

Cath. Church - Doctrine

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OF THE  
*Living God*  
LIVING GOD

THE PILLAR AND THE GROUND OF TRUTH "

AN APPEAL TO OUR THINKING AND REASON-  
ING FELLOW-CHRISTIANS OUTSIDE OF  
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

BY

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BY REV. R.

*“I believe in the holy Catholic Church.”*

• —8th Art. of Apostles' Creed.

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## “THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

THE PILLAR AND THE GROUND OF TRUTH.”

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The above is the title given by St. Paul<sup>1</sup> to what we now commonly call “The Church.” That a body exists at present, as in the time of the Apostle, known by this name of “The Church of the Living God” or “The Christian Church,” is what no one can deny. All men are also in agreement about the purpose of its existence, namely: 1. To duly worship the Supreme Being; 2. To impart a knowledge of all necessary supernatural truth; 3. To teach strict morality; 4. To supply human nature with the necessary supernatural aids to know and to do all that God requires, in order to attain everlasting salvation.

Any institution organized for any other purpose, or that includes not these four, may be a corporation, club, company or society, but a church it cannot be. Moreover, no one—especially no Christian—will deny, that to successfully carry out such purposes, divine aid is absolutely necessary; for each of them is entirely beyond the capabilities of human nature. Accordingly,

1. I. Tim. iii. 15.

that organization that makes profession of them, must first, and above all other things, have God for its author. A mere man-made thing, assuming such an undertaking on purely human lines, cannot for a moment be considered or called the "Church of the Living God." No sane body of human beings ever existed who would make profession of infallibly teaching all truth about the natural order. For the first thing they should know, if they know anything, is that, necessarily, they must be ignorant of it themselves. How much more ignorant must they be of all supernatural truth which they have no means either of knowing or of distinguishing from error?

Hence it follows that "this Church of the Living God, the pillar and the ground of truth," must be divine, both in its origin, in its characteristics, and in its endowments.

#### **THE CHURCH OF GOD MUST BE DIVINE IN ITS ORIGIN.**

Amongst all the various bodies organized for religious purposes, there are but two that can claim, or that do really and unequivocally claim, that God originated them. These are also the only two whose claims history supports, and which other creeds will admit, namely, the Jewish Church and the Christian Church. The former, their own Scriptures declare, was but temporary, and preparatory for the latter. With the coming of their Messiah it passed with all its endowments, divine revelations, moral code and permanent ordinances, into the new and more perfect dispensation established by Him.

History tells of the human founders of all other churches, and quotes Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, as the sole originator of the Christian (called from the beginning) the Catholic Church.

Whilst admitting this genesis, and consequently the divinity of origin, some—who are called from this Protestants—protest that it fell away and ceased to be God's Church. If it did, it wanted the first and most elemental characteristic of all others of God's works that we are acquainted with, namely, indestructibility. Now, we know that the Creator has not left it in the power of any, or of all His creatures combined, to destroy the very least of His works; neither the smallest atom that floats in the sunbeam, no more than any of the mighty orbs that revolve in space. How is it conceivable that He would make an exception in favor, or rather against, that work about which He seems to have been more concerned than about any other? Of the rest it is said: "He spoke and they were made: He commanded and they were created: He hath established them for ever and for ages of ages: He hath made a decree and it shall not pass away."<sup>1</sup> But of the Church, the same inspired Psalmist sang: "The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains." "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion above all the tabernacles of Jacob."<sup>2</sup> Yet there are those who would have us believe that, after God had thus done everything that He could do to preserve this, His cherished work, it became corrupted, was disintegrated and practically destroyed, so that it needed man's interference to recreate and reestablish it! This, too,

1. Ps. xlviii. v 6. 2. Ps. lxxxvi.

is asserted in the face of the most positive Scripture evidence that it was impossible.

### THE TRUE CHURCH IS INDESTRUCTIBLE.

Indestructibility is a characteristic which distinguishes all the works of God. The opposite is indelibly impressed on all the works of man. The former is apparent in the Church's persistence in the state the Saviour left it and in its continuity or perpetuity.

The perpetuity of the Church is repeatedly foretold in Sacred Scripture. At the Annunciation the angel said to Mary that the Son who was to be born of her should "reign over the house of Jacob *forever*, and of His *Kingdom there shall be no end.*"<sup>1</sup> Now, all interpreters agree that "His Kingdom" is His Church. To Peter our Saviour Himself said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell *shall not prevail* against it."<sup>2</sup> How dare any one say that they will, or can, or have done so? In the final words of St. Matthew's gospel, our Lord is reported as saying: "Go ye, teach all nations . . . and behold I am with you *all days, even to the consummation of the world.*"<sup>3</sup> Here the perpetual presence of Christ with His Church, without a single day's interruption, until the end of the world, is plainly promised. How then could it fall away?

So plainly and palpably present has He been, that even if the Sacred Scriptures contained not a single sentence promising it, we would be compelled to be-

1. Luke i. 32, 33. 2. Matt. xvi. 18. 3. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,



lieve it by the evidences afforded by the Church's record of storms encountered, and of battles fought and won, with such overwhelming odds against her, that only by divine power could she have conquered and survived. And the outcome of all has been, unlike that of all other deadly conflicts, she comes out stronger numerically than at any other time in her past history. To-day she is more vigorous in action, more constant to principle, more successful in converting, than ever before. No sooner were the secessions of the sixteenth century completed in the Old World, than acquisitions in Japan and the New World compensated for them. Never did such a galaxy of saints and apostles shine, as brightened her firmament at the time when there fell from it many that promised to be to her a special glory and honor. Steadily but surely she is recovering all the lost ground in England, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. To-day, far from showing signs of that decay which all others so sadly lament, she was never more healthy; never was she more compact, more united, more seemingly indestructible. Three hundred millions dutifully acknowledge her sway.

The immense resources of wonderfully well-equipped rival organizations (in a worldly sense), have been and are being vainly used against her. All combined, they have yet their first nation to convert. She has converted all the nations of the world that claim to be Christian, without the exception of even the smallest.

To the temporal power of the popes and the favor of temporal potentates, her perpetuity was long at-

tributed. Both have been lost to her, the latter for over a quarter of a century, and she has suffered no perceptible detriment therefrom.

Modern discoveries have driven others into practical rejection of their basic principles, or into minimizing or putting them out of sight as the ostrich hides its head in the sand, in the vain hope of thereby escaping detection. She stands out in the open, meets and welcomes all comers, knowing that any that shall seem contradictory to her teachings will, by impact with her, be dissipated into thin vapor, like the buffeting ocean waves on the rock-bound shore, and serve but to hide the unsightly view of the old time wrecks strewn the ocean, over which she proudly towers.

From science, literature, the arts, she who was their best, and, for centuries, their only patron and fosterer, has nothing to fear. All the great universities and schools of the Old World, with the exception of a few modern ones, owe their origin to her. Vaguer than the crude histories of Asiatic countries would be the history of Europe to-day but for her. The classic works of Greece and Rome would have perished with these languages, if she had not preserved both, by the labors of her ministers. Europe would be but an unindexed museum, like India, Egypt and Asia Minor if, in spite of the invasions of barbarians from the North, East and South, whither her light had not penetrated, or where it had been put out, she had not kept the flame alight in her convents and monasteries, until it burst out into the blaze of modern civilization, which is of and from her. For with the discovery of the art of printing and of the New World, its effulgence—solely through her



efforts and patronage—reached its mid-day splendor in the sixteenth century, when the so-called Reformation almost extinguished it again. And not even yet have painting, sculpture, and architecture, recovered from the rude shocks they then received. The little she was able to make secure of the great works of art in the museum of the Vatican, was and is, incomparably, the best in the world, so that even still, no artist or scholar considers his education complete, who has not studied there. All this is incontestible evidence of her vitality, at the very time she was thought to be dead or dying.

