing at our hands; into our hands they are absolutely delivered. We may use them, we may destroy them at our pleasure, not our wanton pleasure, but still for our own ends, for our own benefit or satisfaction, provided we can give a rational account of what we do."

Those words of Cardinal Newman would certainly sanction vivisection, with due precautions, were there the remotest chance of discovering the causes and cure of cancer, and thus deliver humanity from that scourge.

Again, in his lectures on the Present Position of Protestants in England, Cardinal Newman stressed the necessity of being guided by principles. And he used this illustration:

"Various benevolent persons have exerted themselves in favor of the brute creation, which endures so much wanton suffering at the hands of barbarous owners. But when these good people made excessive demands, men laughed at them, and would not condescend to reason with them. But they had reasons, and these reasons will be found traceable up to this First Principle, that the Creator has placed inferior animals absolutely in our hands, that we have no duties to them, and that there is as little sin (except accidentally) in taking away a brute's life as in plucking a flower or eating an orange. This being taken for granted, all questions are in their substance solved, and only accidental difficulties remain."

So speaks Cardinal Newman. In his view, vivisection would be accidentally wrong, if due precautions were not used to prevent unnecessary pain, and if no good purpose were being served in the experimental operations.

**1228. The Newman Foundation Prize for Dr. Carrel would be treason to the Foundation, a stain on the venerable name of Newman.**

You have misinterpreted the mind of Cardinal Newman with whose writings you cannot be very familiar.

**1229. Dr. Carrel should have tactfully refused the prize, knowing the late Cardinal's rejection of vivisection.**

Cardinal Newman did not reject vivisection. He condemned abuses and excessive cruelties, as we all do.

**1230. All who disavow vivisection from the moral Christian point of view as well as the medical, should wipe out this stain in our culture, and see that every vivisectionist is called to account as a criminal.**

Neither medical principles nor the Christian moral law forbid vivisection; nor is it a stain in our culture. To avoid useless animal suffering, of course, the law should insist that experiments should be reasonably necessary, that anaesthetics should be employed, and that operations should take place only under the supervision of appointed officials.

**1231. Either the vivisectionist does not know what he is doing, and should be in a lunatic asylum; or he does know, and should be sent to gaol as a criminal.**

You have let your heart run away with your head. It is possible for a vivisectionist to be neither mad nor bad, but quite a good man bent on the service, and a most valuable service, of his fellow human beings.

**1232. Vivisection is a diabolic, satanic crime, which can only be committed by a man who has no heart and does not know the great commandment of love.**

That is so absurd and extravagant that it does not deserve comment

**1233. People would stone the vivisectionists if they saw those torturers at their monstrous experiments on living animals.**

That is sheer emotionalism. Not a word in that sentence has been dictated by reason. If some poor aboriginal went into a modern operating theatre and saw a surgeon plunge his knife into his son, he might be excused for slaughtering the surgeon, knowing nothing of the boy's unconsciousness of pain, and of the sheer necessity of the operation. And many a vital operation which is successful in saving human life has been made possible only by necessary experiments on living animals, and observance of effects on living tissue. The frantic panic of a primitive aboriginal with no understanding of what is being done may be excusable; but not such absurd exaggerations from an educated man.

**1234. Dr. Carrel especially has made terribly cruel experiments on dogs.**

Dr. Carrel has always taken every scientific precaution to prevent unnecessary pain, and has always had a reasonable motive for all his experiments. He could not in any way be accused of wanton cruelty.

**1235. Such protests were made by the Anti-vivisectionists of America in reference to the Cardinal Newman Prize awarded to Dr. Alexis Carrel, vivisector.**

They would have been better advised not to have made such a protest at all. It is one thing to condemn wanton cruelty to animals, as I myself do with the utmost vigor. But it is quite another thing to go to the other extreme and condemn as criminal a perfectly lawful field of medical and surgical investigation without any qualification, and no allowance for the needs of humanity and the due preservation of animals employed from unnecessary suffering.

**1236. I thoroughly appreciate your frankness and sincerity, but I cannot agree with your conclusions,**

I said that, if human welfare can be benefited by experimental operations on live animals, then such operations are lawful provided due measures are taken by the use of anaesthetics to preserve the animals from unnecessary pain. And undoubtedly by observations of the reactions of living tissue in animals, many surgical operations on human beings have been rendered safe and certain. Also the factors contributing to certain diseases, and successful methods of treating those diseases, have been discovered by the study of the organs of living animals.

**1237. It would seem, from your replies, that you are against wanton cruelty.**

I am, and most strongly. Cruelty for the sake of being cruel is a sin against God and one's own human nature. And God will certainly punish such sins.

**1238. Yet you would condone cruel experiments upon the weaker race if you believed they would benefit the stronger race.**

Your reference to the "weaker race" and the "stronger race" is a bit of emotional special pleading which may do credit to your heart, but which confuses your head. It is not a question of relative strength or weakness. After all, a man is weaker than an elephant from the physical point of view. What I do believe, and what every reasonable person believes is that the animal world is meant by God for the service of mankind. And as animals may lawfully be killed for the benefit of man by providing meat for his table, so they can be used for the benefit of his health and well-being by providing information necessary for surgical science. But, in this latter case, wanton cruelty must be avoided; and any unavoidable pain must be reduced to the minimum by all possible precaution and care.

**1239. This seems totally contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.**

There is nothing in the Gospels, either explicitly or implicitly, against the principles I have stated.

**1240. For instance, if Christ, the Mighty Prince of Peace, could sacrifice Himself for erring mankind, surely we in turn should be willing to suffer for our weaker fellow creatures, instead of trying to "have it both ways."**

The sufferings and death of Christ for the redemption of the immortal and spiritual souls of men do not provide an analogy imposing similar sacrifice of man for brute creation. I hope that, by your reference to our "weaker fellow creatures," you are not thinking to elevate irrational creatures to the human level, or to lower human dignity to the animal level. The argument you adduce, too, admits of a retort. If the human race is so precious in the sight of God that the very sufferings of Christ on the cross were not too much for its welfare, then that the lesser sufferings of brute creation should also contribute to humanity's welfare is not repugnant. But do you really mean that human beings should be willing to suffer for brute creation? It is lawful to kill a sheep to provide food for men. Would you agree that it is lawful to kill a man to provide food for the animals in the zoo? Or, again, if a wild beast attacked your own mother, and the only way you could save your mother was by shooting or maiming the wild beast, would you quote the Gospels and say, "Christ died that we might live, so mother should be willing to suffer also for lesser fellow creatures?"

In the same way, though without the idea of aggression, if a certain operation killed a dozen rats before the surgeon arrived at the degree of skill necessary to save your mother's life, would you grudge your mother her life through an exaggerated pity for the rats?

**1241. What is ethically wrong cannot be scientifically right.**

That is true. But your assumption that vivisection with proper safeguards against unnecessary and excessive pain is ethically wrong remains unproved.

**1242. I would like to know the date of Cardinal Newman's statement that we have no duties towards animals. Our beliefs alter as we grow in years and experience.**

Cardinal Newman's statement was made in 1851, almost forty years before his death. But to save you possible efforts to discover his later mind on the subject, which would involve some research, I can assure you that he never changed his views on that point. It is the universal teaching of Catholic philosophy, taught in every Catholic seminary and university throughout the world that animals have no moral rights vested in themselves which impose duties on human beings towards them. Of course we have a duty towards God and to our own human dignity to treat animals kindly, and to spare them unnecessary suffering. Wanton cruelty is, therefore, a sin. But the welfare of man, whom God intended to benefit by the use of lower creatures, justifies as necessary the minimum amount of unavoidable pain involved in such use of animal creation.

**1243. God is love, and our Savior said that God noted the fall of a sparrow. St. Francis of Assisi loved animals, I believe.**

St. Francis of Assisi loved every creature of God, as all who love God should do. Meantime you are wise in leaving the problem of the ultimate welfare of animals to God. But when you speak of our Savior's teaching that God notes even the fall of a sparrow, do not read into that more than He meant. Jesus is our Savior, not the Savior of animals; and in the passage you quote He was merely bringing out the providence of God. As a matter of fact, the strong contrast He makes is that, if God has such care for creatures who do not matter so very much, far greater is His interest in those who do indeed matter, human beings whose souls are made in the very image and likeness of God.

**1244. May it not be that animals do not need saving? It is only man with his passions and dangerous temptations who needs saving.**

It is quite certain that animals do not need saving from any eternal damnation. Animals lack moral responsibility, lacking reason and free will. And moral responsibility alone could warrant any such penalty as hell and eternal loss.

Man needs saving, not precisely because of his passions and dangerous temptations, but because the whole human race fell from God's grace and friendship by the sin of our first parents, and because men have sinned personally and actually by yielding to their passions and temptations. The Son of God, therefore, died for us men and for our salvation. Whatever God's provision for animals, they do not enter into the redemptive plan save indirectly, insofar as men sin by their misuse of lower creatures and deprive themselves of grace and virtue.

**1245. I always include among my prayers one for the animals.**

It would be better to pray for those human beings who ill-treat animals, that they may desist from doing so. You would thus be praying for those who are morally responsible for their cruelty, and for the welfare of animals at the same time. The prayer, "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven," is a prayer not only for men that they do God's Will, but that they may do so in all the relations with other things which life involves, even in their relations towards dumb creatures. Your attitude towards animals seems to me to savor of a sentimental exaggeration. Far more important is the saving of human souls, and there are thousands of them in real danger of eternal suffering, a fate impossible to conceive for animals. If you have any time to spare for prayer, devote it to the needs of those human souls for whom Christ died, rather than to animals, for which Christ did not die, and which belong to a sphere of existence quite other than that proper to mankind.

**1246. British countries have societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Have any of the Mediterranean Roman Catholic countries a society of that nature?**

Yes. There are Italian, French, and Spanish societies for the protection of animals. But such societies do not create the ideal of kindness to animals. The ideal prompts the formation of such societies. And the ideal has ever prevailed in Catholic doctrine. Lecky, the Rationalist, in his "History of European Morals," says that the influence of the Monks in the Middle Ages "represents one of the most striking efforts made in Christendom to inculcate a feeling of kindness and pity towards the brute creation." Centuries before any R.S.P.C.A. was thought of, we notice a St. Francis of Assisi picking up a worm on the footpath, and saying, "Brother worm, you would have been trodden upon had you stayed where you were." The Catholic tradition is one of kindness to animals. If men have not been kind to animals, they have violated the Catholic tradition. But surely you will blame evil men, and not the Church for that.

**1247. A man is charged with murder, and is being defended by a Catholic lawyer.**

Such is the setting you give for your questions. And in those questions you ask concerning the moral obligations of the lawyer. But there is no need to suppose that the lawyer is a Catholic, unless you believe that a Catholic is expected to be faithful to natural moral obligations more than others. And before I go on, I must point out one other thing. We must divide legal processes into civil causes, and criminal causes. The moral obligations of a lawyer will differ according to the nature of the cause in question. In a civil cause, where two people are engaged in litigation over their supposed rights, a lawyer cannot in conscience defend the case of one whose claim he knows to be quite unjust. If "A" wants to sue "B" for \$1,000, and the lawyer consulted knows that "A" has no case in any just sense of the word, the lawyer may not undertake "A's" case. If he wins the case he is unjustly cooperating in the injury done to "B." If he loses, he unjustly robs "A" of all the useless expenses his advice has entailed. But the case you give is not a "civil," but a "criminal" cause. It is not one man in litigation against another. It is the State against one charged with crime. And here the position, from the lawyer's point of view, is very different. Now for your suppositions.

**1248. Supposing the man tells the lawyer that he is guilty, yet asks him to defend him and try to secure his acquittal. Is the lawyer justified in going on with the case and saying nothing?**

Yes. Whatever the criminal may plead in court, his advocate may plead. For it is really the criminal pleading through his advocate. And every criminal, even knowing himself guilty, may plead "not guilty" for purposes of law. The burden of proving guilt is on the State; and the State wants to have that responsibility, in order that strict justice may be secure; that there may be no miscarriage of justice; and that no one may suffer from excessive severity at its hands. So much so, that the State will often assign the task of defense to a lawyer, if the criminal is unable to provide one for himself. Though the lawyer in question, even as the criminal, knows that his client is guilty, the verdict must be given by the judge and jury. And not only is the lawyer to avoid pronouncing a verdict; he is not even present as a witness. He is there on behalf of the accused, to force the court and witnesses to prove their case; and to show, if possible, that they have failed to do so.

In his defense of his client, of course, the lawyer is morally forbidden to use any but honest and just means. He may not employ trickery, fraud, false witnesses or documents, or lies of any kind. You may say that he knows his client to be guilty, yet keeps quiet about it. That is not a lie. A lie is to say what is not true. Not to say what is true is quite a different thing. And whilst the lawyer may not say what is not true, he may keep silent about what is true on the particular point of his client's guilt, even as the accused himself is allowed to keep quiet about it and plead "not guilty." Nor is such silence a frustration of justice. It is to safeguard the administration of justice by the State.

