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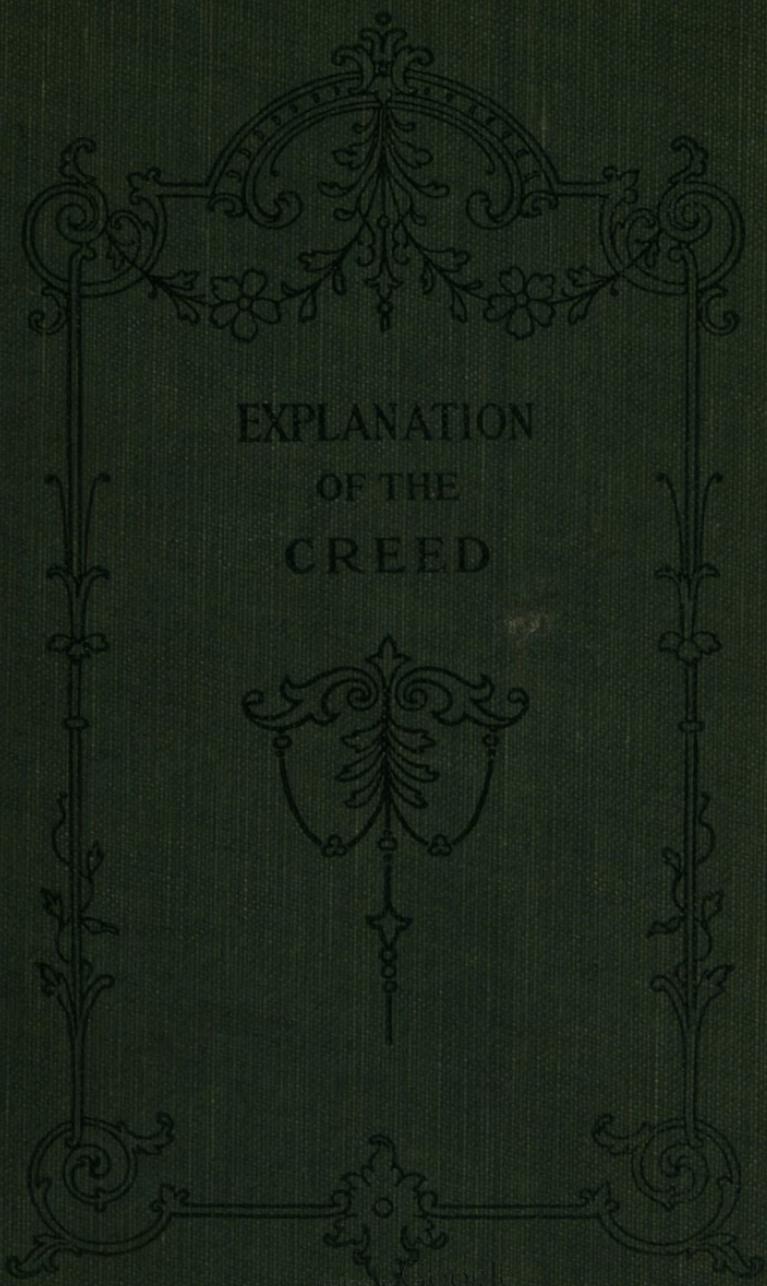
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EXPLANATION  
OF THE  
CREED

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AN EXPLANATION OF  
THE APOSTLES' CREED

A THOROUGH EXPOSITION OF  
CATHOLIC FAITH

*With Numerous Examples from Holy Scripture,  
The Fathers, and Other Sources*

ADAPTED FROM THE ORIGINAL OF  
REV. H. ROLFUS, D.D.

NEW, REVISED EDITION

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO  
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*Auxiliary Bishop and Administrator of New York.*

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# Illustrated Explanation of the Creed.

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## PART I.

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### Faith in General.

#### I. NATURE OF FAITH.—OBJECT OF FAITH. —SOURCES OF FAITH.

##### What is Faith ?

If we would attain the end for which we have been created, namely, the salvation of our souls, it is of vital necessity that we know the Lord our God, by whom all things are made and have their being, and who is from all eternity. To acquire this knowledge limited human reason is greatly aided by faith. Now faith is a virtue and gift of God, whereby, knowing God's infallible truthfulness, we hold for certain whatever He has revealed and has presented through His Church for our acceptance and belief.