But some prophets of ill omen tell us that it is the developments of the future, that the old Church cannot outlive. The present and coming freedom of thought and action will be the death of her old-time slowness and conservatism. As well predict that the flywheel will not be able to keep up with the machinery in the power house. The latter would all go to smash without the former, and so would modern society without the restraint of the Catholic Church. The only effective check now on its too-fast pace are her doctrinal, moral and devotional teachings and practices, and whatever little of them those carried away who broke loose from her communion. Whilst she can very well get along without modern society's ways, it cannot possibly subsist without her ancient restraints. It will break up before she does. Besides, her palmiest days were those when human liberty was most respected. Hence, she thrives in America and pines in Russia, Turkey and every place where liberty is trampled upon and enlightenment despised.

In whatever things modern society is running coun-

ter to her teaching—as in divorce and education—it must, sooner or later, come back to her standard or be wrecked. “One jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled”<sup>1</sup> is the decree of her divine Founder and “heaven and earth shall pass away before His word can be made void.” It and its upholder, the Catholic Church, are indestructible.

Human institutions are continually changing; she is the one sole institution that changes not. Republican and autocratic, monarchical and social, she is all kinds of governments in one, and equally well suited to each, without altering her own. Hence she saw the rise, decline and fall of every species of government of the past, and was at the birth of each new one now subsisting; she will likewise survive their demise. Thrones have tottered and fallen; hers being spiritual, is not liable to decay. Amidst the universal ruins of earthly monuments she is the only one standing proudly pre-eminent: she is indefectible.

### THE TRUE CHURCH IS INFALLIBLE.

Ever so little reflection will convince any one that the Lord might as well not have founded His Church if He had not made it incapable of erring. Man could not be bound to follow a guide that might lead him astray. When the Church took charge of him he was straying; what great difference could it make to him whether it was towards the right or towards the left his wandering footsteps tended? God could not oblige him to believe, under penalty of damnation—“he that

1. Matt. v. 18.

believeth not shall be condemned"—without giving him an infallible teacher to make known what he had to believe, under such an appalling alternative. Thoroughly convinced that the Church was such a God-given teacher, never did her children waver in their persuasion that she was infallible. This is the reason that, to the present day, it has not been formally defined as a dogma of faith; nor is it likely to be, for no believer in Christ and His Church can consistently call it in question. Yet is there no doctrine of Christianity so universally impugned by those outside the Church's fold. It is on this account it is here dwelt upon at length.

That the Church was infallible in Apostolic times, is what hardly any one bearing the name Christian would deny. The Apostles' declarations are not and never were questioned. They were the *only* authority in the Church during almost the whole of the first century; for the New Testament was not completed until the close of it. But the early Church had no such need of infallible teachers as after ages. With the memory of the words and deeds of the Master still fresh, the Apostles were much less likely to make mistakes than their successors, who could not possibly keep from error, if with the Apostles' power of baptizing, confirming, ordaining, governing, etc., they did not inherit their prerogative of teaching infallibly. Besides, can it be entertained for a moment that God loved less those of the second and twentieth centuries, than the few infidels and idolaters of the first, of whom so dreadful an account is given by St. Paul: "As they cared not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate

sense, to do those things which are not becoming, being filled with all wickedness, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without affection, without mercy.”<sup>1</sup>

Over and above these presumptive arguments, we have positive evidence from Scripture, that the Church cannot err in her teachings. Our blessed Lord, in constituting St. Peter Prince of His Apostles, says to him: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”<sup>2</sup> Christ makes here a solemn prediction that no error shall ever invade His Church; and if she fell into error, the gates of hell have certainly prevailed against her.

The Reformers of the sixteenth century affirm that the Church did fall into error; that the gates of hell did prevail against her; that from the sixth to the sixteenth century she was a sink of iniquity. The Book of Homilies of the Church of England says that the Church “lay buried in damnable idolatry for eight hundred years and more.” The personal veracity of our Saviour and of the Reformers is here at issue, for our Lord makes a statement which they contradict. Who is to be believed, Jesus or the Reformers?

If the prediction of our Saviour about the preservation of His Church from error be false, then He was not God, since God cannot err. He is not even a Prophet, since He predicted falsehood. Nay; He is an impostor, and all Christianity is a miserable failure and a huge deception, since it rests on a false Prophet.

But if Jesus predicted the truth when He declared that the gates of hell should not prevail against His

1. Romans i. 28. 2. Matt. xvi. 18.

Church—and who dare deny it?—then the Church never has, and never could have fallen from the truth; then the Catholic Church is infallible, for she is the only Church that is acknowledged to have existed from the beginning, and she alone claims that prerogative. She had for her Architect, that wise builder mentioned in the Gospel, “who built his house upon a rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.”<sup>1</sup>

Jesus sends forth the Apostles with plenipotentiary powers to preach the Gospel. “As the Father,” He says, “hath sent Me, I also send you.”<sup>2</sup> “Going therefore, teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”<sup>3</sup> “Preach the Gospel to every creature.”<sup>4</sup> “Ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.”<sup>5</sup>

This commission evidently applies not to the Apostles only, but also to their successors, to the end of time; since it was utterly impossible for the Apostles personally to preach to the whole world.

Not only does our Lord empower His Apostles to preach the Gospel, but He commands, and under the most severe penalties, those to whom they preach to listen and obey. “Whosoever will not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth from that house or city, shake the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that

1. Matt. vii. 24, et seq.

2. John xx. 21.

3. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

4. Mark. xvi. 15.

5. Acts i. 8.



city.”<sup>1</sup> “If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.”<sup>2</sup> “He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be condemned.”<sup>3</sup> “He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me.”<sup>4</sup>

From these passages, we see, on the one hand, that the Apostles and their successors have received full powers to announce the Gospel; and on the other, that their hearers are obliged to listen with docility, and to obey with internal assent of the intellect. If, therefore, the Catholic Church could preach error, would not God Himself be responsible for the error? And could not the faithful soul say to God with all reverence and truth: ‘Thou hast commanded me, O Lord, to hear Thy Church; if I am deceived by obeying her, Thou art the cause of my error.

But we may rest assured that an all-wise Providence who commands His Church to speak in His name, will so guide her in the path of truth, that she shall never lead into error those that follow her guidance. All this imports but one thing, that she is infallible.

As this was an extraordinary favor the time and manner of bestowing it, and the words in which it was conveyed, betoken its importance. Shortly before His death, Jesus consoles His disciples by this promise: “I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, *that He may abide with you forever.* . . . But when He, the spirit of truth, shall come, *He will teach you all truth.*”<sup>5</sup>

1. Matt. x. 14, 15.  
4. Luke x. 16.

2. Matt. xviii. 16.  
5. John xiv. 10; xvi. 13.

3. Mark xvi. 16.

The following text of the same import, forms the concluding words recorded of our Saviour in St. Matthew's Gospel: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."<sup>1</sup>

These words of Jesus Christ establish two important facts: 1. A promise that His presence with the Church will be continuous, without any interval of absence, to the consummation of the world. 2. A promise to guard His Church from all error at all times.

And this is also the sentiment of St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians: God "gave some indeed Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and others Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all meet in the unity of faith, . . . that we may no more be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men, in craft, by which they lie in wait to deceive."<sup>2</sup>

As we know that the mission of the Son of God was to place within reach of every one the means of salvation, there can be no room for a doubt about His having specially provided for that, which, of all others, is most essential—a knowledge of God and of the Saviour: "This is eternal life that they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent."<sup>3</sup>

This knowledge, certainly, is not merely of the

1. Matt. xxviii. 11-14.

2. Eph. iv. 11-14.

3. Ju. xvii. 3.

names "God and Jesus Christ," but of all that has been divinely revealed concerning both. This alone can be truly called "knowing God." To attain it and the eternal life attached thereto, an infallible teacher is as necessary to earthly wayfarers as an unerring compass is to the mariner, who would safely traverse the ocean to a haven on the opposite shore. Were the needle as liable to point south, east, or west as north, the ship guided by it would never reach its destination. Thank God! in the infinitely more important voyage to the eternal shore, the needed reliable guide has been supplied in an indicator and director that likewise cannot err—that are infallible.