**1249. If the client says nothing, hut the lawyer has strong evidence of his guilt from other sources, can the lawyer go on with the case, and say nothing?**

Yes. As I have said, whatever it is lawful for his client to plead, he may plead. And he is there for the defense of his client; not as a witness against him. Of course those from whom the lawyer got evidence of the man's guilt might be called as witnesses. The lawyer's duty then would be to abstract from his own opinion, and do his best to show, if possible, that the evidence given by such witnesses does not amount to strict proof.

**1250. If, instead of saying nothing, the client protests his innocence all along, and will not depart from it, yet the lawyer has strong evidence of his guilt from other sources, may that lawyer go on with the case?**

The same answer still applies. He is morally free to do so. Remember that we are dealing with criminal causes here, and not with civil causes. And keep in mind the principle that what is lawful to the defendant is lawful to his advocate. The accused man has a perfect right to defend himself with the help of the legal knowledge possessed by the lawyer he employs. And the lawyer is not present as judge or witness; nor, for that matter, in any personal or private capacity. He is there to provide the legal knowledge required by his client, a knowledge to which the accused has a perfect right in his efforts to force the law to prove its case before it proceeds to a conviction.

**1251. May a Catholic lawyer plead on behalf of a person who wants to obtain a divorce?**

A Catholic lawyer can, of course, take up the case of a person who is resisting a divorce. But difficulty can arise when he is asked to plead on behalf of one who is seeking a divorce. Much depends upon the circumstances of the case. If a marriage has been declared null and void in the eyes of the Church by the ecclesiastical authorities, and the parties are seeking merely the removal of the effects of civil law, it is quite lawful for a Catholic lawyer to accept the case. The parties are justified in seeking a civil divorce, and, therefore, the Catholic lawyer is justified in co-operating with them. If, however, the marriage is perfectly valid from every point of view, then one of two positions will arise. Either the party seeking the lawyer's services has no intention of attempting a second marriage, and merely wishes to secure civil recognition of a justified separation; or he (or she) intends straight out to get a divorce and remarry.

If a justified separation without remarriage be intended, a Catholic lawyer could assist in the securing of legal freedom. But where the petitioner obviously intends to get a divorce and to remarry, a Catholic lawyer could not take up the case unless his refusal would result in very grave injury to himself; and also unless he were sure that his action would not be the cause of scandal to others. Of course, if these circumstances were present to justify his acceptance of the case, he himself would have to intend only the abrogation of civil obligations, and in no way the proposed subsequent marriage.

**1252. Some weeks ago, in your interesting session, you said that a Catholic lawyer may defend a person he knows to be guilty of wilful murder.**

That is so.

**1253. Later you interpreted the moral inability of a Catholic lawyer to appear for plaintiff in divorce proceedings.**

I said that he could do so, if a justified separation alone were sought, without any intention of remarriage. But if the petitioner obviously intended divorce and remarriage, a Catholic lawyer could not in conscience take up the case, unless there were very grave reasons to excuse him.

**1254. To my way of thinking, these two cases form a moral paradox.**

They do not really do so. I will make this clear in dealing with the points you submit.

**1255. In the murder case, the lawyer must definitely resort to immoral means to secure his client's acquittal.**

In dealing with that matter, I expressly said that the lawyer may not resort to any immoral means. If he cannot secure his client's acquittal without resorting to immoral means, then he cannot secure his client's acquittal. To say that a lawyer is morally justified in defending a murderer whom he knows to be guilty is not to say that he is obliged to secure an acquittal by hook or by crook.

**1256. He must of necessity be guilty of perjury.**

That is not correct. On no account may he be guilty of perjury. If the murderer will be condemned unless the lawyer commits perjury, then the lawyer must allow the client to be condemned.

**1257. I fail to see how he can prove a guilty man innocent without a whole tissue of wilful lies.**

Herein lies the cause of all your difficulties on this point. You wrongly take the position that the lawyer has to prove his guilty client innocent. But he does not undertake to do that at all. His duty really is to force the State to prove him guilty before convicting him. When the State wishes to vindicate its laws, and charges a man with a capital crime against those laws, the burden of proving the man's guilt rests upon the State. Even though the man be guilty in God's sight, the State must prove that guilt to its own satisfaction before convicting him. And unless the State can prove it, the State has no right to inflict its penalties. For if the State could inflict penalties without proof of guilt, there would be fearful miscarriages of justice. Therefore even the State gives a guilty man the right to plead "not guilty"-precisely because he is not guilty in the eyes of the law until the law has proved its case. And the arrested man can plead not guilty either personally or through a lawyer. In other words, the arrested man uses the legal knowledge of the lawyer in the exercise of his right to force the law to prove its case before convicting.



I hope all is now clear. The lawyer does not undertake to prove a guilty man innocent. It is not for him to prove that the man did not commit the crime. But it is for him to watch the State case, and to say to the State, "Unless you prove that he did commit the crime, you cannot punish him." If the matter brought forward is not evidence, he must point that out. If admissible evidence is not conclusive, he must point that out. And if, in the end, he succeeds honestly in showing that the State has not proved its case, he has done his duty to the State, and secured the rights of his client, in preventing a conviction. A lawyer, then, is justified in defending a murderer whom he knows to be guilty. Now let us turn to your remarks about the divorce case.

**1258. The divorce lawyer has recourse to no dishonest means.**

Nor does the lawyer who defends a guilty murderer. So that point lapses.

**1259. His client, seeking the divorce, has a definite legal claim for a dissolution of the marriage.**

The man charged with murder has a definite legal right to plead not guilty. Both lawyers are still on the same footing so far.

**1260. The divorce lawyer is merely marshaling certain facts attested by impartial witnesses.**

The other lawyer is merely sifting the evidence produced by the State, and pointing out every fallacy he can detect in it, proving if he can that it is not conclusive. So far, things are still equal.

**1261. It seems absurd to justify the lawyer defending an immoral person, and to condemn him who upholds the just rights of a perfectly decent claimant.**

You have no right to contrast the guilt of the murderer with the decency of the applicant for divorce. We are dealing with law. Now, although the lawyer knows that his client is guilty of murder, the State does not. The State may suspect it, but the State does not know it until it can prove its case. And, in the eyes of the State, a man is innocent until proved guilty. Therefore, the lawyer who defends the murderer is equally upholding the just rights of his client as the lawyer upholding the claim of the plaintiff for a divorce.

But now comes the question. Granted that the lawyer may defend the murderer, why cannot a lawyer take up the case of perfectly decent claimant for a divorce? [said that, under certain circumstances he can. If the marriage were null and void in itself, the lawyer could assist in getting a civil divorce. So, too, if permanent separation is justified, and separation only be intended.

But if the client is validly married, and intends not only to get a divorce, but to contract another marriage, then the Catholic lawyer cannot co-operate in the evil plan.

"He who puts away his wife and marries another," said Christ, "commits adultery." If a man says to a Catholic lawyer, "I wish to put away my wife and marry another," the Catholic lawyer must refuse to help him, unless very grave reasons excuse such co-operation. Where the lawyer who defends the murderer is not asked to co-operate in any prospective evil, the divorce lawyer is being asked to do so.

**1262. I do not think the lawyer is generally cognizant concerning the client's intention of subsequent marriage.**

That is a matter of opinion. Personally I find it difficult to agree with you. In talking over the case, and one of such domestic intimacy, it is hard to see how

a client could avoid betraying his personal aspirations for the future. However, such speculations are beside the point. For I have restricted the case to that in which the lawyer does know of an intended second marriage. If he does not know, he could be in quite good faith by believing that a justified separation only is intended. When he is cognizant that a second marriage is the object in view, he would sin did he co-operate with the plaintiff, unless grave injury would result to himself.

**1263. I could not appreciate your point in moderating the obligation of the divorce lawyer according to a possible loss of prestige in his practice. His conduct would be either immoral or not.**

The ethical point in question is difficult, but I will try to make it as clear as I can. You say that the lawyer's co-operation would either be immoral or not. But morality of conduct may be measured either from the very nature of the action involved, or from the circumstances surrounding the action.

For example, perjury is always evil in itself, and it can never be lawful to commit perjury. But whilst perjury is always immoral, there are actions which may be immoral or not according to the circumstances.

For example, is it immoral for a grocer to sell a box of matches to a customer? You will say no. But if the customer says that he wants the box of matches to burn down his neighbor's house, would it be immoral to let him have the matches for that purpose? I think you will say yes.

But let us go on. Let us suppose that two men come into the shop. One demands matches for the purpose of burning down a neighbor's property. The other levels a revolver at the grocer's head, and says, "Give him the matches, or I'll blow your brains out." Under those circumstances, would it be immoral on the grocer's part to sell the box of matches? It would not. The grocer would be morally justified in saying, "To sell a box of matches is not an evil action in itself. I myself have no sinful intention of destroying another's property. And certainly I am not obliged to suffer serious injury personally rather than permit these evil men to do what is wrong." Now apply this to the divorce lawyer. It is not an evil thing in itself to ask the civil law to abrogate the effects of civil law. The marriage bond is really unaffected by that.

But if the client wants an abrogation of civil effects in order that he may live with another woman despite God's prohibition, then the lawyer cannot normally cooperate in such a plan. It is equivalent to saying, "I can't let you have the matches for that purpose." But a very grave injury to himself personally could justify him in saying, "To seek an abrogation of civil effects by civil law is not in itself evil. I certainly do not intend that this client should violate God's law as he proposes to do. And I am not obliged to suffer serious injury rather than permit him to do wrong. Normally I could not fulfill his request, but in these circumstances I would be free from guilt." Surely you can appreciate the point now.

It is never lawful to do anything which of its very nature is dishonest and immoral in itself.

But it is lawful at times to do a thing which is all right in itself, yet which will prove to be an occasion of abuse by others. This is lawful provided one has no personal intention of the subsequent evil, and also provided the gravity of the injury to oneself is proportionate to the gravity of the abuse of which others will be guilty.

#### Judges and Divorce

##### **1264. Since Catholics do not believe in divorce, why do Catholic judges grant divorces?**

In reality, they do not.

Firstly, they are not in their position as Catholics, but as judges.

Secondly, it is State authority which grants the divorce, and the judge merely decides whether applicants comply with the conditions laid down by civil law for a civil dissolution of the bond recognized by the State. If the judge is a Catholic, and the applicant is validly married in the sight of God, he does not personally believe that the civil decree of divorce breaks the bond of marriage in the sight of God. He intends merely the withdrawal of State recognition of the marriage and the abolition of civil obligations. He does not believe, and he does not say that the parties are free in conscience and before God to contract a further marriage whilst both parties still live.

##### **1265. Does a Catholic judge who grants a divorce commit a sin?**

The State grants the civil divorce. The Catholic judge who administers the law in the name of the State is not responsible for the law. And he does not sin by declaring that the parties have proved their claim to the decree of divorce permitted by the State. All he intends is the abolition of civil effects due to civil legislation concerning marriages insofar as they are recognized by the State. The validity or the invalidity of such marriages in the eyes of God is not affected by his decision; for this is subject to a legislation higher than that of the State, and over which the Catholic judge knows that he has no jurisdiction.

#### Professional Secrecy

##### **1266. If a doctor knew, under professional secrecy, that a client had been guilty of murder, should he be compelled to give evidence?**

If the doctor has secured a knowledge of the matter only by promising seriously not to betray his patient's secret, then ordinarily the doctor should not be compelled to make it known. The common good demands

that crimes, as a rule, should be detected and punished. But the common good also demands that professional secrecy can be relied upon.

However, in certain circumstances the doctor would be free to speak.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### **The Church in Her Worship**

#### Why Build Churches?

#### **1267. What authority has the Catholic Church from God or from the Bible to justify the erection of Churches as places of worship?**

The authority given her by Christ to regulate all things connected with His religion. Thus Christ said to the Church, "Whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven." He gave to her the power to legislate for all future religious needs. We know that God Himself commanded the Jews to build the Temple at Jerusalem as their chief place of worship. We know, also, that Christ loved and revered that Temple. He taught in it. He called it His Father's House. He was most indignant with those who would desecrate it, and drove from its holy precincts the buyers and sellers who turned it into a market and a den of thieves.

#### **1268. Why do priests build churches?**

Because duties of public worship according to the Christian religion require public places of worship dedicated to God, just as was the case in the Jewish dispensation. Nowhere in the Bible is there the least hint that Christians are dispensed from the duty of public and collective worship, or that the building of churches for the purpose is against the will of Christ.