Faith in general may be defined as follows: It is to hold for true whatever another tells us, upon his authority, and without requiring from such person any proofs of the truth he affirms. As soon as we know that a truth

has been revealed by God, we believe it without exacting the proof of its certainty, knowing, as we do, that God cannot err, nor assert falsehood, since He Himself is eternal and infallible truth. This is religious faith, or faith in the proper sense of the word.

How do we obtain such belief? How little do those people who are deprived of the light of faith know of God and their own destiny! Of the nature of God and the three divine persons in God they know nothing. They know not who redeemed them nor who sanctified them. Though able to distinguish between good and evil, their knowledge of it and of Christian virtues, such as chastity, charity, etc., is necessarily most imperfect.

A faith which teaches these truths can not proceed from human reason alone, but must necessarily come from God. Faith is a gift of God. St. Paul received this gift or grace of faith while journeying to Damascus with the avowed intent of persecuting the Christians. We receive the grace of faith in the Sacrament of Baptism, as well as in the other sacraments by our zealous and continual prayer. All our study, science, and labors can not give us faith. Hence St. Paul writes, "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God" (Ephesians ii. 8).

Yet God, while granting us faith, does not force our belief. We have our free will, which may either accept or reject faith. If we accept and preserve through life the faith given to us by God, if we direct all our thoughts, words, and actions in accordance with the law and requirements of faith, that faith or belief within us becomes a real virtue, and then, and only then, may we call ourselves believing Christians, truly believing Catholics. The true faith of a Catholic Christian

is, therefore, a virtue and a gift of God, by which we hold for true whatever God has revealed.

### **Object of Faith.—Sources of Faith.**

It is not a matter of indifference what we believe, or how much we believe. We are bound to accept with belief all that God has revealed, without distinction or division. He who would gainsay the smallest part of divine revelation, or refuse to accept the whole, would deny God's own truthfulness.

It is not enough to know that what God says is true, because God is the eternal and infallible truth: we must know, and know with certainty and exactness, what God has spoken to us. Who teaches this?

St. Paul writes, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets: last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world" (Hebrews i. 1, 2). When the fulness of time was come, and sin had reached its most enormous proportions, God sent to men His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, that He might teach them and save them. Jesus Christ possessed the fulness of the Godhead, and hence the fulness of truth. This truth He imparted to His apostles, who became the leaders and teachers of the Church which He established then. "As the Father has sent Me," said He to them, "so do I send you. Go, teach all nations." To these also Christ sent the Holy Spirit, who was to remain with them and their successors during all time, teaching them all truth and preserving them from error. Moreover the apostles wrote down not all but only a part of the teachings of Christ, and of His doings. These writings compose the

Scriptures of the New Testament. Whatever else they had learned from Christ and His Holy Spirit, they communicated to their hearers by word of mouth. Such teachings, so delivered to the early Christians, are called traditional. Whatever the Church presents to us for our belief, she has drawn from Holy Scriptures and Tradition, and hence her doctrines are nothing other than what was originally taught and revealed by God Himself through Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son. Because the chief objects of our belief are contained in Holy Scriptures and Tradition these are termed the sources of faith.

In opposition to us Catholics, the Protestants take as their source of belief the Holy Scriptures only, denying the validity and utility of Tradition. But it is easy to prove that Tradition is as good a source of faith as Holy Writ itself. (See page 23.)

Thus we know and understand the meaning of the proposition: The faith of the Catholic Christian is a virtue and a gift of God, whereby he holds for true and certain whatsoever God has revealed and the Catholic Church holds for our belief.

## I. HOLY SCRIPTURES.

### Contents of Holy Scriptures.

THE Holy Scriptures are a collection of books which have been written under the special guidance and light of the Holy Ghost and, on this account, are recognized and honored by the Church as the word of God.

Holy Scriptures, or the Bible, are divided into parts called the Old Testament, and the New Testament.\*

\* As the Holy Scriptures contain and express the final and un-

The Old Testament contains the things made known by God to man from the creation of the world to the time of Christ. For this purpose God made use of Moses, the prophets, and other holy writers, by whom the divinely-inspired truth was left to His people in many volumes. These books are divided, in regard to their contents, as follows :

1. The historical books. These are twenty-one in number, namely, the five Books of Moses ; the Books of Josue, Judges, and Ruth ; the four Books of Kings ; the two Books of Chronicles, or Paralipomenon ; the Books of Esdras, Nehemias, Tobias, Judith, Esther ; and the two Books of Machabees.