### THE TRUE CHURCH IS ONE.

How could it possibly be otherwise, unless the self-contradictory assumption be made, that there are two supreme beings? In the supposition that there may be more than one true Church, is included, that they either agree in those four constituents of a church, or differ. In the former case they would be practically one; in the latter contradictory, and, therefore, all wrong, save one. Yet, singular to tell, there are many Protestants, who hold—or say they hold—that many, or all of the various churches, although directly contradicting each other, may be the Church of God, or branches of it. With those who would thus stultify reason it is difficult to argue. Yet many of these think they have a monopoly of it, and show it by adducing a simile as a *proof* of a divine truth: "As many roads may lead to the same place, so the various churches are so many ways to the one heaven." Now, as we have

seen, and as the least reflection will show : Man is the wayfarer, heaven is his destination ; the *only* way thereto is that which the Saviour pointed out : " I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me."<sup>1</sup> In many other places He repeats the same thing. He never said that His Church—much less any church—could be the way. And, neither literally nor figuratively can they be said to be ; no more than the sign-post by the roadside, whose duty is merely to point out the way to the various places. This the one only Church of God does, for the one only way, to the one only heaven. God help the poor traveller accosted at the crossing and directed to as many ways as there are " churches " ! By the time he has tried them all, his life's span may be ended. There is, however, no need of his doing so. A simple and effective means is indicated by reason, and sanctioned by it in every other quest for truth.

Moreover, this means is the only test of truth we have, and is at the same time of universal application. It is *unanimity of teaching*. To it we are indebted for all the truth we claim to know in the arts, sciences, and philosophy. All that we rely upon in history, astronomy, architecture, medicine—in fact everything we give assent to, has been acquired, not from the thoughts and notions of individuals or coteries, but from the practically unanimous consensus of those professing to know them. What justification then can we claim if we proceed otherwise in the matter of religion ? Hence, if the least doubt concerning our position arises—and a sane mind must doubt without

1. John xiv. 6.

this assurance—it is a duty imposed by reason and sanctioned by religion, to make inquiry about where this unanimity of teaching may be found. It exists in but one place, the one holy Catholic Church, wherein, as St. Paul reminded the Ephesians, there is “one body and one spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”<sup>1</sup>

This oneness in body, spirit, faith, baptism, worship and means of grace, it is that constitutes the *unity* of the Church, that mark of truth which none can be excused from inquiring after, and which only the wilfully blind cannot perceive the absence or presence of.

The Saviour of the world was most precise in indicating this unity amongst His followers, as the mark by which the world would know and believe Him, and what they said of Him. Immediately before His Passion He said: “I pray for them also who through their word shall believe in Me; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”<sup>2</sup> Certainly this prayer of Jesus for His true followers was heard, and wherever they are, they will show that it has been. There will be no divisions between them in religious matters. They will be as devoid thereof as Jesus and His eternal Father are. Only children of the Catholic Church are thus united. They alone claim to be, as indeed they are, all one in belief, in worship, in means of grace and moral observance. No differences of any kind on doctrinal points, exist amongst those hundreds

1. Eph. iv. 4.

2. John xvii. 20, 21.



of millions of every tribe, nation and tongue under heaven. To find a single congregation belonging to any other denomination, who are so, would be impossible. Yet St. Paul ranks such divisions, contentions and sects, amongst the things that exclude from the kingdom of God: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are . . . enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, *sects*, etc., of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold you, that they who do such things *shall not obtain the kingdom of God*,"<sup>1</sup> and warns the Ephesians to be especially on their guard against them: "Be careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."<sup>2</sup>

Even when only seeming differences arose in the past, the whole Church mourned them as the worst of calamities. Differences amongst others, that would be considered trifling, called forth the prayers and efforts of every child of the Church; nor were they at rest until the last vestige of discord had disappeared. The rebellious who scorn every warning, and insist on their own views, despite the decisions of the Church, are summarily dealt with. Like rotten branches, they are lopped off, no matter what consequences may result, even though it be the loss of whole provinces or countries.

In all these nineteen centuries this unanimity of teaching has remained unaltered. Not one article of her many creeds has the Catholic Church had to modify, much less recall, or attempt to explain away. The least item of her teaching has yet to be found erroneous,

1. Gal. v. 20, 21.

2. Eph. v. 3.

and the moment one mistake is proved against her, she goes down to rise no more. But the heavens will fail first. She is as unchangeable as her Founder, the unchanging God of truth.

Not less essential than unity of faith is unity of government. All the members must be united together by well defined and unequivocal bonds of superiority and subordination. And than those clear and plainly marked articulations, joining together all the members of the Catholic Church, there could be none more perfect. Whilst all her children, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant, civilized or semi-barbarous, know themselves to be on a perfect equality before God, each flock is subject to a pastor; the pastors are under the bishop; the bishops are subordinate to the universal pastor, the Vicar of Christ, who himself is the invisible head of the Church. Thus is the mystical body of Christ perfected in grace and symmetry worthy its incomparable dignity of Spouse of the Lamb. It is not a disjointed or monstrous caricature, as it certainly would be, did the jarring sects, amongst whom every doctrine of Christianity is affirmed and reciprocally denied, constitute it.

This idea of the Church being the mystical body of Christ, pervades the whole New Testament and is referred to by St. Paul in at least twelve places. "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ. . . . Or know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?"<sup>1</sup> Again in Chap. xii. verses 12, 13, and indeed throughout this whole chapter, the same idea pervades — he says:

1. I. Cor. vi. 15-19.

“ For as the body is one and hath many members and all the members of the body whereas they are many, yet are one body: so also is Christ. For in one spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles whether bond or free.” Farther down, verses 27, etc., he states again: “ Now you are the body of Christ, and members of members. And God indeed hath placed some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly doctors. . . . Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all doctors?” etc. He here plainly implies that regular hierarchical order referred to above, as one of the elements of the Church’s unity.

Only in the Catholic Church is this perfect unity of government found; from the beginning it subsisted thus. Unique and unparalleled in its kind, it unites all in a spiritual kinship which no discrepancies otherwise can sever. Hence it is, that emigrants from every clime under heaven, flocking to our shores, although they find everything else new and strange, are at once at home in all things pertaining to their religion, if they happen to be members of the Catholic Church.\*

All the other various figures under which the Church is referred to in the Sacred Scriptures convey this same idea of unity, and find their verification in the Catholic Church alone. It is called a kingdom: “ He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.”<sup>1</sup> Now in every well-regulated

\* On this and the following marks of the Church we have freely drawn on Cardinal Gibbons’ incomparable work, *THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS*, which we earnestly recommend to the perusal of our readers.

1. Luke i. 32.

kingdom there is but *one king, one form of government, one uniform body of laws*, which all are obliged to observe. In like manner, in Christ's spiritual kingdom, there must be one Chief to whom all owe spiritual allegiance; one form of ecclesiastical government; one uniform body of laws which all Christians are bound to observe, otherwise anarchy would prevail; for, "every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate."<sup>1</sup>

Our Saviour calls His Church a sheepfold. "And there shall be made one fold and one shepherd."<sup>2</sup> What more beautiful or fitting illustration of unity can we have than that which is suggested by a sheepfold? All the sheep of a flock cling together. If they are momentarily separated, they are impatient till reunited. They follow in the same path. They feed on the same pastures. They obey the same shepherd, and fly from the voice of strangers.

His Church is compared to a human body. "As in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office; so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of the other."<sup>3</sup>

The Church is compared to a vine, all whose branches, though spreading far and wide, are necessarily connected with the main stem, from whose sap they are nourished.

The Church, in fine, is called in Scripture by the beautiful title of bride or spouse of Christ, and the Christian law admits only one wife.