#### **1269. Why are Catholic Churches constructed so lavishly?**

They are not always lavish. But Catholics believe that nothing can be too good for God, and, therefore, desire that the building consecrated to His worship should be at least as beautiful a one as they can afford to build. Non-Catholics easily outnumber Catholics in this country, and if they are not so lavish where their religion is concerned, they at least refrain from criticizing the generosity of Catholics, as a rule.

#### **1270. Why such grand Churches when Christ was so humble? Our best Churches are worthless compared with our teaching of the glories of heaven.**

Christ did humble Himself, but it is not for us to humble Him. Let us humble ourselves if you like, but our very best is not too good for Christ. Though Christ was so humble, you seem to think that all things must contribute to the glory and welfare of man, as if no God existed. David cried of old, "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy House." We Catholics desire to dedicate to God and to religion the best we have. Our best may fall short of the glory of heaven. But we are not in heaven; we are in this world. And the fact that the glory of heaven surpasses any glory we can give to God on earth does not dispense us from giving God such glory as we can during this life.

#### **1271. What did Jesus do and say with the Temple the Jews were so proud of?**

I hope you are not going to say that He disapproved of the Temple at Jerusalem, nor of the principle of erecting beautiful buildings for the glory and worship of God. Remember that God Himself commanded the building of the Temple at Jerusalem. As for what Jesus said and did, He called it His Father's House, revered it, and cast out of it those who would desecrate it.

#### **1272. The Jews, so proud of their Temple, defiled it and blasphemed the name of God.**

That is no argument against the Temple. It is an argument against the Jews who defiled it, and the degree of guilt in defiling it was proportionate to the very sanctity of the place in the sight of God.

**1273. To my mind it is wrong to waste so much money in the name of religion.**

To that I can merely say that you have a wrong mind on the subject. It is a peculiar thing that people do not object to magnificent undertakings proportionately to the dignity of their country or city. We may have lavish coronation ceremonies almost regardless of expense. We must have a magnificent town hall, post office, banks, and other public buildings in keeping with the civic position of the community. But it is wrong to pay a similar tribute to the religion of Christ, according to you. That is where you differ from the Catholic outlook. We Catholics do not object to civic magnificence proportionately to the dignity of our cities. But we hold that the honor and dignity of Christ and of the religion of Christ are far above any earthly grandeur. And for us, all that is ordained to the honor and glory of God holds the first place. For this reason it is a Catholic axiom that nothing can be too good for God. The building of a glorious church or chapel is but the expression of liberality in conception and generosity proportionate to the highest ideals. Those who would be too mean to contribute a penny to such a cause are the only ones who complain. But if they deplore the building of a beautiful Cathedral, and say that a tin shed would do just as well, it is because religion has become a very secondary thing to them, and the only thing that really counts in their eyes is material and earthly prosperity. It is religion itself which is a tin shed to them, whilst it is this world which is "a magnificent town hall in their estimation.

**1274. I am a Protestant, but it is your beautiful Cathedral Church that calls me, and I always attend there.**

I scarcely know what you mean by that. Do you mean that our Cathedral Church as a beautiful building attracts you? If that is so, then had the Catholic Church no such beautiful Cathedral, it would not be of interest to you. It is the Catholic Church as our Lord's representative in this world which must attract people. And the Catholic Church is herself, whether she offers her worship in a magnificent Cathedral anywhere, or a thatched hut in the wilds of Papua. I confess that I am hopeful of people who are impressed by the solid authority of the Catholic Church rather than by a solid building; and who are moved rather by God's grace than by Gothic windows. However, even a beautiful Cathedral can inspire one to enquire into the truth of a religion which inspires such an ideal expression of the worship due to God. The heart of the Catholic religion is obedience. You see, we went from God by disobedience. The road back must be by obedience. And if religion is to get us back, its essential demand must be obedience. And the true Church, representing the genuine religion, must be characterized by the spirit of obedience. That is why the Catholic Church alone is characterized by such firm principles of obedience. Catholics obey their Church, not because they like this or that element of discipline, but because of the authority of Christ vested in their Church. He who obeys because he likes what is commanded, is quite likely to disobey should he disapprove. He knows nothing of real obedience, which is essentially respect for the inherent authority of the one commanding. I obey because it is the law, not for any motive of self-satisfaction.

Glamor of Ritual

**1275. We Protestants reject the Catholic religion because it depends merely on the observance of impressive forms and ceremonies.**

The Catholic religion does not depend merely on impressive forms and ceremonies. So nothing is gained by making such an allusion. At the same time, whilst mere form and ceremony do not constitute the Christian religion, we do know that the Christian religion includes within itself certain very wise and beautiful rites. Jesus Himself instituted the rite of Baptism. He employed ceremonial rites again and again during His life when healing the deaf and the blind. Your suggestion that the forms and ceremonies were really a continuance of old ideas of human sacrifice is without a trace of foundation, and quite opposed to facts. Professor Harnack, a great German scholar who died in 1931, and whose authoritative research in early Christian periods the whole, world of scholars has to admit, writes as follows: "The oldest Christianity strictly refrained from everything polytheistic and heathen. The unreasonable method of collecting from mythology parallels for original Church traditions is valueless. There is no occasion to suppose that the Gentile congregations in the time up to the middle of the second century adopted, despite their fixed principle, popular mythical representations."

**1276. It was stated that, during the Eucharistic Congress Procession in Dublin, jewels and vestments were worn which were valued at half a million dollars.**

I had not heard of such an estimate. But, in any case, the exact value is immaterial. Personally, I am glad to think it was not less, and would be happy to think that it might possibly have been more.

**1277. Don't you think, since you claim to be followers of Christ, that this was only vulgar display?**

If we thought that, do you imagine that we would do it? To your mind it might seem "vulgar display." But you must make allowance for the fact that our outlook differs from your own, and try to interpret our conduct in the light of our principles. Of course I am more than willing to believe that that is just what you desire. So let us try to get at the heart of things. "Vulgar display" is personal ostentation opposed to good taste. It is the foolish effort to secure empty honor for oneself. And no one who claims to be a follower of Christ should be guilty of such worldly vanity. But when one seeks, not one's own honor, but to render due respect to another, and to render that honor in the degree the other deserves, we have not "vulgar display," but a just tribute of reverence and respect. Now we Catholics, as followers of Christ, believe Christ to be God. And we believe Him to be truly present in the Eucharist. When, therefore, we arrange a Congress in His honor, we feel that our tribute of praise, and gratitude, and worship, cannot be too splendid and glorious. At least you can see that we intended the honor for Him, and not for ourselves; and that, since He is God, there could be no possibility of excess in such honor as we could render. Nothing is too good for God.

**1278. It seems quite out of keeping with the humility displayed by Jesus Himself.**

The Eternal Son of God came into this world in human form to teach us true virtue. And, as a good teacher, He exemplified the virtues He taught, amongst them being humility. We, therefore, must learn humility, to entertain a modest estimate of ourselves, and to keep ourselves in the background where conduct is concerned. But whilst humility teaches us to have a lowly opinion of self, it does not teach us to have a lowly opinion of Christ. He might humble Himself, and we love Him for doing so. But it is not for us to humble Him. Scripture tells us that Jesus "empties Himself, taking the form of a slave; wherefore God hath exalted Him, giving Him a name above all other names." Will you blame us Catholics for exalting Him also? Of course your mistake arose from your belief that by the magnificence of the Congress we intended to exalt ourselves. But that is quite erroneous. We intended to exalt Christ as our Lord and Savior and God. Have you any objections to our doing so? Remember that the more humble a man is the more he will depreciate self, but the more also will he magnify and glorify God.

**1279. Jesus Himself displayed a lack of ostentation.**

As a teacher of humility to men, He regularly exemplified humility in His own conduct, but He allowed the ostentation of others who wished to honor His true dignity. When His followers cast their very garments on the road to make a festive way for Him, and praised Him with joy, crying out, "Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord," the Pharisees were scandalized, and told Jesus to rebuke His disciples. But He refused to do so, saying, "If these hold their peace, the very stones will cry out." Jesus Himself, at fitting and proper times, manifested His authority and glory. When he said publicly to the Jews, "You know that Moses has said this, but now I say unto you." His suggestion that He was superior to Moses was not an ostentation to be reprehended, for He is God. So, too, in the Transfiguration He manifested His glory to His Apostles, but for a definite and legitimate purpose. But I have said enough to show that the personal humility exhibited by Christ in no way conflicts with Catholic generosity in the worship of Christ.

**1280. Whilst not condemning your Church alone, I think you are the greatest offenders in this respect.**

I do not wish to speak unkindly, but does it really matter what you think? Would you suggest that our ways are certainly wrong unless they fit in with your ideas as to what should or should not be done? By condemning us, you set yourself up as the competent judge of Christian conduct. But are you sufficiently well-informed to pass judgment at all? You say that we are the worst "offenders." But against what principles have we offended? And wherein lies our offense? You invoke the principle of humility, but forget that, whilst humility demands self-depreciation, it does not forbid us to magnify and glorify to the best of our ability the God who made and redeemed us. And the offense with which you charge us is based upon a completely wrong interpretation of our motives and intentions. Where we intend to honor Christ, you insist that we desire only to glorify ourselves. But I think it is for us to say what we intend by our own actions.

**1281. I would like to know if there is any reason for departing from Christ's teachings.**

There is not. But do you understand Christ's teachings? Have you any reason for believing that you have clearly grasped them? You object to vestments and jewels valued at half a million being worn at a splendid and glorious procession in honor of Christ in the midst of a gathering of over a million people. Will you object to the lavish display and the beautiful ceremonial which took place at the coronation of King George VI.? Yet is Christ, the King of Kings, worthy of less honor than an earthly sovereign? You may say that Christ neither wishes nor accepts such external demonstrations of honor. I have already answered that by showing that He did so when His disciples cast their garments in the way, and accompanied Him into Jerusalem midst shouts of joy and waving palms, all with His consent. He sanctioned exactly the same principle when Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed Him with very costly ointment in the presence of all there assembled. And Judas complained of the lavish expense in His honor. "Why was not the ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" cried Judas. He thought it a dreadful waste that 10 or 12 dollars in our present day money should be used in such an ostentatious display of reverence for Christ. And Jesus rebuked, not Mary, but Judas. In the past, as a Protestant, I shared your views on these matters, and had much the same outlook. I understand your attitude, therefore, and do not intend any reproach in all that I have said. But it is certain that you have not fully understood the spirit of the Gospels, nor the spirit of Catholic ceremonial. And for that reason, your comparison of the two is bound to be faulty.

**1282. Is Roman pageantry a scheme to work up the masses to fever heat so that they can be molded to the will of their religious rulers?**

If that were the reason, it would be a dismal failure. But it is not the reason. And you are taking two wrong things for granted. Firstly, that fever heat is enkindled amongst our Catholic people; and secondly, that the purpose of the Church is to mold them to the will of their religious rulers. Amongst an ordinary congregation of Catholic people at Mass, fever heat is conspicuous by its absence. There is a great spirit of reverence, if you wish. But for calm and common-sensed tranquility, and lack of outbursts of emotionalism, I can commend to you our Catholic people in their religious duties. Again, the object of the Catholic religion is not to mold Catholics to the will of their religious rulers, but to mold all, Pope, cardinals, bishops, priests, and the laity, whether men, women or children, to the Holy Will of God.

And now that your two suppositions have broken down, why that dignified and reverent ceremonial in the Catholic Religion which you call pageantry? It is because we are visible and sense-endowed human beings engaged at such moments in the worship of God. God's very majesty demands the highest and most reverent worship, and man's sensitive nature demands the expression of that worship in an external and symbolic way. You may not agree with that principle, though you really use it every time you give an external and symbolic expression of your respect for a lady by raising your hat. Yet even though you don't agree with the principle, I must ask you to remember that our motives are that we may render what we believe to be fitting worship to God. And now that I have told you that, I'm sure you won't repeat your idea that our motive is to enkindle fever heat, or to mold Catholics to the will of their ecclesiastical rulers. I think we have the right to say what our interior motives really are.

**1283. Romanism relies largely on superstition and ceremony to hold Us people.**

The Catholic Church condemns superstition as sinful and warns her members that they themselves will no longer hold to her standards if they are guilty of it. That she relies on her ceremonies to hold her people is absurd. Her ceremonies are but an expression of the Catholic faith; and the Church relies upon the divine gift of faith, together with the grace of God and their good will to hold her people. Speaking of ceremonies, surely you will agree with me that the Coronation ceremonies are but the expression, and not the cause of British loyalty to the throne. Is it unreasonable to ask you to apply the same principle to the Catholic religion?