The chief contents of the five Books of Moses are the history of the creation of the world, of the first members of the human family, of their sins and punishments, of their dispersion over the earth, and of the chastisements inflicted on the world by the Deluge and on certain cities by fire and brimstone. They also contain the records of Abraham and the other patriarchs, of the growth of the people of Israel, their liberation from Egyptian bondage, their wonderful journey through the desert, the promulgation of the ten commandments, and of the laws prescribing the various religious rites and ceremonies. In a word, these books form the records of early mankind in general and of the Jewish people in particular, down to the time of Moses' death. The other books contain the history of the conquest of the Promised Land, of the wars of the

questionable declaration to man of God's will, they are termed a Testament. They are sometimes termed a Covenant, because they set forth the teachings and the will of God, with the promised agreement that all those who accept these doctrines with belief, and fulfil the word of God, will obtain everlasting happiness. It is as if God made a covenant with men. The word " bible," means the book of books.

Israelites with the neighboring nations, of the building of the Temple, of the dismemberment of the kingdom, and of the fate of each portion, till their conquest and their reduction into the Asiatic and Babylonian captivity; then of their return, and of their doings down to a period of one hundred and thirty-four years before the birth of Christ. The Books of Tobias and Judith contain simply the domestic history of two God-fearing families.

2. The devotional books. These are so called because they contain little other than moral precepts and maxims. They are entitled as follows: the Book of Job; the Psalms; Proverbs; the Preacher, or Ecclesiastes; the Canticle of Canticles; the Book of Wisdom; and Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus.

The Book of Job narrates the sufferings and the wonderful patience and resignation of Job, and his confidence in God. The Psalms are one hundred and fifty sacred songs, chiefly composed by David to the honor and glory of God, and for man's comfort and encouragement in the perplexities of life. Some of these Psalms contain, too, prophecies concerning the future Redeemer. The Proverbs of Solomon form a golden rule of life, mostly in the form of maxims. Ecclesiastes shows forth the vanity of earthly things and exhorts us to fear God and to keep His commandments, for such is the way to become perfect men. The Canticle of Canticles is so called because it is the most beautiful of the sacred songs composed by Solomon. In tender strains it portrays the love that ought to exist between God and the just man's soul, and also between God and His Church on earth. The Book of Wisdom and the Book of Sirach contain various doctrines and precepts for the spiritual instruction and edification of righteous men.

3. The seventeen prophetic books. These are composed chiefly of prophecies concerning the future history of the Jewish people, and the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. The prophets are Isaias, Jeremias, Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zacharias and Malachias.

The first four of these are called the Greater Prophets, because their writings relate to greater events and have a wider scope than have the predictions of the other twelve, who are called the Minor Prophets. Isaias was an agent and an instrument of God, chosen to reform and save Juda and their city, Jerusalem. In his prophecies the reader meets such clear and striking forecasts of the Redeemer that St. Jerome himself said of him, "Isaias is rather to be called an Evangelist than a prophet." He lived seven hundred years before Christ. Jeremias foretold to the Jewish people the punishments about to be inflicted upon them by God for their faithlessness.

Among these chastisements were the Babylonian captivity, the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, on the ruins of which the prophet sang his Lamentations at a later day. Ezechiel predicted the approaching misfortunes of Israel, and lived with Daniel during the Babylonian captivity, from 605 to 535 years before Christ. Daniel was descended from a royal stock, and lived at the court of King Nabuchodonosor. His predictions extend chiefly to the succession of the worldly kingdoms, namely, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman. In Daniel's writings we meet some of the plainest prophecies concerning the Redeemer, the time of whose coming he defines by the weeks of years, and whom he thus describes, "One like the Son of man

came with the clouds of heaven. . . . and the Ancient gave Him power and glory and a kingdom : and all peoples, tribes and tongues shall serve Him ; His power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away, and His kingdom, that shall not be destroyed ” (Daniel vii. 13, 14). The Lesser Prophets at different periods foretold the history of the Jewish people, the coming Messias, His forerunner, and other matters. The latest of all the prophets was Malachias, who lived 450 years before the birth of Christ.

A prophecy is a sure prediction founded on supernatural knowledge received from God either directly or indirectly, of some future event which can not be foreseen by mere human knowledge or calculation.