In fact, our common sense alone, apart from revela-

1. Matt. xii. 25.

2. John x. 16.

3. Rom. xii. 4, 5.

tion, is sufficient to convince us that God could not be the author of various opposing systems of religion. God is essentially one, and is Truth itself. How could the God of truth affirm, for instance, to one body of Christians that there are three Persons in God, and to another that there is only one Person in God? How could He say to one individual that Jesus Christ is God, and to another that He is only man. How can He tell me that the punishments of the wicked are eternal, and tell another that they are not eternal? One of these contradictory statements must be false. "God is not the God of dissension, but of peace."

Perfect unity and harmony prevails in the laws which govern the physical world that we inhabit, and in our planetary system. Each planet moves in its own sphere, and all are controlled by the central sun. Why should there not be also unity, harmony and concord in that spiritual world, the Church of God, the grandest conception of His omnipotence, and the most bounteous manifestation of His goodness and love for mankind?

How sublime and consoling is the thought, that withersoever a Catholic goes over the broad world, whether he enters his Church in Pekin or in Melbourne, in London, or Dublin, or Paris, or Rome, or New York, or San Francisco, he is sure to hear the self-same doctrine preached, to assist at the same sacrifice, and to partake of the same sacraments!

### THE TRUE CHURCH IS HOLY.

Various bodies may have various aims, the True Church can have but one, the sanctification of its mem-



bers; hence, St. Peter calls the Christians of his time "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a *holy nation*, a purchased people."<sup>1</sup>

The example of the divine Founder, Jesus Christ, the sublime moral lessons He has taught, the Sacraments He has instituted—all tend to sanctification. Behold the sublime Model that is placed before us! It is not man, nor angel, nor archangel, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "who is the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance."<sup>2</sup> His uplifted image in our churches admonishes us to "look and do according to the pattern shown on the Mount."<sup>3</sup> And from that height He seems to say to us: "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."<sup>4</sup> "Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."<sup>5</sup> "Be ye followers of God as most dear children."<sup>6</sup>

It was to sanctify the world that Christ came into it, and sent forth apostles to preach. For this, temples are built in every nation, and missionaries go forth to the extremities of the globe. God, says St. Paul, "gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and others Evangelists, and others Pastors and Doctors, for the *perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ* until we all meet unto the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man."<sup>7</sup> The moral law is the highest and holiest standard of perfection ever presented, and furnishes the strongest incentive to virtue. The same divine precepts delivered through Moses to the Jews, on Mount Sinai, the same salutary warn-

1. Pet. ii. 9.

2. Heb. i. 3.

3. Exod. xxv. 40.

4. Lev. xix. 2.

5. Matt. v. 48.

6. Eph. v. 1.

7. Eph. iv. 11-13.

ings which the prophets uttered throughout Judea, the same sublime and consoling lessons of morality which Jesus gave on the Mount, these are the lessons which the Catholic Church teaches all the year round. The Catholic preacher does not amuse his audience with speculative topics or political harangues, or any other subjects of a transitory nature. He preaches only "Christ, and Him crucified."

This code of divine precepts is enforced with as much zeal by the Catholic Church as was the decalogue of old by Moses, when he said: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt tell them to thy children; and thou shalt meditate upon them, sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising."

The first lesson taught to children in our Sunday-schools is their duty to know, love and serve God, and thus to be saints. Not only are Catholics instructed in church, but they are exhorted to peruse the Word of God, and manuals of devotion, at home. The saints of the Church, whose lives are there recorded, serve like bright stars to guide them over the stormy ocean of life to the shores of eternity. These books of piety are adapted to every want of the human soul, and are a fruitful source of sanctification. So admirable and excellent are they that there is nothing like them in all the world outside of the Church. In fact, whatever of good may be found in others, whatever of real devotion, of wise teaching, of sublime perfection there may be, are all traceable to Catholic sources. The best part of the Episcopalian "Book of Common Prayer," is but a translation from the old Catholic

Missal and Breviary. "The Imitation of Christ" is entirely Catholic, although published in a mutilated form as Protestant; as are other Catholic works of devotion. The Catholic Church alone has a system of scientific theology, any one of whose countless volumes is available for every Catholic student, whilst not one of all the non-Catholic productions of one sect is acceptable to any of the others.

Not only does the Church supply all, and more than all, the motives for virtuous living others may boast of, she also affords abundant means of sanctification they are strangers to, in her public and private prayers and devotional exercises of various kinds. In her fasts, abstinences, sublime ceremonies, religious societies, and orders of so many varieties; but, above all, in the divine sacrifice and seven sacred sacraments, there is no spiritual need that is not royally provided for there.

From all these motives and means she reaps the most abundant fruits of holiness. In every age and country she is the fruitful mother of saints. Our Ecclesiastical calendar is not confined to the names of the twelve Apostles. It is emblazoned with the lists of heroic martyrs who "were stoned, and cut asunder, and put to death by the sword"; of innumerable confessors and hermits who left all things and followed Christ; of spotless virgins who preserved their chastity for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Every day in the year is consecrated in our Martyrology to a large number of saints. And in our own times, in every quarter of the globe and in every department of life, the Church continues to raise up saints worthy of the primitive days of Christianity.

If we seek for *apostles*, we find them conspicuously wherever there is a pagan or unbeliever to be converted, or a stray-away from the fold to be brought back. This it is that fills our churches with the poor, the outcast, the sinner, for whom no one else cares. Every year records the premature deaths of young priests and young virgin toilers, amongst the sick, the orphan, the outcast, as well as of those who shed their blood amidst unheard of tortures in infidel lands. The worldly possessions of most of these, unlike the well-equipped, well-housed, well-cared-for Protestant missionary, who goes with all soothing domestic comforts, are often confined to a few books and the clothes on their backs.

Of these and the myriad hidden saints of the Church, those outside of it never hear; having only eyes to see the few scandal-givers, and ears to hear only what may be reproachful. They forget that amongst so vast a body, so varied, so prolific (because strictly living up to the moral law) many necessarily are not all they ought to be; this, however, is not because of the Church's teaching, but rather in defiance of it: "It must needs be that scandals come." Amongst the humbler classes they are apparent; amongst the rich and refined they are better concealed. Regarding both it ought be—but it is not oftentimes borne in mind that as God does not, neither can the Church, *force* any one's conscience. "Behold I set before you the way of life and the way of death." The choice rests with the individual, and should be attributed to him, not to the Church that has to endure him, even when it cannot cure him.

Walking in the footsteps of her divine Spouse, the Church never repudiates sinners, no matter how grievous or notorious may be their moral delinquencies; not because she connives at their sin, but because she wishes to reclaim them. She bids them never to despair, and tries to weaken their passions, at least, if she cannot altogether reform their lives. Mindful also of the words of our Lord: "The poor have the Gospel preached to them," the Church has a tender compassion for the victims of poverty, which has its train of peculiar temptations and infirmities. Hence, the poor and the sinners cling to her, as they clung to our Lord during His mortal life.

We know, on the other hand, that sinners who are guilty of gross crimes which shock public decency, are virtually excommunicated from Protestant Communions. And as for the poor, the public press often complains that little or no provision is made for them in Protestant Churches. Who ever saw a poor person enter an Episcopal Church or the poor in general, any but Catholic Churches? The parables descriptive of the Church which our Lord employed, clearly teach that the good and bad shall be joined together in the Church as long as her earthly mission lasts. The kingdom of God is like a field in which the cockle is allowed to grow up with the good seed until the harvest-time;<sup>2</sup> it is like a net which encloses good fish and bad until the hour of separation comes.<sup>3</sup> So, too, the Church is that great house<sup>4</sup> in which there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay.