**1284. At what period did the Roman Catholic ritual originate?**

It originated with Christ, who gave us the Mass and the Sacraments, and sanctioned the principles which have found their perfect expression in the liturgical worship of the Catholic Church. I admit, of course, that whilst Christ originated Catholic ritual, that ritual has developed immensely through the ages in comparison with the primitive simplicity of the rites given and used by Christ Himself. Such development is to be

expected. Our Lord Himself said that He was planting a seed which would develop into a vast tree. And a grown oak tree certainly differs in its complexity from a simple acorn. We cannot, therefore, object to development whether in doctrinal expression or form of worship. But such development as does occur must be true development, clinging to the right type and keeping within original principles. A kitten develops into a cat, not into a dog. The acorn evolves into an oak tree, not into a cabbage. And the ritual of the Catholic Church is a quite legitimate evolution of the teachings and principles of Christ.

**1285. What was the name of the Pope who authorized this ritual?**

As the ritual of the Catholic Church has grown steadily with that Church through nearly 2,000 years, it has been under the supervision of all the Popes. At every stage of her growth, the Catholic Church has been sanctioning true and legitimate phases of her ritual, and rejecting innovations not in harmony with the principles of genuine Christianity. It would be impossible in so brief a reply to mention every detail of Catholic ritual, and give the name of the Pope of the time who sanctioned it.

The "Lord's Prayer"

**1286. Why do Protestants use the word "which" instead of "who" in the Lord's prayer?**

Because they have taken the prayer from different English translations of the New Testament. The Catholic version uses "who" as the relative pronoun; the Protestant version uses "which." In our days, the pronoun "which" is reserved rather for things than for persons. As used in the Protestant version of the "Our Father," therefore, it is obsolete. But its use as a personal pronoun instead of "who" was quite correct at the time the Protestant translation was made. It is a correct form of old English, used at the time by both Catholics and Protestants. Quite a common expression in Chaucer is such a phrase as "The Abbot which was a holy man." Protestants use an obsolete form, but it was quite correct when the translation was made, and is intended even now in a perfectly correct sense. No Protestant has any idea of regarding God as a thing rather than as a person by his use of the word "which."

**1287. I always understood that "which" applied only to inanimate things.**

That is because usage has restricted it to inanimate things so long as you can remember. But, although you have always understood it to refer only to inanimate things, the word itself has not always been applied only to inanimate things in the English language.

**1288. I have asked some Protestants to tell me, and they could not do so.**

It is because they have learned the "Our Father" from their Protestant Bible just as it is written there. But merely because they use a quite legitimate form of English which happens to be a little archaic now, we must not suggest that they are treating God with contempt as an inanimate thing. No good Protestant who says he "Lord's Prayer" would dream of doing that.

Pagan Derivations

**1289. Catholics stand for all that is false and hypocritical, borrowing the dregs of all that is superstitious in heathen ritual and ceremony, and putting them to the basest uses.**

Your judgment is so erroneous that you are not only inadequately informed, you are quite wrongly informed. Moreover, I must call your attention to one point. When you say that others stand for what is false and drawn from heathen ritual, it is possible that you accuse them only of being mistaken. And that is not necessarily a violation of charity, whatever the worth of your verdict. But when you accuse them of being hypocrites, and of putting their religion to the basic uses, you accuse them of malice and deliberate wickedness. Such charges are unpardonable, and indicate evil dispositions on your part towards your fellow men. Not honest mistakes, but such evil dispositions are the cause of war and discord in this world. And the greatest contribution to peace is to put aside such ill will, and to learn a polite, charitable, and tolerant attitude towards those from whom you happen to differ in outlook.

**1290. How do you explain the fact that all your ceremonies are pagan in nature and origin?**

That is not a fact, and therefore I have not to explain it as if it were a fact.

**1291. The proof is clear. Catholics use a Rosary for repeating prayers. So do the people of India.**

The devotion of the Rosary is Christian in nature and origin, and is unknown to pagans, Indian or otherwise. Pagans may use beads and repeat prayers, but this has no more connection with the Rosary than the fact that they wear sandals has a connection with the fact that you wear boots. A practice which is naturally helpful religiously will naturally suggest itself quite independently both to men who have the wrong religion and to those who have the right religion. And to this diversity of origin, the diversity of the religions will give an entirely different nature and significance.

**1292. Catholics worship Mary and her Child; Hindoos worship Lankhria, Queen of Heaven<sup>9</sup> and her Son, Devi, King of Heaven.**

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. You understand neither the Catholic religion nor the Hindu religion. And you are not, therefore, in a position to compare them. It is true that we Catholics worship Jesus as God. We do not worship Mary as a goddess.

Your statement of the Hindu teaching is equally astray. The ancient Hindu or Vedic religion taught straight-out pantheism. In reality one alone exists-Brahman. The thought that anything else exists is illusion.

Five centuries after the birth of Christ a new Hindu sect arose called the Tautrikas or Saktas. They taught a subordinate god named Siva, gave him a wife named Durga, and declared that she was identical with him and in no way different from him. She was worshipped as a goddess, though identical with Siva the god! The Hindu sect made her supreme, because they said she was the "power" of Siva, the active side of his nature. This Durga was called Devi, which means "the" goddess. How can you make Devi the King of Heaven, when the very word means "the" goddess? Any ordinary encyclopedia would tell you that, in Hindu mythology, Devi was regarded as a goddess, and not King of Heaven or of anywhere else. Nor have these Indian mythological characters any historical reality such as all the world acknowledges in the case of Christ and His mother, Mary.

**1293. Concerning the origin of "Easter Day." Ancient secular history records the origin of the vernal or spring equinox feast as being in existence for centuries before the Christian era.**

The existence of a spring equinox feast centuries before the Christian era has nothing whatever to do with the origin of "Easter Day." The argument from superficial similarities to causal connection teems with fallacies. One might as well say, "As regards the origin of swimming in the Domain baths, history shows that people used to swim in the river Ganges centuries before Australia was discovered." Did we therefore build the Domain baths because people used to swim in the Ganges some centuries ago? The celebration of festivals is as natural to man as to wash. Again, where religion is concerned, it is not the act which counts, but the motive and intention. A feast in honor of springtime is not the same thing as a feast which is in honor of something else, and which merely happens to occur during the spring season. Ancient celebrations of spring equinox feasts contained no trace of the significance of the Christian Easter.

**1294. In the Babylonian Mythology we read that a large egg fell from heaven into the river Euphrates, and out came the goddess "Ishtar" or "Easter," and hence the egg became the symbol of Astarte, or Ishtar.**

In the first place, the word "Easter" has no connection with the name of "Ishtar" the goddess of the Babylonians. The word "Easter" is an Anglo-Saxon word from the Teutonic "Eostre," an ancient German goddess of light. To think that "Easter" and "Ishtar" are synonyms because they have a remote resemblance in sound is simply a barbarism. From an etymological point of view one would have a better case in trying to trace the origin of the Christian Easter to ancient German mythology than to that of the ancient Babylonians. But even that would not work. Not only because the significance of the Christian Easter is not to be found in German mythology, but because the feast designated by the word Easter existed long before that term was applied to it. "Easter" is but an Anglo-Saxon designation of a feast observed by Christians from the very beginning, and by Christians who had never heard the word, and who would not have recognized the Anglo-Saxon method of alluding to it. The early Christians knew "Easter" as "Paschal" time. And the Greek word "Pascha" was derived from the Hebrew word, "Pesach," meaning "passover."



The Christian liturgy adopted the feast from the Jewish religion, because the Paschal feast in that religion was prophetic of Christianity. The Paschal lamb slain by the Jews was typical of Christ, and as Christ died on the Jewish Paschal day, or as we say in English "Easter" day, that day has been retained. And it happens to fall in the spring season. Babylonian mythology had nothing to do with this, and Christians had no idea of honoring spring, any more than they thought of dishonoring summer, autumn, or winter.

**1295. So from Babylon of old the egg has always been associated with the festival of Easter. Buns also figured in the Babylonian rites, as they do now.**

Eggs and buns were certainly usual symbols in use at springtime long before Christianity came on the scene. The egg was a symbol of germinating life, and buns symbolized the fruits of the earth. Since Easter happened to occur in the springtime, those symbols were in use amongst the pagans of early ages precisely when Christians were celebrating Easter. And as those symbols were as harmless as the lifting of one's hat to symbolize reverence towards a lady friend, the Church allowed converted pagans to retain the custom of eggs and buns. But the essential significance of Easter as representing the fulfillment of Jewish Paschal predictions in Christ was absolutely foreign to their paganism. And an entirely new symbolism was given to their simple habits of feasting on eggs and buns. No longer did these things symbolize any religious devotion to "Ishtar" the goddess of spring, but they now symbolized the new life won for humanity by the resurrection of Christ, and the fact that He is the bread of our true, supernatural, and eternal life.

**1296. The observance of the Easter festival was introduced into the Roman Church in order to conciliate the pagans to nominal Christianity.**

That is sheer nonsense. The Easter festival originated with the Church herself and was a legitimate continuation of the Jewish Paschal season. It would be interesting were people, fond of glib assertions, to give the date when their supposed additions to Christianity were made. Eusebius quotes a controversy in the time of Pope St. Victor in the year 190 as to the right day for the celebration of Easter. St. Irenaeus shows a diversity of practice in the time of Pope Sixtus, about the year 120. The feast was in existence then, or there could not have grown up diversity of usages in different places. St. Irenaeus also mentions that St. Polycarp kept Easter on the 14th of Nisan, clinging rigidly to the Jewish date, and claiming that he was following the custom of St. John the Apostle, whose disciple he had been. The idea that the feast was introduced in order to conciliate pagans to nominal Christianity is just wild extravagance. The feast was not introduced to conciliate pagans; its Christian significance and utter repudiation of all pagan Ishtar-worship could not have conciliated them in any case; and such pagans as were converted were not invited to become nominal Christians. The early ages of the Church were not the times for nominal Christians. The invitation to become a Christian was practically an invitation to martyrdom.

**1297. The Church, pursuing its usual methods, took measures to get the Christian and pagan festivals amalgamated.**

No Christian and pagan festivals were amalgamated. The Church followed her usual methods in tolerating harmless practices to which pagans were attached provided they renounced and repudiated all pagan significance. If I converted a pagan today who attached a religious significance to the growing of a beard, I would demand that he renounce his religious idea, but I would not order him to shave. Things pagan of their very nature the Church forbade absolutely.

**1298. By a complicated and skillful adjustment of the calendar, it was found no difficult matter in general to get paganism and Christianity- now far sunk in idolatry-to shake hands.**

That is sheer nonsense. No adjustment of the calendar was made in order to get paganism and Christianity to shake hands. Paganism and Christianity could no more mix than oil and water. The Jewish calendar and the Roman calendar were based on different calculations and the exigencies of daily life demanded an adjustment. But this had nothing to do with the conciliation of pagans. The assertion that Christianity was "now far sunk in idolatry" is outrageous. Easter was there from the beginning, and Christians were dying by thousands because they would not sacrifice to the gods of Rome, and hated idolatry in all its forms. Professor Harnack, the great German Protestant scholar, says that "the unreasonable method of collecting from the mythology of all peoples parallels for original Church traditions whether historical reports or legends, is valueless."

**1299. The Lenten fast of 40 days was also observed by these pagans before the Christian Church was polluted by the introduction of pagan idolatry.**

The Christian Church was not polluted by the introduction of idolatry. No pagans ever observed any fast similar to the Lenten fast in preparation for Christ's death. The idea of fasting in expiation of sin is, of course, as old as sin itself; and therefore as old as humanity. If men get on to the wrong track in their religious ideas, they will offer propitiation to wrong deities. But that does not prove anything wrong with the basic idea of expiating sin by mortification and fasting.

**1300. As Hislop says in "The Two Babylons," p. 104: "The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess."**

That is pure imagination, Christ Himself predicted that when He was gone, His disciples and followers would fast. St. Paul advised Christians to work out their salvation in prayer and patience, in watchings and fastings. At first fasting was left to the discretion of individual Christians. Regular fasting imposed by the discipline of the Church began first in Gaul in the second century, not in the East at all; and it had no connection with any Babylonian mythology. Diversity of practices sprang up, and the Church finally decreed the forty days' fast of Lent for the sake of uniformity. And she chose "forty" days in honor of the forty days' fast endured by Christ prior to His public life and in remembrance of the forty years spent by

the Jews in the desert before they entered the promised land. As they endured suffering before attaining to the joy of possession, so Lent is a period of suffering in preparation for the joy of the resurrection of Christ. There is nothing like this in any mythology.

**1301. Is it true that the first Catholic missionaries to Mexico were astonished to find there among the pagan Aztecs all the ceremonial elements of their own religion?**

It is true that they were astonished by many of the external similarities which the naturally evolved religion of the Aztecs had in common with their own true Catholic religion. But this merely shows that the Catholic religion is adapted to human needs, as it should be. Meantime, the dissimilarities were far more striking than the similarities; and the similarities were almost entirely external, the Aztec rites having a significance quite different from that of Christianity.