The truth of a prophecy can not be reasonably denied. As an all-knowing God foresees the future, so, too, has He the power and the right to unveil that future to the mental vision of His chosen servants. A prophecy uttered by a man who has proved himself to be sent by God, is in itself a proof of his divine mission, and hence a proof, too, of the divinity and truth of his teachings. For God can not establish or confirm an error by a miracle.

The New Testament contains the divine revelations as given to us by Jesus Christ Himself. The writings of the New Testament are :

1. The four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

2. The Acts of the Apostles.

3. The twenty-one Apostolic Briefs, or Epistles. Fourteen of these last are by St. Paul, and the remaining seven by other apostles. The Epistles of St. Paul were addressed to particular churches and to private individuals, as follows : one to the Christians at Rome,

two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon, and one to the Hebrews, that is to say, to those Jews in Palestine who had become Christians. The other seven Epistles are: one by St. James, two by St. Peter, three by St. John, and one by St. Jude.

#### 4. The Apocalypse, or Revelations.

The four Gospels give us details of the history of the precursor, St. John, and his family, the genealogy and birth of the Saviour, the perils and sufferings of Himself and His parents, His public career, His calling of the apostles, His teachings, works, and miracles, and also His later sufferings, His death, burial, and resurrection, His sending out of the apostles and His ascension into heaven.

Matthew and John were witnesses of what they relate. St. Mark was a disciple and companion of St. Peter, at whose suggestion he wrote his Gospel, as St. Luke wrote his at the instance of St. Paul, whose disciple and companion he was. Each Gospel has its own peculiar characteristics and beauties, and although the four were written without any concerted plan, and one sometimes supplies histories of incidents which another Evangelist has omitted, yet they harmonize beautifully together. In most modern languages "gospel" is expressed by a word meaning "joyful message." \*

It is so termed because it contains the only message that can bring gladness to men, and is the message brought by the Son of God, made man, to His creatures, whom He came to redeem.

The Acts of the Apostles describe the sending of

\* *Evangelium* in Latin.

the Holy Ghost, the career of the Christian Church during the first thirty years of its existence, and more particularly the history of St. Paul down to the date of his first imprisonment in Rome.

The Epistles of St. Paul are occasional writings which he addressed, as circumstances required, to those people whose names they bear. In them the parties addressed are exhorted to constancy and perseverance, and are advised concerning those truths which the saint found it necessary to impress more forcibly upon their minds.

The Epistles of Sts. James, Peter, Jude, and John, on the other hand, not being addressed to any persons in particular, but to the Church at large, are, for that reason, called Universal, or Catholic, Epistles.

Revelations, or the Apocalypse of St. John, is essentially a book of prophecies foreshadowing in mysterious figures the history of the Christian Church as God's kingdom on earth, its struggles, and its final triumph on the Last Day. These mysterious revelations and forecasts were manifested to St. John on the island of Patmos, while he was living in banishment there by order of the Emperor Domitian, a violent persecutor of the Christians.

Such, in brief, are the contents of the Holy Bible, which is properly termed the treasure-house of our faith and the armory of our holy Church. By the holy Fathers and teachers of the Church these Scriptures are likened to a letter addressed to mankind by our loving and merciful Father in heaven. St. Augustine says of the Holy Scriptures, "From that celestial city out of which we have been withheld till now, a letter has come telling what God in His love has done for us, and teaching us what we out of love should do for Him."

The authority of the Scriptures is divine, hence we call them Sacred Writings. The writers of both the Old Testament and the New Testament were men chosen by God, and were so elevated and guided by the Holy Spirit that they could not fall into error. Of this we find testimony even among the Jews. One of their greatest historians, Josephus Flavius, states, "It is perfectly plain and certain that we may repose full faith in our books, for, although a long time has elapsed since they were written, no man has dared to add anything to them, to take from them, or to alter them. It is, as it were, born with all Jews to consider these books as the word of God, to adhere faithfully to them and, if it becomes necessary, to die willingly for them."

That the Holy Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Ghost, and consequently are of divine import, has been testified by Jesus Christ and confirmed by His apostles; for they themselves appealed to them and taught expressly that they emanated from the Holy Ghost. "Men, brethren," said St. Peter to the hundred and twenty disciples, "the Scripture must needs be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas" (Acts i. 16). Again the prince of the apostles writes, "Understanding this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation. For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 20, 21). The Fathers in all ages have taught the same truth. The holy Pope, St. Clement, says, "Read the Holy Scripture, for it is the expression of the Holy Ghost" (Epistle to the Corinthians). Irenæus says, writing against the heretics, "The Holy Scripture is perfect, for it has been pronounced by the Holy Ghost."