1. Matt. xi. 5.

2. Matt. xiii. 24-37.

3. Ibid. xiii. 47.

4. II. Tim. ii. 20.



The occasional scandals existing among members of the Church do not invalidate or impair her claim to the title of sanctity. The spots on the sun do not mar its brightness. Neither do the moral stains of some members sully the brilliancy of her "who cometh forth as the morning star, fair as the moon, bright as the sun."<sup>1</sup> The cockle that grows amidst the wheat does not destroy the beauty of the ripened harvest. The sanctity of Jesus was not sullied by the presence of Judas in the apostolic college. Neither can the moral corruption of a few disciples tarnish the holiness of the Church. St. Paul calls the Church of Corinth a congregation of saints,<sup>2</sup> though he reproves some scandalous members among them.<sup>3</sup>

### THE TRUE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC.

That Catholicity is a prominent note of the Church, is evident from the Apostles' Creed, which says: "I believe in the holy *Catholic* Church." The word *Catholic*, or universal, signifies that the true Church is not circumscribed in its extent, like human empires, nor confined to one race of people, like the Jewish Church, but that she is diffused over every nation of the globe, and counts her children among all tribes and peoples and tongues of the earth.

This glorious Church is foreshadowed by the Psalmist, when he sings: "All the ends of the earth shall be converted to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight; for the kingdom is the Lord's, and He shall have dominion over the nations."<sup>4</sup> The prophet Malachy saw in the distant

1. Cant. vi. 9.

2. I. Cor. i.

3. I. Cor. v.

4. Ps. xii.

future this world-wide Church, when he wrote: "From the rising of the sun, to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in *every place* there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts."<sup>1</sup>

That the Church was to be for all, is evident from the following: "Go ye, therefore, and teach *all nations*."<sup>2</sup> "Go ye into the *whole world*, and preach the Gospel *to every creature*."<sup>3</sup> "Ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even *to the uttermost part of the earth*."<sup>4</sup>

The prophecies were fulfilled. The Apostles scattered themselves over the surface of the earth, preaching the Gospel of Christ. "Their sound," says St. Paul, "went over all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world." Within thirty years after our Saviour's crucifixion, the Apostle of the Gentiles was able to say to the Romans: "I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ because your faith is spoken of in the entire world;"—spoken of assuredly by those who were in sympathy and communion with the faith of the Romans.

St. Justin, martyr, about one hundred years after Christ, St. Irenaeus at the end of the second century, and all writers since, bear evidence to the spread and acceptance of the Gospel.

This catholicity, or universality, is not to be found in any, or in all, of the combined communions separated from the Roman Catholic Church, nor in any false religion; nor is there the slightest likelihood of any-

1. Mal. i. 11.

2. Matt. xxviii. 19.

3. Mark xvi. 15.

4. Acts i. 8.

thing bearing the name or semblance of religion, that will captivate men's hearts and win their allegiance, as Catholic Christianity has done. She is perfectly safe, therefore, in her possession. The few sects that from time to time usurp the name "Catholic," only draw on themselves the ridicule of the world. In the first and only bearer of it, is it verified and likely to remain. She has now so filled the world that there is not room for another Catholicity. Hence, but little need be said on this mark of the true Church, until the impossible comes to pass, *i. e.*, some other body makes good its claim to universality in doctrine, in time and space.

### THE TRUE CHURCH IS APOSTOLIC.

In the Creed framed in the first Ecumenical Council of Nicæa, in the year 325, we find these words: "I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic, and *Apostolic* Church."

This note of the Church implies, that the true Church must always teach the identical doctrines once delivered by the Apostles, and that her ministers must derive their powers from the Apostles by an uninterrupted succession. Consequently, no church can claim to be the true one whose doctrines differ from those of the Apostles, or whose ministers are unable to trace, by an unbroken chain, their authority to an Apostolic source; just as our Minister to England can exercise no authority in that country unless he is duly commissioned by our Government, and represents its views.

The Church, says St. Paul, is "built upon the

foundation of the Apostle,"<sup>1</sup> so that the doctrine which it propagates, must be based on Apostolic teaching. Hence St. Paul says to the Galatians: "Though an angel from heaven preach a Gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."<sup>2</sup> The same Apostle gives this admonition to Timothy: "The things which thou hast heard from me before many witnesses, the *same* commend to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also."<sup>3</sup> Timothy must transmit to his disciples only such doctrines as he heard from the lips of his master.

Not only is it required that ministers of the Gospel should conform their teaching to the doctrine of the Apostles, but also that these ministers should be ordained and commissioned by the Apostles or their legitimate successors. "Neither doth any man," says the Apostle, "take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was."<sup>4</sup> This text evidently condemns all self-constituted preachers and reformers; for, how shall they preach, unless they be sent?"<sup>5</sup> *Sent*, of course by legitimate authority, and not directed by their own caprice. Hence, we find that those who succeeded the Apostles were ordained and commissioned by them to preach, and that no others were permitted to exercise this function. Thus we are told that Paul and Barnabas "had ordained for them priests in every church."<sup>6</sup> And the Apostle says to Titus: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, . . . that thou shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee."<sup>7</sup> Even St. Paul himself, though

1. Eph. ii. 20.

2. Gal. i. 8.

3. II. Tim. ii. 2.

4. Heb. v. 4.

5. Rom. x. 15.

6. Acts xiv. 22.

7. Tit. i. 5.

miraculously called and instructed by God, had hands imposed on him,<sup>1</sup> lest others should be tempted by his example to preach without Apostolic warrant.

The subjoined table, compiled from recognized historical records, tells which one amongst the "churches" can make good its claim to this acknowledged mark of the true Church.

NAME.	FOUNDER.	DATE.
Anabaptists . . . . .	Nicolas Stork . . . . .	1521 . . . . .
Baptists . . . . .	Roger Williams . . . . .	1639 . . . . .
Cambellites, or Christians	Alex. Campbell . . . . .	1813 . . . . .
Methodists, . . . . .	John Wesley . . . . .	1739 . . . . .
Presbyterians . . . . .	General Assembly . . . . .	1560 . . . . .
Episcopalians . . . . .	Henry VIII . . . . .	1534 . . . . .
Lutherans . . . . .	Martin Luther . . . . .	1524 . . . . .
Unita'n Congrega'nalists.	Celarius . . . . .	About 1540 . . . . .
Congregauionalists, . . . . .	Robert Brown . . . . .	1583 . . . . .
Quakers . . . . .	George Fox . . . . .	1647 . . . . .

Catholic Church . . . . . Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, and Redeemer of the World, who alone was competent to found a Church, and who had no more need of man's meddling to improve, refund, or reform it, than God had of his assistance when He formed the material universe, in the beginning of all things. Indeed, on this latter, it would be less presumptuous for him to try his skill, than on that greater,

1. Acts xiii. 2, 3.



sublimar, supernatural realm, the comprehending of whose mysteries is absolutely beyond the ken of his feeble reason.

From the above it will appear, that all the "churches" save one, had their origin fifteen hundred years too late to have any pretension to the title "Apostolic." But it is said: "Although their *public* history dates from the time assigned, their origin is traceable to the Apostles." This is impossible. First of all, the very name betrays their recent birth; for who ever heard of a Baptist or an Episcopal, or any other Protestant Church, prior to the Reformation? Nor can you say: "We existed in every age as an invisible church." Your concealment, indeed, was so complete, that no man can tell, to this day, where you lay hid for sixteen centuries. But even if you did exist, you could not claim to be the Church of Christ; for our Lord predicted that His Church should ever be as a city placed upon the mountain-top, that all might see it, and that its ministers should preach the truths of salvation from the watch-towers thereof, that all might hear them.

It is equally in vain to say that you were allied in faith to the various Christian sects that went out from the Catholic Church from age to age; for these sects proclaimed doctrines diametrically opposed to one another, and the true Church must be one in faith. And besides, the less relationship you claim with many of these seceders, the better for you, as they all advocated errors against Christian truth, and some of them disseminated principles at variance with *decency* and morality.

The Catholic Church, on the contrary, can easily

vindicate the title of Apostolic, because, as all historians assert she derived her origin from the Apostles. Every priest and bishop can trace his genealogy to the first disciples of Christ with as much facility as the most remote branch of a vine can be traced to the main stem.