**1302. There was the same story of the flood and the same symbol of the Cross.**

That is not true. The superficial judgment of rationalists is not borne out by a scientific study of the comparative religions. The tradition of a flood amongst the Aztecs was not the same story as that of the Bible; and although a cross figured in their religious ritual, it had nothing like the symbolism of mankind's redemption by Christ. The idea of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and of our redemption by the sufferings of Christ, was quite unknown to the Aztecs.

**1303. They had the same consecration and ritual eating of the flesh of God, but made of maize instead of wheat.**

That also is untrue. The Aztecs worshipped the sun as a god, and believed that the sun lived on human hearts. They offered human sacrifices to their solar god, the priest cutting out the heart of a living human victim, and holding it up towards the sun. Then the flesh of the human victim was eaten under the fancy that, since it had been offered to the sun-god, it had become part of him; and that by eating it the participants would be identified with their god also. When living human victims were scarce, the Aztecs used to make models of victims of dough, and eat the models instead. The resemblance to the Christian consecration of the Holy Eucharist, and its reception in Holy Communion, is vague in the extreme.

**1304. The Aztecs had baptism in which the head and lips were touched with water so that the recipient might be cleansed and born again to a new life.**

Such terms are due to efforts to read a Christian significance into pagan rites. The Aztecs had purification rites in which water was used, as so many other religions prompted by natural human instincts. There is nothing surprising in that. But in no sense was this cleansing ritual anything like Baptism in the Christian sense of the word. The Aztecs knew nothing of the supernatural and spiritual life of grace such as that given by Christ.

**1305. The good priests were astonished, because they believed their own Christian religion to be unique and entirely new.**

They were not astonished from that point of view. They were astonished, as I have said, by many of the external rites of the Aztecs. But they had to convert the Aztecs from the worship of many pagan deities, abolish their murderous human sacrifices to the sun, wean them from innumerable superstitions, and win them to faith in doctrines entirely new to the Aztecs, and undoubtedly unique. Not for a moment were the good missionaries astounded by any thought that the Aztecs might have the same religion as that which they themselves had brought to American shores.

**1306. But they need not have been astonished for, like that of the Aztecs, their religion took shape in the archaic civilization.**

That is an entirely gratuitous assumption, for which there is not a trace of evidence. This effort to reduce the pagan Aztec religion and Christianity to a common source is born of the rationalist desire to reduce Christianity to the level of merely natural religions. But there is a complete lack of evidence as to whence the primitive Aztec religion was drawn; and there is positive evidence that the religion taught by Christ was certainly not an eclectic religion built up from other more primitive religions. His teaching was quite different in kind from any other religious teaching hitherto existent; and the mass of historical facts guaranteeing the claims of Christ, and the divine origin of His doctrine are not so easily dismissed as rationalists with their sweeping generalizations imagine.

**1307. Not only our religious rites, but the whole foundation of our daily life we owe to the people of Egypt, Sumera, and the Indus Valley.**

The value of that assertion is completely dependent on the value of the proof that can be advanced in favor of it. And no proof of any kind is given for it, or can be given. On the other hand definite proof is available to demonstrate that the doctrine of Christ was directly the revelation of God as He Himself claimed. It was no new synthesis of ancient teachings derived from Jewish, Greek, Latin, Egyptian, Indian, and other sources. Similarities between Christianity and other religions have been invented or hopelessly exaggerated. That there have been some real similarities is undoubtedly true. It would be astonishing if they did not exist, since all religions have some idea of communicating with an invisible world, and symbolic expression is as natural to man as language itself. But similarity does not prove connection' or derivation.

#### Liturgical Symbolism

**1308. Do not graven images, symbols, relics, and other material things play a large part in the worship of the Roman Catholic Church?**

No. They play their part within due limits, and in a very secondary way only. Every Catholic knows that such external helps to religion have value only insofar as they reflect or stimulate the interior spirit of worship. Without that, they would be but the dead body of religion deprived of its soul.

**1309. Is not this one reason for the large following which your Church has, compared with other churches which adopt a simple form of worship giving no prominence to material symbols?**

It is one thing by no means the main reason why the Catholic religion has more appeal, and is better adapted to the religious needs of men, than the Protestant forms of religion. It was one of the mistakes of the Reformation that, in those years of heated dissent and violent reaction against the Catholic Church, men tended to sweep away all external Catholic rites and ceremonies, statues, medals, relics, rosary beads, and all such visible and tangible signs of religion. Where the Pharisees, in our Lord's time, went to one extreme, concentrating almost entirely on external rites and neglecting the interior spirit of religion, the Protestant reformers went to the other extreme, and boasted that they would worship God in spirit and in truth, abolishing the superstitious practices of Rome. But a merely interior and spiritual worship of God is not possible to man. We are human beings, consisting of body and soul. We are not pure spirits, or angels. And worship of God offered by men must be both of the senses and of the spirit. A disembodied religion cannot retain its hold over men. And one of two things is happening with Protestantism. Its adherents are either giving up all religion, having neither exterior nor interior religion, or they are either restoring Catholic rites and ceremonies and practices, as High Church Anglicans, or inventing substitute external manifestations and sensible attractions for themselves. Some parsons are talking of introducing films as an aid to religious devotion, which is simply the introduction of "cinematographic images" as opposed to the "static images"

in Catholic Churches they once so vehemently denounced. They are at least beginning to see that the only sane doctrine is that which Catholics have ever maintained, namely, that true religion in practice must blend both interior worship with external and sensible helps. So the dispute is not so much whether we may have external and material aids to religion, but as to what those aids shall be. Meantime, is not the success of Catholicism as opposed to Protestantism, which you admit at least as regards its hold upon men, an indication of its Tightness rather than of its wrongness? Surely God's wisdom would provide a religion which does cater for the deepest needs of man according to all the factors contributing to his personality.

**1310. Why has the Church in China portrayed the Holy Family, in images and pictures as if they were Chinese?**

We can consider Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in their human and natural characteristics, as members of the Jewish race; or we can dwell upon the ideals for which they stand. If we desired to convey to the Chinese their national characteristics, we would have to depict them as Jewish.

But if we wish to convey to the Chinese the ideals for which the Holy Family stands, it is better to depict the members of the Holy Family, not as foreigners, but as of the Chinese and for the Chinese. Catholicism, of its very nature, rises above national considerations. Our Lord has to be born of some particular race, since mankind was divided into particular races. But He was not born for a particular race. He is for all mankind.

The idea of presenting the Holy Family to the Chinese in their particular style and on a level they can easily grasp is based on the same principle as that of God, who revealed Himself to men in language and analogies proper to men, and not proper to God. Any good teacher must convey the truth to those taught, in the way best calculated to benefit the recipient. No matter how much a superior person knows, he is no good as a teacher unless he can understand and adapt himself to the lesser capacity of his pupils.

**1311. I recently saw a statue of a little child, and was told that it represented the Holy Infant of Prague. Could you tell me something of this devotion?**

The title is derived from an image of the Child Jesus preserved in a Carmelite Church in Prague. It has been revered in that Church since 1628. Sometime prior to this it appears that a religious community was in grave temporal want. A noble Bohemian lady named Princess Von Lobkowitz brought them a small image of the Infant Jesus, telling the religious that it would bring them a great blessing if they honored it for the love of the Child Jesus whom it represented. It brought many spiritual and temporal blessings upon them, and rapidly became quite a public devotion. Pope Pius X declared that this devotion should inspire parents to invoke upon their children the special protection of the Child Jesus, and to train them to love Him and to imitate the virtues of His infancy and childhood at Nazareth.

Devotion to the Holy Infant of Prague is one of those free matters for Catholics and not of any obligation. Those who feel drawn to it may adopt it. The spirit of the devotion enkindles the virtues so particularly associated with the Child Jesus- innocence and purity, humility and obedience.

**1312. What is the origin and significance of the halo one often sees in pictures and images of saints?**

The halo originated probably in Greece, centuries before the Christian era. Men had noticed the circular luminous glow around the moon, for example, and in various other natural reflections in water and in crystals. Such phenomena of light were naturally chosen to symbolize the light of heroic examples and lofty dignity. The Greeks first applied the idea to the gods, the classical poets describing them as veiled in luminous clouds and radiating light.

Christian artists saw the truth and beauty of the symbolism. The only thing wrong was that the Greek pagans were applying it to false gods. The Christian artists but adapted it to the truth as a symbol of true virtue and luminous saintly ideals. In paintings, of course, it was easy to paint a luminous circle about the head of Christ, or of our Lady, or of a saint. In sculpture, the difficulty was overcome by the attaching of a disc behind or above the head of the figure.

## Use of Latin

### **1313. Why is Latin used in the Roman Catholic service instead of English, or the national language of each country?**

We can scarcely say that Latin is used "instead of English," when both Latin and English are used. All sermons and instructions are given in English, or in the language of the country in which the Church happens to be. I have heard Italian priests preaching in Italian, French priests preaching in French; German priests preaching in German, etc. You yourself would never hear a priest preaching in a Catholic Church in this country save in English.

But you must remember that the Catholic religion does not consist merely in preaching and the singing of hymns. She has an official liturgical worship, of which the chief element is the Sacrifice of the Mass. And for this official liturgical worship, which is offered to God, and not to the people, she uses her official liturgical language -Latin.

The Mass is an act of sacrifice to God. And whether the Mass were in Arabic, or Greek, or Hebrew, the people would understand it as an act. In the old Jewish law, the high priest retired to the Holy of Holies to offer sacrifice, and the people assisted in spirit, each praying his own prayers.

The Church reserves Latin for her liturgical worship for many reasons. Firstly, the significance of her rites is preserved in its original form. Latin is a dead language, not subject to the constant changes of meaning which we find in all living languages. For this reason, the Jews still use Hebrew in their Synagogues-whether they be English Jews, or German Jews, or American, or French, or Italian. Now Latin is the basic language of European civilization. Italian, Spanish, French, and even English to a great extent, are but modern variations of Latin. The Catholic Church retains the Latin, avoiding the variations. In their prayer books, of course, Catholics have the translation of the Latin liturgical language, and in their own countries can follow the prayers in English, Italian, French, or German, as the case may be.

Secondly, the Catholic Church, as a universal Church, needs a single universal language, so that at least her essential rites may be universally the same. This could not be, were the Mass offered in the language of one particular country. But, wherever a Catholic travels he can assist at Mass and be quite at home, finding it said in Latin, just as in his own country, whether he be in Palestine or Africa, Fiji, Alaska, Belgium or Austria, or anywhere else. If an Anglican minister celebrated his English service in a remote Japanese village, because he knew no Japanese, the villagers would be sadly puzzled. If I went there, the moment I began the Latin Mass, every Japanese Catholic would feel quite at home, for I would offer Mass just as every Japanese Catholic priest offers Mass. There are other reasons, but I have said enough to indicate the chief grounds for one common liturgical language in the one great universal Church.

### **1314. St. Paul says, "In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." 1 Cor. XIV., 19. Reconcile that with your use of Latin, an unknown tongue to the vast majority of the people.**

There is no opposition whatever between the text you quote and Catholic practice. The terms of comparison need explanation, not reconciliation as if they were opposed to each other. St. Paul's allusion to speaking in an unknown tongue does not refer to any natural use of a foreign language. He is referring to a special and miraculous gift of God to certain Christians in the early Church by which onlookers were suddenly made aware that the speaker was subject to a supernatural power. This induced them to pay attention when the speaker did explain Christian doctrine to them in their own language and quite clearly. But the gift of speaking in unknown tongues was not given for its own sake. It was merely a means to winning attention to the preaching of the Gospel. Unfortunately some of the Corinthians began to regard the teaching of Christian doctrine as quite secondary and the cultivation of the more astonishing gift of tongues as of higher importance. St. Paul rebukes them for this, and in the verse you quote, brings out the importance of teaching cleanly the true doctrine of Christ. "I would rather use my natural gifts of understanding to teach others, than take pride in astonishing people by speech in unknown tongues. What is the use of speaking in such unknown tongues, if you do not interpret so that people can understand, or seize the opportunity of their awakened interest to teach them Christian doctrine? For it is more important to teach than to speak in unknown tongues."

Thus you have the explanation of your text.

Now take your reference to the use of Latin in the Catholic Church.

Firstly, you are wrong when you suggest that perhaps all our prayers are in a tongue unknown to the vast majority of people. The prayers after Mass, at evening devotions, during the Stations of the Cross, etc., are in the language of the country; here, in English. All sermons, notices, and teachings are given in English. Latin is reserved only for strictly liturgical functions. And even in this restricted case, granted that the majority of Catholics do not understand Latin, your text has no bearing whatever on the case. For firstly, the use of Latin has no reference to any claim to be speaking in virtue of a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, to which alone St. Paul alludes. Secondly, it is not a question of speaking in a language the sense of which is unintelligible and profitless to those present, for they have the English translation of the Mass in their prayer books and can follow quite easily all that the priest at the altar is saying. In not one single point, then, is there any conflict between St. Paul's words, and the Catholic practice of celebrating Mass in the one universal language-Latin.