Such was at all times the belief of the whole Catholic Church, which always considered and honored the Holy Scriptures as the divine treasury of its doctrines and laws. From the earliest times, too, the Church with decided care and solicitude has taught what books belong to Holy Writ and what do not. In this way the Church, in the long lapse of ages, has preserved the word of God pure and intact. Hence it is that today we honor as inspired the same books which the Council of Nice, in the year 325, declared to be such. In all this, too, the Church has been guided by the Spirit of God, who can not permit His teacher and representative on earth to fall into error.

Whoever would read the Sacred Scriptures for his own instruction and edification must be careful to obtain a correct translation as approved by the local Catholic authorities, a translation accompanied with notes explaining the most difficult passages. For in the Bible there are many things "hard to be understood," as St. Peter says, "and which the unlearned and the unstable wrest to their own destruction" (2 Peter iii. 16). Having taken such precautions the good Catholic may then read the Scriptures safely and profitably. The Church can never tolerate the doctrine that each individual may draw and arrange his faith for himself, for such a system is opposed, not only to the plain letter of the Holy Scriptures themselves, but also to the unity of belief, and, therefore, sullies and distorts the purity of Christ's doctrines.

It was not Luther who made the first translation of the Bible, as has been erroneously maintained by Protestants. Before he was born there were in circulation several editions of that holy Book, in various languages.

## 2. TRADITION.

**Nature and Necessity of Tradition.**

TRADITION embraces all those teachings concerning faith and morals imparted by Christ Himself, or by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to the apostles, and which they preached orally although they did not commit them to writing.

Christ did not put His teachings into a written form, neither did He order the apostles to do so. He went about preaching and teaching (Matthew iv. 23). To His apostles He simply said, "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. . . . But they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed" (Mark xvi. 15, 20). It was preaching, therefore, that is, the verbal expounding of the doctrine of Jesus, which, in conformity to the will of God, was to be foundation for faith, and not simply written forms. If some of the apostles wrote a few pages, it was always done to meet certain exigencies and for some personal and local purpose, and not, by any means, with a view of giving even a summary or totality of the doctrines to be believed by all men unto salvation. This truth is explicitly laid down by St. John. He had written his Gospel later than the three other Evangelists, and partly with the intention to supply many things overlooked and omitted by them. Yet at the end of his work he said, "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. There are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (John xx. 30 ; xxi. 25).

Thus it is not difficult to discover that the apostles, their disciples, and the faithful generally, never depended on any writing as the only and exclusive rule of faith. On the contrary, hear what St. Paul says of communication by word of mouth, or Tradition. Writing to Timothy, he exhorts: "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong . . . and the things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same command to faithful men who shall be fit to teach others also" (2 Timothy ii. 1, 2).

Moreover the Church of Christ could not have existed, nor would it exist to-day, if deprived of oral Tradition; for there was no written rule of faith for full ten years after the coming of the Holy Ghost. Then, too, Holy Writ is silent concerning many important doctrines, such as the number of the sacraments, their administration, the baptism of infants, the observance of Sunday instead of Saturday, the lawfulness of oaths, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and others. Again, doctrines mentioned in the Bible are not fully and satisfactorily explained. Necessarily the Holy Scriptures must be not only corroborated by Tradition, but also made clear and intelligible.

The assumption that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith from which every man must draw his belief, involves and produces countless absurd consequences. For instance, what is to become of those persons who cannot secure a copy of the Bible? Before the invention of printing, a modern event, such persons were counted by millions. Others can not read, and no man is sure that his translation is true and exact.

The recognition of Tradition as a source of belief when combined with the written word, is as ancient as the Catholic Church itself. Fathers of the apostolic

times, such as St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, who lived in the first and second centuries, exhorted the Christians of their day to preserve faithfully their religious traditions and preachings. In the second century we find St. Irenæus complaining of the heretics, that they rejected Holy Scriptures and Tradition, although the latter had come from the apostles and had been sacredly preserved in the Church through all succeeding bishops. (*Adv. Haer.*, 1, 3.) Beside these there are countless other testimonies to the same effect.

In the course of time these ancient oral traditions were gradually committed to writing by the Fathers and were carefully handed down in the Church from generation to generation.