### THE TRUE CHURCH HAS A HEAD.

There is not, there never was, there cannot be, any well ordered body composed of human beings, without a head. A church is no exception. Whilst Christ our Lord, the founder of the one, only, true Church was on earth, He was its sole, supreme, visible head. Had He not provided another on withdrawing His visible presence, it would hardly have survived Him. The Church of God of the old dispensation was so provided. There were priests and Levites ordained to minister at the altar; and there was, also, a supreme ecclesiastical tribunal, with the high priest at its head to rule the faithful. All matters of religious controversy were referred to this tribunal; and in the last resort to the high priest, whose decision was enforced under pain of death. "If there be a hard matter in judgment between blood and blood, cause and cause, leprosy and leprosy, . . . thou shalt come to the priests of the Levitical race, and to the judge, . . . and they shall show thee true judgment. And thou shalt do whatever they say who preside in the place which the Lord shall choose, and thou shalt follow their sentence. And thou shalt not decline to the right hand, or to the left. . . . But he that . . . will refuse to obey the commandment of the priest, who ministereth at the time, . . . that man

shall die, and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel.”<sup>1</sup> From this it is evident that the high priest had supreme jurisdiction in religious matters.

Now the Jewish synagogue, as St. Paul testifies, was the type and figure of the Christian Church; for, “all things happened to them (the Jews) in figure. We must, therefore, find in the Church of Christ a spiritual judge, exercising the same supreme authority as the high priest wielded in the Old Law. For, if a supreme Pontiff was necessary, in the Mosaic dispensation, to maintain purity and uniformity of worship, the same dignitary is far more necessary now to preserve unity of faith among the various peoples composing the Church.

But some may say: “We do not deny that the Church has a Head. God Himself is its ruler.” This is evading the real question. Is not God the Ruler of all governments? “By Me,” He says, “kings reign, and lawgivers decree just things.”<sup>2</sup> He is the recognized Head of our Republic, and of every Christian family in the land; but, nevertheless, there is always presiding over the country a visible chief, who represents God on earth.

In like manner the Church, besides an invisible Head in heaven, must have a visible Head on earth. The body and members of the Church are visible; why not also the Head? The Church without a supreme ruler, would be like an army without a general, a navy without an admiral, a sheepfold without a shepherd, like a human body without a head, or any of

1. Deut. xvii.

2. Prov. viii. 15.

the many sects that are daily dividing and subdividing, "tossed about by every wind of doctrine."

But have we any positive proof that Christ did appoint a supreme ruler over His Church? To those, indeed, who read the Scriptures with the single eye of pure intention, the most abundant evidence of this fact is furnished. Like all the great leading events of the New Law we have the *Promise* of this appointment, the *Fulfilment* of the promise and the *Record* of the appointed head exercising his functions.

*Promise of the Primacy.* Our Saviour, on a certain occasion, asked His Disciples, saying: "Whom do men say that the Son of man is?" And they said: "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; and others, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets. Jesus saith to them: But whom do ye say that I am?" Peter, as usual, as the leader and spokesman, answering, said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And *I will give* to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."<sup>1</sup> Here we find Peter confessing the Divinity of Christ, and in reward for that confession he is honored with the promise of the Primacy.

1. Matt. xvi. 13-19.

The word *Peter*, in the Syro-Chaldaic tongue, which our Saviour spoke, means *a rock*. The sentence runs thus in that language: “*Thou art a rock, and on this rock I will build My Church.*” Indeed, all respectable Protestant commentators have now abandoned, and even ridicule, the absurdity of applying the word *rock* to any one but to Peter; as the sentence can bear no other construction, unless our Lord’s good grammar and common sense are called in question.

Our Lord continues: “And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” etc. In ancient times, and particularly among the Hebrew people, keys were an emblem of jurisdiction. To affirm that a man had received the keys of a city, was equivalent to the assertion that he had been appointed its governor. In the Book of Revelation, our Saviour says that He has the keys of death and of hell,<sup>1</sup> which means that He is endowed with power over death and hell. In fact, even to this day, does not the presentation of keys convey among ourselves the idea of authority? If the proprietor of a house, on leaving it for the summer, says to any friend: “Here are the keys of my house,” would not this simple declaration, without a word of explanation, convey the idea, “I give you full control of my house. You may admit or exclude whom you please. You represent me in my absence?” Let us now apply this interpretation to our Redeemer’s words. When He says to Peter: “I will give to thee the keys,” etc., He evidently means: I will give thee supreme authority over My Church, which is the citadel of faith. Thou and thy successors shall be My

1. Rev. i. 18.



visible representatives to the end of time. And be it remembered, that to Peter alone, and to no other Apostle, were these solemn words addressed.

*Fulfilment of the promise.* After His resurrection "Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He had said to him the third time: Lovest thou Me? and he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep." <sup>1</sup>

By these words, uttered in presence of the other apostles, the duty was confided to Peter—and, of course, to his successors, as long as the Divine Shepherd's flock survived of caring for the *whole of it*; the lambs—the weak and tender portion of it by which are understood the faithful; and the sheep—those who nourish, shelter and preserve them—by which are understood the pastors. Sheep and lambs—the whole flock—are bound to hear and heed Peter's voice as they would that of the Divine Proprietor Himself. Neither Peter, nor the popes his successors, ever claimed to be anything more than shepherds, under the Supreme Pastor, to whom they are responsible for all the flock.

*Exercise of the Primacy.* In that inspired history of the leading events subsequent to the Ascension, the Acts

1. John xxi. 15-17.

of the Apostles—the first twelve chapters are devoted to Peter, and, incidentally to some of the other apostles. His name is everywhere pre-éminent. It always stands first in the lists of the Apostles, while Judas Iscariot is invariably mentioned last.<sup>1</sup> Peter is even called by St. Matthew *the first Apostle*. Now Peter was first neither in age nor in priority of election, his elder brother Andrew having been chosen before him. The meaning, therefore, of the expression must be, that Peter was first not only in rank and honor, but also in authority.

Peter is the first Apostle who performed a miracle.<sup>2</sup> He is the first to address the Jews in Jerusalem while his Apostolic brethren stand respectfully around him; upon which occasion he converts three thousand souls.<sup>3</sup> Peter is the first to make converts from the Gentile world in the persons of Cornelius and his friends.<sup>4</sup>

When there is question of electing a successor to Judas, Peter *alone speaks*. He points out to the Apostles and disciples the duty of choosing another to succeed the traitor. The Apostles silently acquiesce in the instructions of their leader.<sup>5</sup> In the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem, Peter is the first whose sentiments are recorded. Before his discourse, "there was much disputing." But when he had ceased to speak, "all the multitude held their peace."<sup>6</sup> St. James and the other Apostles concur in the sentiments of Peter without a single dissenting voice. This same St. James is cast into prison by Herod, and afterward beheaded. He was one of the three most favored Apostles. He

1. Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 14.

3. Acts ii.

4. Acts x.

5. Acts i.

2. Acts iii.

6. Acts xv.

was the cousin of our Lord and brother of St. John. He was most dear to the faithful, yet no extraordinary efforts are made by the faithful to rescue him from death. Peter is imprisoned about the same time. The whole Church is aroused. Prayers for his deliverance ascend to heaven, not only from Jerusalem but also from every Christian family in the land.<sup>1</sup>

Against this overwhelming evidence of Peter's primacy, there is quoted the one solitary fact, that Paul, as he tells us himself, "withstood Peter to his face." What if he did? Paul would do the same to the Roman Emperor. Perhaps, in his fiery impetuosity, he would do so even to the Divine Master Himself. Whilst this over-zealous act of Paul is quoted *ad nauseam* that other mark of deference which he showed St. Peter as his chief, and which much more plainly testified his inferiority and his honest acknowledgment of it, is overlooked. "I went," he says "to Jerusalem to see Peter and I tarried with him fifteen days."<sup>2</sup>

If the Church were to consist solely of the comparatively few that lived in the Apostles' time, the question of the continuance of Peter's privileges in his successors, would never have been raised. And that it should have arisen amongst those who believe in the constant perpetuity of the Church, is something very difficult to reconcile with consistency.