**1315. Mass should not be read in Latin by the priest, as the congregation cannot thereby follow the Mass.**

As a non-Catholic, unfamiliar with the Catholic religion, you are not in a position to judge what Catholics are able, or are not able to do. Your Catholic friends will tell you that they are quite at home in assisting at Mass, and their verdict should satisfy you. It is well to note that Catholic prayer books for the use of the laity have the full translation into English of all that is said at Mass, and the people are thus able to follow the Mass perfectly. It is also well to note that the priest, when celebrating Mass, is praying for the people, but not to the people. He is praying to God. And God understands Latin. All that you have said is based upon a lack of knowledge of the Catholic religion, and even upon wrong ideas of it. It is not surprising that you come to wrong conclusions about it. And the sensible thing to do is to rectify your lack of knowledge by studying the Catholic religion until you are familiar with its teachings and practices.

**1316. I believe that in Palestine the Mass is said in the common tongue.**

There are Churches of both the Western and Eastern rites in Palestine. In Churches of the Western rite, Mass is said in Latin, even in Palestine. In Churches of the Eastern rites, Mass is said in various Eastern languages. Usually these are ancient forms which present-day members no more understand than they would Latin. For example, the Greek Melchite Church, which is in union with Rome, uses the Arabic language in the Mass. The language in which Mass is said is really unimportant in itself, for the Mass is not addressed to the people; it is a sacrifice offered to God. And God understands all forms of human speech. It is for wise reasons, however, that the Western Church has retained Latin as its liturgical language.

**1317. Is it true that one of the reasons why the Church of England digressed was because the Church of Rome refused to recite the service in the common tongue?**

No. When Henry VIII., broke away from Rome and set up the new "Church of England," there was no talk of replacing Latin by English. Later on, when Protestant ideas became current, the whole character of religious worship was changed. The Mass and the Catholic idea of the priesthood were abolished. The thought of a minister of religion turning his back on the people, and addressing himself to God by the offering of sacrifice was rejected. The minister was ordered to face the people, and adjust the service to them. The ministry of preaching supplanted the ministry of sacrifice. And as the congregation became all important, the language used in all services was adapted to the requirements of the people. In the Catholic Church, such sections of the service as are directly addressed to the people are given in the languages of the respective countries. But the liturgical worship which is addressed directly to God is offered in Latin, the uniform language of the Western Church.

**1318. Why does the Catholic Church insist that even the nuns must pray in Latin, a language they cannot understand?**

Passing over your supposition that nuns in general cannot understand Latin, the Church does not insist that nuns "pray in Latin." Their private and personal prayers, as well as their ordinary community prayers, are in English; and they say far more prayers in English than they do in Latin. It is only when saying their "office," or official liturgical prayers that they use Latin. And that is because in this particular exercise, they are really "lending their voices" to the Catholic Church which prays through them in her own official liturgical language-Latin.

Even if the nuns did not understand, it would not matter. The Church knows full well the meaning of the prayers she asks her nuns to say for her, and God certainly understands the worship being offered to Him in the name of all the faithful. And even such nuns as are not able to perceive the full sense of every word, can lift their hearts to God by their own interior dispositions of reverence, praise, and love. But the chief thing to remember that, in these official prayers, it is the Church praying to God through the instrumentality of her religious orders.

#### Intercession of Mary and the Saints

#### **1319. Prayers to saints seem to me to be the thin edge of the wedge of spiritualism, which is abhorrent to the Lord.**

There can be no comparison between the two. The intercommunication by prayer of all who are united in God is a very different thing from efforts to communicate directly with departed spirits in curious ways forbidden by God, and independently of God. Our union with the saints in the love and in the presence of God naturally expresses itself by prayer. And we ask the prayers of the saints according to God's will, honoring God in them, and seeking only to become more closely united with God even as they. But the seeking of information and revelations from departed spirits, whether saints or not, in dubious ways forbidden by God, is a usurpation of rights which do not belong to us, and very easily leads to superstition and blasphemy.

#### **1320. Christ has made all the intercession that is necessary.**

Christ has not made all the intercession that is necessary. If so, why does St. James writing well after the Ascension of Christ from this world and under the inspiration of God, write V., 16, "Pray one for another that you may be saved."

There are many secondary mediators who derive their power from Christ and retain it in and through Christ. That this is so is evident from Acts XII., 5, where Christians offered prayer without ceasing for St. Peter who was in prison. What right had they to mediate-if your idea be true? St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "We pray that you may do no evil." He was interceding for them. To Philemon he wrote, "I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you." To the Hebrews XIII., 18, he wrote asking their prayers for him. "Pray for us," he writes; "for we hope to have a good conscience and behave well in all things."

Again St. Paul wrote to the Romans XV., 30, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ and by the charity of the Holy Spirit, that you help me in your prayers for me to God." Was St. Paul relying on their help rather than on the merits of Christ? No. But Christ had said, "I am the vine, you are the branches," i. e., branches deriving their life and value from Him. Each member is incorporated in Christ, and Christ lives in His members. Consequently, any value in the prayers of others is derived from Christ, and in this sense St. Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, "I beseech you, help me by your prayers for me to God." And he certainly hoped to benefit by the medium of their prayers for him.

The principle then is Scriptural that we may benefit by each other's prayers. It is certain, also, that the prayer of a saintly person added to my own will deserve more graces than my own prayers alone could do.

Whose prayers will I ask? St. Paul asked his fellow Christians in Rome to pray for him to God. We also may do that. Also, in virtue of the Communion of Saints, we may ask the intercession of souls already in heaven with God, and what better than to ask the prayers of Mary, the very Mother of Christ.

#### **1321. Why is it necessary to pray to the Virgin Mary or the saints? There is but one Mediator, Christ Jesus, from whom we may obtain forgiveness and life everlasting.**

If a mother prays for a wayward son, she is mediating on behalf of that son. And if God hears her prayers, that does not detract from the mediation of Christ. And as she can pray for her son, the Lady Mother of Christ and the saints can pray for us. And when they do, it is Jesus mediating for us, for it is Jesus in them Who is doing so. You lack understanding of Christian doctrine. Christians, whether in heaven or on earth, are the members of Christ. He identifies Himself with them. When Saul persecuted the Christians, Jesus said to him, "Why persecutest thou Me?" And if the sufferings of the saints are His sufferings; the intercession of the saints is another form of His intercession. We Catholics believe in the Communion of saints; the common union of all saints in Christ. Protestants say that they believe in the Communion of

Saints, but sedulously exclude all union with them. Catholics at least are conscious of belonging to the great family of God's children, and do not insist on being strangers to all with whom they will be associated in heaven.

**1322. 1. Tim. II., 5 says that there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.**

Correct, and Catholics also believe that

**1323. Then why do Catholics pray to the Virgin Mary and other saints to make intercession for them?**

Firstly, because doing so is not opposed to the passage you quote. Even though we pray to our Lady and the saints, it is in the Name of Jesus that we ask them to intercede for us, and it is that they may obtain for us a greater share in the fruits of His mediation with God on our behalf.

Secondly, not only is prayer to our Lady and the saints not opposed to the passage you quote, it is an application of it. For, according to the New Testament, Jesus makes all who belong to Him members of Himself. He is the Head, and we are the members. And the members are not only for Him, but they are for each other, and can help each other. For example, my eye is for me, and my hand is for me. But my hand can protect my eye if someone throws a brick at me. But always the power and the life in my eye or in my hand is my power and my life. So, too, I, a poor little member of Christ can appeal to much nobler members of Christ in the persons of Mary and the saints when the devil starts throwing bricks at me. But any power and life in our Lady and the saints is the power and life of Christ and is derived from Him. So I am appealing to Him after all-I, in Christ, appeal to Christ in other members whom He has deigned to associate more closely with Himself; and any hope I have in their intercession is in the name of Christ and through His one great mediation with God. Your difficulties are due to the very superficial view you have of our Christian religion, and a strange tendency to isolate members of the great family of the children of God one from another. From time immemorial Christians have said, "I believe in the Communion of Saints." That means the "common union" of all in Christ, and implies their communication one with another. Catholics understand this, and criticism from others is merely because they have no real understanding of the Christian religion.

**1324. I can apprehend the Communion of Saints in the Holy Eucharist, hut I cannot understand or apprehend (two very different words) the Communication of Saints i. e., Christians on earth communicating by prayer to a departed saint9 even though so highly honored as the Holy Mother of Jesus.**

What is the Communion of Saints in the Holy Eucharist, if not the common union of all who love Christ, expressed in a Sacramental way? The Catholic Church is simply our spiritual mother, giving life in Baptism; forgiving faults and sins in Confession; nourishing us with the food of the Eucharist, and uniting us all as children of God in that one great Christian family known as the Communion of Saints. And that great family of the children of God includes the Church Triumphant in heaven; the Church Militant on earth; and the Church Suffering in purgatory. And the children of this great spiritual family are not strangers to each other. We are all members of the one Christ, and members of Christ on earth can benefit by the intercession of members of Christ in heaven. And since that is so, we may pray to the saints, asking them to intercede for us. I would find it far more difficult to understand or apprehend that the union of all in Christ would be a sterile and fruitless bond as far as the relationship of member to member is concerned. Or that the prayer of a just man should avail much, as St. James says, only whilst that just man still lives in this world; and that he should lose all interest in us, and power to pray for us, merely because he has been transferred to heaven.

**1325. Why do not the Protestant churches teach us anything about Mary's power of intercession for us?**

Because they have wrested Scripture to the destruction of all true understanding of Christian revelation, and have been led into many grave errors by an exaggerated literalism. Concentrating on the fact that Christ is the one principal Mediator, they have made no allowance for the equally clear doctrine of secondary mediation of one human being for another with, in, and through Christ. Though they repeat the words of the Creed, "I believe in the Communion of Saints," they have no idea of the practical significance of those words. They do not understand that they mean the common union in Christ of all who love Him, so that He



lives in them as in His very members, and in them as His own mystical body. But we Catholics understand this doctrine, and know that member can help member. We accept the teaching of St. James that the prayer of a just soul availeth much. And first and foremost among the just is the Mother of Christ. She is with God; she shared in the redemptive work of Christ; she is interested in all whom Jesus died to redeem; and as He makes constant intercession in heaven for us now, she associates her intercession with His, and we rightly ask for a share in her intercession as well as in His.

**1326. How do you account for the silence of the Protestant churches concerning the Mother of Christ?**

They would justify it by declaring devotion to Mary to be a kind of superstition and idolatry. But their belief is mistaken, and based upon a superficial knowledge of Christianity, together with a lingering prejudice against Catholic teaching and practices. There is, however, a deeper explanation. In the very beginning God declared that He would put enmity between Satan and the woman who was to undo the work of our first mother Eve. And in virtue of that promise there is a deadly enmity between Mary and Satan. Those two are as irreconcilable as Christ and Satan. Where you find Mary, therefore, you will not find Satan; and where you find Satan you will not find Mary. Now Satan is the principle of disruption even as Christ is the principle of unity. All movements disruptive of the unity of the Church have been the work of Satan; and the more radical these disruptive movements have been, the more they have felt impelled to abandon all relations with Mary, the Mother of Christ. On the other hand, Mary has ever retained her proper place in the Catholic religion.

**1327. I asked a Catholic to quote one instance in the Bible where Mary interceded between man and Christ, and he could quote only the marriage feast at Cana.**

That is the one case where the Virgin Mary is explicitly mentioned. But it is not the only text possible in support of the intercessory power of Mary. There are dozens of texts guaranteeing the intercessory power of the saints, and indeed of any human being in the grace and friendship of Christ. Every text in the New Testament showing the identity of the faithful with Christ in His mystical body the Church proves the intercessory power of every member of Christ. And since the Mother of Christ is the greatest of the saints and most nearly related to Christ, all such texts prove her intercessory power with Him. But let us take your difficulty in regard to the particular text I quoted.

**1328. An intercession loses all its charm for me when it is priced so high as to meet with the rebuke, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"**

Firstly, that is not the correct translation of what Jesus said. According to the Greek text He really replied, "Woman, what is it to me and to thee?" And there is no trace of a rebuke in His words. He was speaking in Aramaic, and the word for which "Woman" is the English equivalent was one of the utmost respect. Nor would

Christ, the model of every virtue, address His mother save with the greatest reverence. Moreover, Mary had noticed the possible discomfiture of the hosts at the wedding feast in not having provided sufficient wine for the guests, and Christ would be the last in the world to rebuke a request prompted only by charity.