### **Sources of Tradition.**

The various sources whence ecclesiastical Tradition is drawn and then imparted by the Church-teaching, are, first, the decrees and definitions of Councils; secondly, the writings of the Fathers; thirdly, the recorded acts of martyrs and confessors; fourthly, the ancient books containing the history, teachings, and discipline of the Church; fifthly, the different rites, ceremonies, and prayers of the Church.

Whatever is laid down in these writings as universal doctrines of the Catholic Church, is, after the Sacred Scriptures, our second source of belief. Such it has been, too, from the earliest times. As early as the fifth century St. Vincent of Lerins wrote, "We hold fast to that which has been believed by all, everywhere and in every age, for such is truly and undeniably Catholic."

**II. NECESSITY OF FAITH.****Why is Faith, or Belief, Absolutely Necessary to Salvation ?**

SINCE God has not only enabled us to know Him by the use of reason, but has made Himself and His holy will more fully known to us by divine revelation, we must believe. It is not allowed to man to be free in the sense that he may believe or not believe, as if unbelief were no sin for him. On the contrary, it is our simple duty to accept the faith, to preserve it, and to live in it and by it. It is only by fulfilling this duty imposed upon us by God that we can hope to obtain heaven. Hence, belief is absolutely necessary. "The just man liveth by faith" (Romans i. 17). Faith is the life of the soul. Without it there is no justification meritorious before God. Hence, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews xi. 6).

Consider, Christian reader, how enormous is the sin of unbelief. Not to believe is nothing other than to rebel from one's self divine truth, to oppose the Creator who has made Himself known to us, and to wish to know nothing of Him and His holy will. And as the Lord God has sent His Son to bring us the tidings of salvation, and, as that Saviour was judged, and died, in order to save us from judgment, to refuse to believe is nothing more or less, on our part, than to concur willingly in the sentence and judgment of the Saviour. This is what Christ means when He says in John iii. 18, "He that doth not believe is already judged." The unbeliever can not escape responsibility. How foolish then for any man to say, "I do not need to believe as long as I do right." The Lord, on His side, says, "He that believeth not shall be condemned." Thus it is that the wisdom of man would array itself

against the express law of God, and that the world would set itself up in opposition to its Maker and His holy Gospel.

### **True Faith.**

Not every or any form of belief can secure man's salvation, but only the faith of Jesus Christ. The Son of God brought down the unknown truth from heaven and opened to us the mysteries of the divine kingdom. Equally with the eternal Father He is the fountain of truth. He is the truth itself. And He is, beside the truth, the way and life. Hence we can believe in none other than in Jesus. Now, whoever believes in Him is on the right road. Only such as believe in Him have life and come to life everlasting. No other belief can lead to salvation, "for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Hence the Lord says, "He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). On the Day of Judgment it will be made manifest that only the followers of Christ can be saved. Their great protecting shield against condemnation will be, on that day, the powerful name of Jesus.

Christ was pleased to make His Church the depository of truth. He Himself, having ascended into heaven, is no longer with us. To whom could He entrust the true faith? Men can err, though they be saints. No system of belief has any value unless the things to be believed are purely and certainly true. Now, in order that this most precious of all goods might be preserved unimpaired for the benefit of all generations, Our Lord bequeathed it as a legacy to the Church founded by Himself. The Church received it in the persons of the

apostles, and has ever guarded it jealously. The bishops in all ages have guarded this deposit of faith like trusty and fearless watchmen, while they have not ceased to cry out to all men in the words of St. Paul to his friend Timothy, "That keep which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called" (1 Timothy vi. 20.) Any system of belief not founded on Christ is not wisdom, it is foolishness. What folly it would be to suppose that Christ had exposed His sacred word, the fountain of salvation, the treasure of faith, to every change; that He had neglected those precautions necessary to keep the light of faith burning clear and undisturbed before the eyes of those who were created to be guided and saved by it!

Consider, Christian reader, the great grace which God conferred upon you when He permitted you, without any merit of your own, to be born in the bosom of the holy Catholic Church. That Church is the city of God of which we must be the citizens, if we hope to enjoy His protection and favor. In this city you were born, and by the free gift of God you are entitled to all the citizens' rights. How many thousands are deprived of the blessings which you enjoy! Your name is inscribed in the book of life. You have but to comply with your duties as a citizen. You have but to have faith in God. But you say, "That is just my greatest trouble. I can not believe. I can not overcome my doubts in matters of faith. My reason shows me nothing but contradictions."