The authority and prerogatives of temporal rulers pass to their successors, as a matter of course, no matter how the succession be regulated. Why should not Peter's primacy of honor and jurisdiction, and all the other privileges essential to the government of Christ's

1. Acts xii.      2. Gal. i. 18.

kingdom on earth similarly pass to his successors? In it, as in other kingdoms, rebels have risen up, challenged and denied them. They are, however, only rebels; and their rebellion has served but to make more clear, precise and better defined what they impugned.

All ecclesiastical history; the writings of all the Fathers, the constant practice and universal consensus of the whole Church, bear evidence to the reality of Peter's primacy. The order, harmony and perfect unanimity within the Church, in the midst of the deepening chaos spreading around her, are results of it, that testify trumpet-tongued to the wisdom of the divine Appointer of it, and ought to win the admiration instead of the unreasonable opposition of so many who claim to be believers and followers of the Divine Master. They attribute the equipoise between authority and submission, which they must admit, exists in the Church, to other causes. Why not attribute it to that which, by analogy with other things it should be ascribed to, namely, this peculiar constitution which the Founder of the Church formulated and His Spirit maintains?

The claims of the Popes to the primacy or headship of the visible Church have never been concealed, or minimized, or even denied excepting by those who had to suffer from its exercise. Every age, every Christian country's history and its monuments, testify to this. You might as well write the history of America with the Presidents left out, as record the religious history of any people omitting the Pope's supremacy, in deciding matters of Church government, in disputes concerning jurisdiction, as well as in doctrinal, moral and con-

troversial questions of every description that may have arisen.

Had the Pope sided with the Reformers of the sixteenth century—which was impossible—they would have been well pleased to acknowledge his supremacy; when he did not, they rejected it, and like all disappointed contestants before and since, sought reasons for denying it: a thing their followers have been busied about ever since.

### THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH IS INFALLIBLE.

The fate of the Catholic Church, like that of its Divine Founder, has ever been to be misunderstood and misrepresented. Not one of her dogmas has escaped this; and the last one defined, has come in for its full share of what has been invariably doled out to each of its predecessors on being promulgated. Hence it becomes necessary before stating what is precisely meant by the Pope's infallibility to tell first what it does not import.

1. The infallibility of the Popes does not signify that they are inspired. 2. Infallibility does not mean that the Pope is impeccable, or especially exempt from liability to sin. 3. The Divine assistance is guaranteed to the Pope, not in his capacity as private teacher, but only in his official capacity, when he judges of faith and morals as Head of the Church. If a Pope were to write a treatise on Canon Law, his book would be as much open to criticism as that of any Doctor of the Church. 4. Finally, the infallibility of the Popes does not extend to the natural sciences, such as astronomy or geology, unless where error is



presented under the false name of science, and arrays itself against revealed truth. Nor does it regard purely political questions, such as the form of government a nation ought to adopt, or for what candidates its citizens ought to vote. It does not, therefore, interfere with civil allegiance; but leaves that matter where it found it and where it always was, according to the teaching of St. Paul: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God."<sup>1</sup>

What then, is the real doctrine of the Infallibility of the Pope? It simply means that the Pope, as successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, by virtue of the promises of Jesus Christ, is preserved from error of judgment when he promulgates to the Church a decision on faith or morals.

The Pope, therefore, be it known, is not the maker of the divine law; he is only its expounder. He is not the author of revelation, but only its interpreter. All revelation came from God alone through His inspired ministers, and it was complete in the beginning of the Church.

In a word, the Sovereign Pontiff is to the Church, though in a more eminent degree, what the Chief Justice is to the United States. The latter having, with his associate judges, duly examined into a disputed point of law, pronounces judgment upon it. His decision is final, without appeal and practically infallible. Without such a court, such an authority, and such a spokesman to utter decisions and settle constitutional questions, government would come to

1. Rom. xiii. 1.

a standstill, and law would be but a dead letter. Every litigant would, as a matter of course, decide in his own favor, and we would have in the civil order, the sad spectacle presented by the warring sects in the religious world to-day. The framers of our splendid Constitution seem to have taken the divine constitution of the Catholic Church as their model, for they proceeded, consciously or unconsciously, on similar lines.

When a dispute arises in the Catholic Church concerning an undefined doctrine, law, or the sense of the Scripture, instead of "fighting it out," and splitting up over it, the subject is referred to a supreme tribunal, of which the Sovereign Pontiff is the head and mouthpiece. Before deciding the case, he gathers around him his venerable colleagues, the cardinals of the Church; or he calls a council of his associate judges, the bishops of Christendom; or he has recourse to other lights which the Holy Ghost may suggest to him. Then, after mature and prayerful deliberation, and the use of all available means for finding out the truth, he pronounces judgment, and his sentence is final, irrevocable and infallible.

By means of this infallible court, the Church's marvellous unity is preserved throughout the world. Hence this doctrine is the keystone in the arch of Catholic faith, and, far from arousing opposition, it ought to command the unqualified admiration of every reflecting mind.

These explanations being premised, let us now briefly consider the grounds of the doctrine itself. The following passages of the Gospel, spoken at different times, were addressed exclusively to Peter:

“Thou art Peter; and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”<sup>1</sup> I, the supreme Architect of the universe, says our Saviour, will establish a Church which is to last till the end of time. I will lay the foundation of this Church so deep and strong, on the rock of truth, that the winds and storms of error shall not prevail against it. Thou, O Peter, shalt be the corner-stone of this Church. It shall never fall, because thou shalt never be shaken; and thou shalt never be shaken, because thou shalt rest on me as foundation.

“And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Thou shalt hold the keys of truth, with which to open to the faithful the treasures of heavenly knowledge. “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven.” The judgment which thou shalt pronounce on earth I will ratify in heaven. Surely the God of truth is incapable of sanctioning an untruthful judgment.

“Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee* (Peter) that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.” It is worthy of note that Jesus prays only for Peter. And why for Peter in particular? Because on his shoulders was to rest the burden of the whole Church. Our Lord prays for two things: 1. That the faith of Peter might not ever fail; 2. That Peter would confirm his brethren in the faith, “in order,” as St. Leo says, “that the strength given by Christ to Peter should descend on the Apostles.”

1. Matt. xvi.

We know that the prayer of Jesus is always heard. Therefore the faith of Peter will always be firm. He was destined to be the oracle which all were to consult. Hence we always find him the prominent figure among the Apostles, the first to speak, the first to act on every occasion.

In the presence of the other Apostles after His resurrection our Lord after interrogating Peter concerning his love for Him said: "Feed My lambs; feed My sheep." Peter is appointed by our Lord the universal shepherd of His flock—of the sheep and of the lambs, that is, shepherd of the Bishops and Priests as well as of the people. The Bishops are shepherds, in reference to their flocks; they are sheep, in reference to the Pope, who is the shepherd of shepherds. The Pope, as shepherd, must feed the flock, not with the poison of error, but with the healthy food of sound doctrine; for he is not a shepherd, but a hireling, who administers pernicious food to his flock.

This position and this prerogative of Peter and his successors, have always been admitted and acted upon in the Church. Superabounding evidence of this is at hand; but could not be advantageously given in such a brief popular sketch as this. Any Catholic controversial work will furnish it.

That the Church in its first Council, viz., that at which all of the Apostles were present, was infallible, is what no Christian ever denied, and, if so, by what strange inconsistency can they suppose it fallible in any similar Council, composed of these Apostles' successors? Nor will it be claimed that everything which was said, or each one's expressed opinion was

infallible in the one no more than in the other. Indeed, the only account we have of the first is in the Acts of the Apostles, . . . and implies the contrary. What then but Peter's decision was thus divinely protected, and what but his successor's decision or approval is so still? No council was ever considered valid without this sanction, but, in giving it may he not alter, and might he not err, if God's special protection were not always at hand to save His Church from the dreadful consequences of such a catastrophe? That it has never failed, according to our Lord's prayer and promise, is the unchanging belief of the Church. This word "Infallibility" expresses it. How foolish to be staggered now by the sound of it, as those outside seem to have been, on the solemn promulgation of the decree defining it, after the General Council of the Vatican in 1870.