Further, had Mary understood that Jesus intended to rebuke her, she would not have gone on with the matter, telling the waiters to prepare for what her Son would do. And still further, had Jesus intended to rebuke her for a wrong thing He would not have fulfilled her wish. Yet He did so. It is impossible to interpret the reply He gave His mother as a rebuke. He uttered a common Eastern expression meaning, "It is not really our responsibility, Lady Mother of Mine." And it is evident that He betrayed a smiling acquiescence as He said the words, so that Mary knew her request was granted.

**1329. Pope Pius XI once attributed his recovery from sickness to St. Therese of Lisieux.**

I have no grounds for any other judgment save that the Pope declared his belief that his improvement was due to the intercession of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Whether the Pope was mistaken in that belief or not, I do not know. He may have been, for this is not a case in which he would be safeguarded from error

by his infallibility. One thing, however, is certain. He would not be mistaken on the score that it is either wrong or useless to appeal to the intercession of the saints.

**1330. Don't you think that a dead woman could not intercede?**

I will not comment upon your crude reference to a canonized saint who has been honored by the Church solely because of her heroic Christian virtue and charity. But let me ask a few questions of you. Do you believe that human beings possess souls? Do you believe that human souls are immortal of their very nature? And if you believe in the future life of the soul, do you think that "a dead woman" is a sufficient description of a departed Christian?

Again, granted that the souls of the just are with God, do you believe that, though they prayed for their friends on earth, they are less capable of such prayer, or less willing to pray for others still in this world, merely because they have attained to the Vision of God and the full charity of heaven? To bring this home to yourself in a more impressive way, if your mother died, would she be merely a "dead woman" to you? And if you believed her soul to be with God, would it be difficult for you to believe that she had not lost all interest in you, and that she would plead with God that the child she brought forth into this world might also attain heavenly happiness with her? Would you object to this intercession of a dead woman for you? If not, you must rectify your ideas, and admit the reasonableness of the Catholic doctrine that the saints can intercede for us who are still in this world.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### The Church and Social Welfare

#### The Church and Education

**1331. If Catholicism is the only true religion, it would follow as a matter of course that it would be the one with the greatest benefit to the country and people under it.**

You need to define what you mean by "greatest benefit," and you also need to add the condition "provided the people in question accept Catholicism not only in theory but in all its practical consequences." Christ never promised temporal prosperity as a necessary consequence of Christianity, nor did He promise even spiritual benefits to people who do not live up to its teachings.

**1332. In Latin countries, where the Roman Catholic Church predominates, as in Argentine, Mexico, Spain, and Italy, the percentage of illiteracy is very high-40% in some cases.**

In none of the countries mentioned has the control of education been in the hands of the Catholic Church authorities for generations. In fact the Church has been consistently hampered in her efforts by unsympathetic governments.

**1333. Is not this because the Catholic Church was predominant?**

No. But since you introduce this topic, let me ask you to account for the fact that, when the Catholic Church was predominant in Europe, she inspired so marvelous a culture, such masterpieces of architecture in the glorious pre-Reformation Cathedrals, such expressions of genius in music, and painting, and philosophy; why she established the great Universities of Europe; why great minds like that of Newman and hundreds of other outstanding converts have been attracted by her. The suggestion that the Catholic Church is the mother of ignorance has been played out long ago for all thinking men who have any knowledge of the facts. I do not know whether my session sounds very illiterate to any of my listeners. But I do know that when I decided to become a priest, I found myself given a 12 years' course of study here in Australia prior to my ordination, and was then sent to Europe for a further University course of specialized study before commencing my priestly work. If the Catholic Church is the mother of ignorance she has a strange way of manifesting it. The citation of countries in which national and racial characteristics differ from ours, and whose political regime is often enough in the hands of those who are alienated from the Catholic Church, and bent on repressing her activities, is worthless.

**1334. Does not the Catholic Church stand for education?**

The Catholic Church does stand for education and culture and civilization. But her primary purpose is not to turn illiterate people into literary prodigies, but to teach both literate and illiterate people how to love and serve God according to the precepts of Christ in whatever condition they may be, and thus to save their souls. And you will surely admit that an illiterate person can have a moral worth and a degree of virtue unknown to many a literate genius who can quite well be a cultured scoundrel.

**1335. What would you say to Catholics who send their children to public schools on the plea that they get a better education there?**

I would say to Catholics who send their children to public schools when there is a Catholic school within reach, that they are violating a grave law of their religion, and that no supposed temporal advantages can be sufficient compensation for that. Secondly, I would challenge their statement that their children will get a better education at state schools. Is it a "better" education to fit a child for this life by reading, writing and arithmetic than to fit it for both this life and the next by a solid formation in religion, reading, writing, and arithmetic? What is the use of bringing forth children to temporal life, if they are brought forth to eternal death? If a parent gives life, let him give life indeed, not only in this world, but in heaven also. Education, to be complete, must embody the formation of the whole being, intellectual and moral, body, mind, and soul. The spiritual atmosphere is entirely absent from the state school. My own education as a Protestant was entirely in state schools, and I know by experience the irreligious atmosphere that prevails. They are no place for Catholic children. Conversing with me recently, an Anglican clergyman deplored the fact that only about 10 per cent of Anglicans practiced their religion. He blamed state school secular education. "We Anglicans," he said, "played the part of Judas when we handed our children over to the tender mercies of the state, and accepted the policy of free, compulsory, and secular education." And a Catholic parent who sends his children to a state school without absolute necessity is also playing the part of Judas.

Finally, if a Catholic means by "better education" merely a "better secular education," then facts are against him in the form of actual results; and also the judgment of many Protestants who send their children to Catholic schools, precisely for their secular education, stipulating that they are not to receive religious instruction. However, the arguments of those Catholics who prefer to send their children to state schools are not reasons, but excuses. The real reason is their own lack of faith, human respect, worldly ambitions, and ignorance of their religious obligations towards God, as well as of their parental obligations towards their children.

**1336. If it is a sin to send Catholic children to state schools, it must be a sin for Catholic adults to accept employment as teachers in the state schools.**

The fact that Catholic teachers are employed in state schools has nothing to do with the case. We do not say that the subjects taught are evil in themselves. We merely say that the omission of religion from the curriculum renders the system unsuitable for Catholic children. Catholic teachers are quite free in conscience to teach such subjects as are taught; and if non-Catholic parents are content with such subjects only, which are good as far as they go, Catholics are free to teach such subjects. The teachers are not responsible for the omission of religion. Again, since the teaching of secular subjects is not evil, and since Catholics are compelled to pay practically a quarter of the taxes necessary to keep the state schools going, it is only right that Catholics should share in the employment their own taxes help to provide.

Meantime, it is not enough from the child's point of view that secular education only should be given. And Catholic parents sin gravely if they deprive their children of a sound Catholic education. Consequently, Catholic parents are not free in conscience to send their children to state schools for the inadequate education given there.

**1337. Why do Catholics demand state aid for the teaching of religion in their Catholic schools?**

All that Catholics ask is that the normal secular education prescribed by the government and given in Catholic schools be provided for out of public educational funds collected by taxation from all citizens

alike, whether Catholic or non-Catholic. If both Catholics and non-Catholics provide the funds, the children of both Catholics and non-Catholics have a right to benefit by them.

The government has not done its duty unless it provides for the secular education of all taxpayers' children alike. And, whilst the state has the right to exact a given standard of secular education, it has not the right to dictate the nature of education as such. And education as such includes more than merely secular subjects. The state has not the right to dictate the kind of education to be given, because parental rights come before state rights where the upbringing of children is concerned. Families make the state; the state does not make the families.

Again, the state cannot say to Catholics, "The schools are there." For the schools are not there. If the Catholics of the United States took advantage of the state system tomorrow, and sent their 3,000,000 children now in Catholic schools to them, the State could not possibly provide accommodation for them, or teachers. And it would cost the States millions of dollars yearly to undertake their education. The Catholic schools are run at a third of that cost, owing to the unselfish dedication of their lives to the work by brothers and nuns. If the state's choice lies between educating Catholic children in its own schools or paying for the secular education given in Catholic schools, the latter would be by far the better business proposition, And all it would mean is that the taxes paid by Catholic parents would be used for Catholic children instead of being diverted to the education of other people's children.

**1338. How can you infer that the public school system is intended for non-Catholics only?**

I do not. Those who brought in the state school system intended it for Catholics and non-Catholics alike. But this intention of the legislators was nullified by the legislators themselves when they mapped out a program of education which not all could accept in conscience. Supposing that I had two friends, one of whom was a very good Jew, and who had told me repeatedly that he would never eat ham. Supposing, further, that I invited these two friends to dinner, and to make the case more exact, made them pay for their share of the dinner in advance. Yet notwithstanding my knowledge of the Jew's principles, I provide only ham as food. Would it be much consolation for the Jew were I to tell him that I intended the meal for him also? And would he be unreasonable in refusing to eat, or would I be unreasonable in having provided a fare which I knew quite well he could not eat? And again, would he be unreasonable in asking for his share of the expenses, that he might procure suitable food for himself?

**1339. But does it not seem reasonable that, if non-Catholics are contented with the state system whilst Roman Catholics wish to have their own schools, they should pay for the education of their own children in them?**

Catholics are more than willing to pay for the education of their own children in their own schools. They merely object to paying for the education of your children in state schools. If Catholics receive the share of the education tax which they pay, they are still paying for the education of their own children.

**1340. Why should the government subsidize the schools of a section of the people?**

There is no reason at all why the government should subsidize any schools independently erected by any section of the public. In that I agree with you. Catholic schools ought not to be subsidized. But Catholics are not asking for any subsidy. The voting of a subsidy to any given work of public benefit is not an act of justice; it is rather one of benevolence. Catholics ask for strict justice; that the taxes they pay towards the education of America's children will be devoted to their children.

**1341. Does not "state aid" imply a sort of "free gift" to Catholics?**

No, unless it be quite misunderstood. Catholics want to educate their own children at their own expense. And they will be doing that, if the taxes they themselves pay are allotted to the education of their own children. Catholics merely ask relief from the confiscation of their contributions and the giving of their taxes as a "free gift" to non-Catholics in non-Catholic schools. In reality, non-Catholics are drawing "state aid," in the bad sense of that word, from Catholics for the support of state schools which Catholics do not and cannot use.

**1342. Because I am a Protestant I am naturally opposed to state aid to Catholic schools.**

Does Protestantism demand that taxes paid by Catholic parents may not be used for the education of the children of those parents?

**1343. I admit the right of parents to provide for the moral and religious training of their children.**

I am glad that you do admit that right. Otherwise you would deprive parents of their own children and make them the property of the state. But the very basis of society is the family. The family comes before the state. For the state is but the mutual association of many domestic groups, and it exists for the welfare of those groups. But granting your admission that parents have the radical right to make complete provision for their children's bodily, moral, and religious welfare, you admit the right of Catholics to have a system of education they can in conscience approve. And, as a matter of fact, the legal standing of Catholic schools is accepted in our midst. But, if the government recognizes the right of our schools to exist, it should recognize the justice of the claim upon public funds for the public service those schools render to the country.

**1344. But this does not mean that I am opposed to a sound religious training.**

Where will the children get that training? If you want a child trained as a lawyer, you send him to a law school; if as a doctor, to a medical school. And if every child should receive a sound religious training it should go to a religious school. In a recent address Prof. G. V. Portus, who lectures in history at the Adelaide University, said that he could see no logical argument in favor of secular education, if one believed in religion. "If religion is a force in life," he said, "why should it be barred from the schools, except as a special extra in charge of visiting clergymen."

**1345. I regret as much as anyone the widespread driftage from religion.**

You regret the effect, yet take no steps to abolish the cause. If children are sent to schools where religion is not taught how can they be otherwise than ignorant of religion? And ignorance of religion does not fill churches. If Protestant clergymen complain of empty churches, they have not far to go for the cause. They and their people have accepted a secular system of education, and the product is an irreligious generation with merely a secular outlook on life. Their very complaints justify the wisdom of Catholics in keeping their Catholic schools, even though it has been at the cost of such great self-sacrifice. And the more they see that Catholics were justified, the less they should oppose the Catholic demand that the burden should be removed from them.

**1346. But surely Sunday School, the weekly visit to the state school by the clergyman, and the religious training given by parents at home is enough.**

If so, why have you to regret the widespread driftage from religion amongst non-Catholics? As a matter of fact, religious indifference has grown to such an extent that most non-Catholic parents have no religious practices themselves, and cannot be bothered either to send their children to Sunday School or to give them any religious instruction at home. And the weekly visit of a clergyman to the state schools is much more often omitted than fulfilled. The only sane system for people who do believe in religion is to have schools in which the subject of religion and its practice are inculcated side by side with other subjects, and daily as a regular feature of the curriculum. And Catholics should not have their share of the taxes confiscated and spent upon other people's children merely because they have seen the wisdom of this.