Then you are acting foolishly. Let me ask you, as St. Theophylus asked Autolicus, "Why do you not believe? Do you not know that faith prevails in all things and in all places, human as well as divine? What farmer could gather his crop if he did not first

have faith enough to confide the seed to the earth? Who would trust his life at sea if he had not faith in the vessel's captain and crew? Belief in a physician and confidence in his treatment must precede the restoration of a patient. How can any one learn a science, or acquire an art, if he do not first of all surrender his mind to his preceptor? If, then, the farmer believes in the elements, the seafarer in his officers, the sick man in his doctor, how can you distrust God, from whom you have received so many evidences of truth? While you refuse to believe, your soul is sick. If faith do not illumine your pathway in life you are a pitiable wanderer."

Then, Christian reader, embrace faith, keep it, defend it, let no bribe induce you to part with it, for, as St. Augustine says very beautifully, "there is no more solid wealth, no greater treasure than Catholic faith. Pray, strive, wrestle with God for the sake of your faith, as Jacob of old did wrestle to obtain God's blessing, and that same blessing will attend you as it attended Jacob."

### III. QUALITIES OR PROPERTIES OF FAITH.

#### **Our Faith must be Universal.**

FIRST of all we must believe all that God has revealed and the Catholic Church believes and teaches.

We believe because God is truthful.

To believe only partially in Him, who is all truth, is the same as not to believe at all. For if we believe one truth and reject another, we believe, not because God is truth, but because it pleases us so to believe. It is as if one said, "I believe not God; I believe myself." Such belief is of no value.

**Our Faith must be Firm.**

Firm and unshaken faith or belief is only a natural result of the very nature of faith. To better understand this we must remember that there are many sources of evidence, that is to say, many grounds by which we can become convinced of the truth of a thing.

These may be drawn from the realm of nature and are then called natural grounds of belief ; or they may be founded above the sphere of nature, and are therefore called supernatural proofs or grounds.

Natural sources of belief may be designated thus :

1. The testimony of other persons, that is, where we hold a thing to be true because we have heard it from others.

2. The testimony of our senses, that is, where we are convinced of the existence of an object because our eyes, our ears, or some other sense, assure us that it exists.

3. The testimony of our reason, that is, where a process of reasoning makes a thing clear to us.

The first kind of belief is called natural, or human, faith ; in the two latter we have natural human knowledge. We are convinced of a thing on supernatural grounds when we hold to be true whatever God says and because He says it, or when God permits us to see a truth in His light, as is the case with the blessed in heaven. In the former case we have supernatural divine faith ; in the latter supernatural divine knowledge.

Now, it is not difficult to comprehend that it is far more probable that our fellow-men will deceive us, than our senses and reason. Hence, natural knowledge is based upon a higher grade of testimony than is human faith. But our daily experience teaches us that even

reason and our outward senses may deceive us and that, consequently, human knowledge can never be raised above all suspicion of doubt.

On the contrary, if we hold a thing to be true, relying on the testimony of God, we can not fail, for God is eternal and infallible truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Hence supernatural faith or belief affords us greater certainty than a merely human faith affords, or even human knowledge, and we must believe more firmly the testimony of God than the testimony of all men, or the testimony of our senses and intellect. Hence the saying, we are led captive by our understanding. Nothing should be able to make us waver in our divine faith.

### **Our Faith must be Living.**

Any one of us may say, "Lord, I believe; Lord, I doubt nothing." But we must also make our faith a living one by doing good and avoiding evil, as the law prescribes. Good works infuse life into faith. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (James ii. 26). Christian life is a tree whose vital roots are planted in faith. But if the tree bear no fruit it will be cut down, for it is of no use, let it be ever so fair. Now, the blossoms and fruits on the tree of Christian life are our works. It is, therefore, a soul-destroying error to deny the necessity of good works. "By their fruits you shall know them" (Matthew vii. 20).

### **Our Faith must be Steadfast.**

Faith should give proof of its genuineness and steadfastness, more especially when the profession of it is attended with danger, when the Christian confessor is threatened with chains, prison, loss of position,

and of his livelihood. It is in trials only that proof is furnished whether our faith is firmly planted in our hearts or whether it is only on the surface and is worn as a garment which may be laid aside at the pleasure of the wearer. The Christian martyrs, who confessed their belief in Christ amid scourgings, racks, and in prisons, had a real, genuine, constant faith.