Do some think that Infallibility, as defined, is too great a prerogative to confer on any one man? It is not as great as that of Inspiration, which each writer of the Scriptures and all of the Apostles enjoyed. If it is not too much to admit that God made so many the organs of His revealed Word, surely it is not too much to believe, that, for its sake and our sakes, He did something equally necessary, namely, to provide an infallible guardian and interpreter of it. Thus it has ever seemed to the Holy Ghost and to the "Church, the pillar and the ground of truth." Hence the clearing away forever of all doubt about the matter, by her solemn dogmatic, irreformable, infallible definition, "that when the Roman Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*—that is, when he, using his office as pastor and doc-



tor of all Christians in virtue of his Apostolic office, defines a doctrine of faith and morals to be held by the whole Church, he, by the divine assistance promised to him in the blessed Peter, possesses that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer was pleased to invest His Church in the definition of faith or morals, and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiffs are irreformable in their own nature and not because of the consent of the Church" ("Pastor Æternus," Cap. 4).

From this it must not be concluded that the Pope is, in spiritual matters, like an absolute monarch in temporal concerns. There are many things he cannot do, nor dogmatically define. He cannot annul the divinely constituted order in the Church. His power of definition is limited by a multitude of irreformable definitions made by councils, by his predecessors and by the ordinary exercise of the Church's magisterium. The Church claims infallibility in three other ways, and hereby she affords an easily recognized proof that God is the author of each; for, if He were not, contradiction would immediately result, a thing that has never yet happened. She exercises it: 1. Through her general councils; 2. Through the unanimous voice of the bishops dispersed throughout the world, but united with the Pope; 3. Through her ordinary and uniform preaching, teaching and believing.

Of one thing then we may feel quite assured, that God who has thus provided for preserving His revelation from corruption, will take further care, that this means will not be abused, or be rendered nugatory by any conceivable misuse of it. For "unless the Lord build

the house they labor in vain who try to build it. Unless the Lord keep the city he watcheth in vain that keepeth it." (Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2). And here the Lord Himself is the designer, the builder, the watcher.

### ARE ALL OBLIGED TO BELONG TO THE ONE ONLY TRUE CHURCH.

Some things are so necessary for salvation that, no one, under any circumstances, can attain it without them. Of this class is baptism, without which, either actually by water, or equivalently by martyrdom, or, in the absence of both, by desire, no one can enter the kingdom of heaven, as our Lord assured Nicodemus: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."<sup>1</sup> Such things are called *necessary as means*. Other things are *necessary because of a divine precept* commanding them. Of this class is the obligation on all of belonging to the true Church, who have come to a sufficient knowledge of it, to be persuaded that it is the real, true Church of Christ. If they only suspect that it is, or are in doubt concerning it, there is a positive obligation on them, to inquire until their minds become fully convinced one way or the other, or they feel assured, that what they suspect to be the true Church of Christ is really so or not. After due deliberation and examination, should they fail of finding the true Church, or mistake some other for it, they are then said to be in invincible ignorance; and as God, who is infinitely just, binds no one to the impossible, they are, as far as

1. John iii. 5.

this matter is concerned, in the way of salvation, in that state.

But, alas! this is poor consolation, merely to be in *this respect, in the way of salvation*. Without the sacraments, the holy sacrifice, all the incomparable benefits of the communion of saints, and all other means of God's providing, how are they going to practise virtue, overcome temptations, comply with essential duties, persevere in the state of grace, or recover it when lost, by other means than those ordained by Him who perfectly knew and perfectly provided in His Church only, all those aids and means of grace weak humanity requires?

Perfect contrition, it is true, remits actual sin, without the sacrament of penance, but outside of the Catholic Church it is lost sight of, and people are commonly exhorted to believe their sins forgiven, to put on Christ, to trust in Him, etc., although, whilst doing this, they may yet retain the whole guilt of their sins, and go thus before God to be condemned for them. Besides, how can any one be ever certain of his having perfect contrition, especially as it includes the love of God and a determination to do *whatever* He requires? Hence, comes in, even for the invincibly ignorant (as they are rather loosely designated), the obligation of searching further, and *making sure* that they have complied with all that God requires for eternal salvation. No chances can lawfully be taken where so great an affair is concerned. Eternal happiness or eternal misery being involved no risks must be run.

Furthermore, it is the duty of all to accept the Christian religion, because God, by the very fact that

He has revealed it, imposes on all the obligation of accepting it. Equally essential is it to receive and adhere to it, under the form it has pleased God to present it. Now this form was that appointed by Jesus Christ. And here it is to be observed, that He never commanded His doctrines or precepts to be committed to writing; much less did He command to be read what others wrote; and least of all, to put our own interpretation on what was read. But, as all the world knows, He carefully instructed His Apostles, formed them into a society along with the disciples and commissioned them with the very same authority with which the Eternal Father had invested Himself,<sup>1</sup> to "go into all the world and *Preach* the gospel to every living creature, *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded;"<sup>2</sup> promising that whosoever believed them and was baptized, should be saved and threatening that whosoever did not, would be condemned.<sup>3</sup> He furthermore declared that this society would endure until the end of time, and that the Holy Ghost would always remain with them.<sup>4</sup>

No one believing His word, can consistently doubt for one moment, that there is an obligation upon all mankind under penalty of eternal separation from Him to receive their teaching, and follow their directions.

Conspicuous in this teaching, had always been, their insistence on belonging to "the household of the faith." In fact this is what conversion to Christianity implied. Nothing could be more foreign to *their* thoughts, than the idea of a man going about and teach-

1. John xx, 21. 2. Matt. xxviii, 19. 3. Mark. xvi, 16. 4. John xiv, 16.

ing whatever HE *thought* well of, and then telling his auditors to join any sect of the many, that, even from the beginning, manifested themselves to the great grief of the Apostles. For to them and their successors, as there was but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, there was and could be only one Church, one sole society of which their Divine Master was, and still is, the life and soul.

This society He Himself designated His kingdom, His Church; and we have already seen that it is no other than the One, Holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church. All, therefore, are obliged to belong to it, and for those who knowingly, deliberately and intentionally remain outside of it, there can be no salvation. For it is the only one which was moulded and fashioned by the Master's own hand and in which every soul must be cast, that would bear the Christ-like form that can alone gain admission into heaven. What any one else may think, or we ourselves imagine, must count for nought before God; for the way of salvation ordained by the Redeemer can alone be the correct one. That the Church He founded alone teaches this way was never doubted by the converts of the Apostles or their successors. The only exceptions were the ambitious founders of sects, who started out with the arrogant assumption, that they were called upon to improve, correct, remodel, or even create another way, on the presumption, forsooth, that the Lord—unlike the sect-maker—did not provide for the preservation of *His* way sufficiently, and that, consequently, men were able to spoil it. What madness! The Lord can preserve the heavens, the earth and all His other works,



from man's impotent attempts. This one work, the most necessary and important of all—the way of salvation provided in His Church—He did not, or could not!

Christ expressly declares the duty of submitting to His Church. "If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."<sup>1</sup> But those who "will not hear the Church" are, in the first instance, they who knowing her to be God's work and refuse to belong to her. Not man, but Christ the Lord, the judge of all men, declares such, to be no better than "the heathen and the publican"; no matter what their pretensions, no matter what their sentiments, intentions or associations otherwise. Of this, as of some other of His teachings, there are those who assert, that it "is a hard saying: who can hear it?" and "many hearing it went away and walked no more with Him"—and, sad to tell, He let them. *Vel Ecclesia Catholica, vel nulla.*

1. Matt. xviii. 17.

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