The Social Problem

**1347. I admire your efforts in what you believe to be the truth, but you are only diverting people's attention from the real business of life.**

I believe absolutely in the Divinity of Christ, and He declared that the real business of life is to seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice. Nothing will ever persuade me that He was mistaken.

**1348. Do you know that American factories, kept going at full efficiency, could supply this world, and four others, with all necessary material requirements?**

I have no hesitation in describing that as a hopeless exaggeration. But that is a minor point. Let us go on.

**1349. If so, why the poor?**

Because, whatever the efficacy of production, the limitations of human wisdom, and the moral deficiencies in human character will always result in an uneven distribution. The poor will not always be a reality amongst men because good men want them to be poor. They will be a reality because even the best of men will fail to devise a really perfect system of administration; and because there will always be ambitious, covetous, evil, yet clever men who will want to be rich at the expense of others. And Christ predicted the sad fact of continued poverty precisely because He knew both the limitations of human wisdom, and the moral depravity ever likely to assert itself in human nature. We must do our best to improve human knowledge and correct the moral depravity. But so long as the human race exists we shall never entirely succeed in our task. Our Lord foresaw this, and foretold it. But you ignore the realities of life, take it for granted that human nature is what it is not, and live in a world of dreams.

**1350. Why do men try to bring about an artificial scarcity by destroying the fruits of the earth whilst people starve?**

They would argue that a too plentiful supply of any given commodity will so lower prices that the very growers will not get a sufficient return for their labor, and would themselves be reduced practically to starvation. I certainly agree that they have some kind of right to protect themselves from this point of view. But it is certainly wrong to destroy good food supplies whilst the poor and workless are without sufficient nourishment. It is here that government authority could be used to prevent the destruction of food. If it can be dumped in the ocean with no financial return to anybody, it could be dumped into government receiving depots, and issued free of charge to relief workers and dole recipients. Prices would thus be maintained for those who could afford to purchase their own supplies; and the surplus would benefit those who cannot. I can foresee difficulties in practice arising out of this suggestion, but they should not be insurmountable.

The Social Duty of the Church

**1351. I definitely affirm that if our spiritual leaders would concentrate on solving the problem of starvation in the midst of plenty, this world would be a much happier place.**

I am tempted to ask who is your "spiritual leader," and to what extent you submit to his guidance. Here it is you who offer to be the guide. I do not deny for a moment that the world would be a happier place if the problem of starvation in the midst of plenty were solved. But I might mention that Christ sent His Church to concentrate upon the salvation of souls, and to drill into men that, whatever comes or goes, they must seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice. In obedience to that teaching of the Church, it is for men to let God's justice extend to their human relationships. In a thoroughly Christian spirit those in charge of the administration of the temporal welfare of humanity must concentrate on the problem of starvation in the midst of plenty. If rulers and politicians have abandoned the Christian spirit and have neglected this duty, then there is no sense in attacking the spiritual leaders whose advice has been ignored.

**1352. Millions, in needless suffering, are compelled to exist on the dole until we get back to prosperity.**

Correct. But you must distribute the blame in the right quarters. I deny that any advice from our spiritual leaders has led to such a sad state of affairs. And I deny that they have been silent about it.

**1353. Are the fortunate of more concern to God than the unfortunate?**

No. St. James writes very emphatically on that point. Listen to his words. "Hearken, my brethren," he writes, "hath not God chosen the poor man? Do not the rich oppress you by might? And do they not draw you before the judgment seats? Do they not blaspheme the good name that is invoked upon you? Go to now, ye rich men. Weep and howl in your miseries which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted: and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you; and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. Behold the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down your fields which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth; and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts."

That does not sound as if the fortunate are of more concern to God than the unfortunate.

**1354. I venture to say that, if our spiritual leaders, politicians, and journalists were put on the dole until the problem of starvation were solved, we would have a permanent solution within a week.**

I cannot agree with you. The problem is more complex than that. Also why do you leave out the millionaires, bankers, commercial magnates, and those generally who have actual control of the wealth of this world? Spiritual advice, political legislation, and streams of ink from journalists' pens are not sufficient in themselves to reform the world.

**1355. The suffering is caused in the main through the sheer callousness and indifference of the many well-placed, who are too selfish and in-human to give this problem proper scientific and intelligent attention.**

If that be so, you were not justified in transferring your attack to ecclesiastical leaders. But I do not think that even now you are entirely right. Bewilderment, as much as callousness and indifference, leaves us with this problem. Even amongst the well-placed there are many worried people who are most anxious to remedy things. But the problem is most complex. The world is flooded with social theories, economic plans, financial suggestions, and political ideologies; and with no centralized international control a chaos has resulted which seems almost beyond the management of man. The human race has undoubtedly deserved the distress that has come upon it both for its past and present sins. And it should at least learn some humility from the thought of its limited abilities. Men have tried to get on without God, and God has left them to it. The results are not very encouraging. But it is the duty of all who can do so to labor for the alleviation of distress wherever an opportunity presents itself.

**1356. it would be interesting to know whom Romanism would select as an escort, to point out to Jesus if He came to this world, the development of the Gospel.**

I do not know that very much interest attaches to the question as to who would be selected for that duty. Nor would our Lord require a guide. Being God, He would know all things without being told. He would know how the Catholic Church has done her best, under great difficulties, to teach her children their Christian religion, how she has pleaded, day in and day out, for social justice and charity; how she has defended the Gospels and the truth He revealed against the forces of unbelief, whilst other professing Christians have made concession after concession to rationalism and the spirit of the age; how she has fought for moral standards, insisting on the integrity of marriage, opposing divorce, birth control, companionate unions, abortion, euthanasia, and the breakdown in morals generally which has followed in the wake of materialism and unbelief; how she has inspired the saints of the ages, a St. Bernard, a St. Francis of Assisi, a Father Damien to consecrate his life to the lepers, thousands of nuns to devote themselves to caring for the orphan, or for the sick in hospitals, or for unwanted old people in homes where the love of God reigns supreme; how the world has hated her, and obstructed her because of it; how prejudice has reviled her; and tyrants have felt it essential to persecute and cripple her. He would know all that, and would proclaim her His own.

**1357. How would the escort explain the slums, the disease, the suffering and poverty and unhappiness and misery; and the magnificent buildings that house the rich?**

Partly by the inevitable conditions of this world, partly by the neglect and sloth of people themselves; chiefly by the neglect of Catholic teaching and principles, especially during the last four hundred years since the Protestant Reformation, a movement which is foundering in the quicksands of materialism and secularism, with an "each man for himself" policy in the scramble for earthly goods, as if there were no hereafter at all.

**1358. Jesus satisfied the hunger of the people after three days.**

You must not make the mistake of thinking that Jesus came to fill the stomachs of hungry people. He multiplied bread for the particular group that was with Him. But there were other hungry people elsewhere, and as God, He knew of their existence. Yet He did not multiply bread for them. And why did He multiply bread for those to whom He had been speaking? Was it merely to satisfy their hunger? No. He did so as a miraculous guarantee-of the truth of His teaching. But, like many other people, they were not interested in spiritual truth; they were interested only in their full stomachs. And if you look up John VI., 26, you will see Christ's reaction to that. For He said, "Amen, Amen, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you." In other words, Christ wrought the miracle to lead them to faith in Him and to the eternal life above and beyond this life. But they ignored that primary purpose, and took only a materialistic view based on present earthly

benefits. He blamed them, as He would blame you for quoting His action in favor of a purely economic relief. Are you interested in soup-or in salvation?

### Catholicism and Capitalism

#### **1359. Does not the Catholic Church defend the right of private property because she owns about one-third of it?**

The Church does not own about one-third, or anything like it. In any case what is the Catholic Church? The Catholic Church is composed of Catholics, and if Catholics like to show some devotion to God and their religion and set apart portions of their earnings for the purposes of religion instead of reserving all they have for themselves, who can justly complain? Certainly one who does not know what such unselfish generosity means should have the grace to be silent. Nor does the Church support the principle of private ownership because the Catholic community has devoted its savings to Church buildings. If every single building were confiscated, the Church would still proclaim the natural moral law, and God's commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," a commandment which obviously supposes the unjust taking of property to which other individuals have a strict right.

#### **1360. Why not teach as a duty to the country that all who do not serve the community by personal service and real work should be despised as criminals?**

The Catholic Church teaches that duty to one's country is a Christian obligation, for patriotism comes under the Christian virtue of piety, a virtue dictating due regard not only for one's father but also for one's fatherland or nation.

But when you restrict duty to one's country to the matter of civic service, you introduce merely a special aspect of the question. Let us see.

Should those who do not benefit the community by personal service and real work be despised as criminals? That of course depends upon the question as to whether it is a crime not to give such service. We must examine the law.

Now firstly, since a man is obliged to preserve the life God gives him, he is obliged to take the means to do so, and if work is necessary for that, he is obliged to work. And the majority of men will find personal work an obligation dictated by necessity. But if an individual is already provided for by other lawful means, as by the foresight and providence of his parents, he is not obliged to engage in lucrative or productive labor. For his own individual good, of course, he should avoid mere idleness which is a source of many evils, and find some occupation.

Now what about social good?

Undoubtedly personal service and productive work are of great importance to the social good, but that obligation is general, and does not fall necessarily upon this or that particular individual. Such service by a given individual is to be highly commended, but he is not obliged to render it. It would be an act of charity towards his fellow citizens, but not a duty in strict justice.

#### **1361. We see rich men who do not work, but get an income which others have to provide. Do you support these capitalists?**

I hold no brief for the defense of rich men. But we must talk common sense. The fact that some rich men do not work in the way that you would interpret work does not render them criminals. If they are sufficiently provided for, they are not obliged to toil for their personal existence.

As far as their income is concerned, that income may be derived from honest sources or from dishonest sources. If from dishonest sources, it is to be denounced and the Catholic Church does denounce it, ordering restitution to those from whom it is dishonestly derived. But a wealthy man's income may be derived from perfectly honest sources, and in that case you have no right to say that others have to provide it, as if it were wrung from them against their will and their just rights.

Would you say that a grocer lives on an income which others have to provide? You get your tin of salmon, and he gets his two bits. Supposing that his business thrives? As long as each individual transaction is honest, his income is honestly come by. If he becomes wealthy and retires from active work, you still cannot argue that others have to provide his income. And if he leaves his wealth to his son, that son



honestly inherits his father's wealth, and you cannot say that others have to provide that son's income, as if the original wealth had never been acquired by rendering due service to others.

Meantime, even as regards present social good, the owner of the wealth is obliged to render personal service to the community by paying proportionate income taxes for the upkeep of public services, and does so in addition by merely living in the country and circulating the money he spends for personal requirements and in giving employment, etc.

You are so sweeping in your ideas that you would be in great difficulty in hundreds of practical cases. If a man starts an honest business and it prospers, at what stage will his income become dishonest merely because increasing?

Think the matter over.

**1362. Your Church would bless their gifts.**

You have a most peculiar outlook. You were blaming wealthy men who render no personal service to the community. Now you want to blame the Church for blessing them when they do. If a wealthy man donates a portion of his income to religious or charitable institutions, he is rendering service to the community. Money does not evaporate when given to such institutions of great social benefit. It is promptly spent, and upon necessities. At least try to be consistent.

**1363. Would you bless gifts from a criminal which have been stolen?**

No. But gifts from a man possessing honestly acquired wealth are not the gifts of a criminal which have been stolen. When principle forbids the acceptance of money, the Catholic Church is not impressed by any considerations of expediency.

**1364. Why not take literally Christ's words that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven? And that means impossibility.**

Normally the rich man experiences greater difficulty than the poor man, for the rich man has much upon which to set his heart, even to the forgetting of God.

That Christ did not intend to say that it is impossible for a rich man to enter heaven is evident from the preceding verse where He says, "It is hard for a rich man to enter heaven." To express this difficulty more strongly He merely fell back on a proverbial expression, and once we know that He is using a proverb we know that we must not take the literal but the proverbial sense of the words. Now the camel and the needle formed a common proverb among the Jews at the time to express any improbability. If a Jew said "Caesar himself is coming to Jerusalem," another would express his doubts by replying "yes-and a camel will walk through the eye of a needle." The Jews had many similar proverbs to express unlikelihood -such as "You'll tell me next that a tortoise can race a hare," or "Why don't you tell me you have an elephant in your purse"-or again, "I'd rather believe that a woman was at a loss for words." But the proverb chosen by Christ was particularly suitable. It symbolized a rich man, his back burdened with goods as the back of a camel with a hump trying to pass through the narrow gate in the walls of Jerusalem known as the Needle, or to limit his desires to the narrow restrictions of virtue imposed by the law of God. Our Lord's words, therefore, are to be taken proverbially, not literally; and His expression in the previous verse shows without doubt that he meant to say riches are an obstacle in the way of salvation, not that riches render such salvation absolutely impossible.

**THE END OF VOL. 3**