### **Fall from Faith.**

Any belief devoid of any one of the above four qualities is a vain faith. It is not genuine faith. This real faith is, indeed, a precious gift from God, a free gift—why should we therefore, despair of securing it? Fervent and persevering prayer, like that of the apostles, will obtain it for us. But we usually do the opposite of what we ought to do. Instead of humbly bringing into captivity our understandings unto the obedience of Christ, as St. Paul did (2 Corinthians x. 5), we are puffed up with pride and conceit, and seek with wrong motives to fathom the profoundest mysteries of religion. The scoffers of our day do not wish to believe, they want to know. But as they are weak creatures and are liable to go astray they fall from one blunder into another. They do not discharge the duties of their religion, but lead a wicked life, hence they do not even know that the truth makes them free (John viii. 32). "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light" (John iii. 21), saith the Lord. Therefore the unbelievers remain in darkness because they follow the blinded impulses of their reason. Only he who complies with God's word can feel within himself a consciousness that he belongs to God.

Many deaden within themselves their belief, for they read bad books and do not fear to associate with those persons who have no religion. To those who are not

of the true faith, do all the good you can, but if they do not wish your help leave them and go where you will find strength and food for your own faith. A good apple placed among decaying ones does not make them sound. It soon becomes tainted itself. How can you make friends of those who have no faith? On what basis can a friendship be established if not on religious convictions and for religious motives? A society in which a man dare not mention his religion without raising a contention, is replete with danger instead of pleasure. Most men resemble Eve. When the serpent speaks to them they tarry and listen. And since the children of this world are wiser in their way than the children of light, since they can not govern their passions, like Eve they will forfeit their happiness and be driven from the paradise of their innocence.

If we undertake to choose our own belief, and to reject it at every whim, God will not sustain us; but if we seek refuge in God and work with Him, He will assist us. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (James iv. 6).

### **Means of Preserving Faith.**

In order to preserve our faith untainted and undiminished it is necessary that we should not be guilty of the smallest fault against it. We must not at any time deny our God, not even in appearance; on the contrary, we must seize every opportunity to prove ourselves Christian Catholics by word, writing, and works. Especially in all those circumstances in which the Catholic Christian is distinguished from others by his demeanor, must we acknowledge our faith, as, for example, when passing by a cross, before a church, when the bells ring for the Angelus, when the Blessed Sacrament is passing by, when we sit down to, and rise up from, meals away

from home or where others do not say grace. If we be ashamed to give outward expression to our belief in such circumstances how would we act if our profession were attended with danger? Let no Catholic be ashamed of the sign of the cross. It is by this sign especially that the Catholic Christian is known. But it is more than his badge, it is also his weapon of defense against the attacks of the evil spirit; hence he crosses himself when threatened with danger to body or soul. It reminds him at once of his Redeemer, and he blesses himself in order that he may be blessed. Under this standard he battles and wins the victory. By this token he implores the protection of heaven. He rises and lies down with this sign because he rises and lies down with his crucified Master. By this sign he proclaims the Lord before the world, and the Lord, on the Last Day, will acknowledge him before the world. "The cross of Christ shall not be made void" (1 Corinthians i. 17). Let us say, with St. Paul, "God forbid that I shall glory, save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians vi. 14).

## PART II.

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### The Apostles' Creed.

#### The Apostles' Creed in General.

HAVING now obtained complete instruction concerning the necessary qualities of faith, we may go farther forward and consider the subject of faith, that is to say, those things and truths which the Catholic Church has to believe. All this may be summed up, included, and expressed, in its briefest form, in the words, "I believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost. Amen." For belief in these three divine persons embraces and includes within itself belief in the revelations, teachings, and doings of these three divine persons. The chief mysteries, those which compose the subject-matter of Christian faith, are set forth in the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed, or profession of faith, which is nothing other than a development of the above-named form.

This formula of faith is termed a creed or symbol, that is to say, a distinguishing code or sign by which Christians are known as such to themselves, to one another, and to those who do not believe. It is an acknowledgment, or a solemn compact, which Christians utter, and whereby they obligate and bind themselves to a practical profession of their belief. This twofold meaning is contained in the word "symbol" or

“creed.” This apostolic symbol, therefore, is the sworn covenant of the Christians, by which they recognize one another, and which compels them, as Christian soldiers, to strive bravely under the banner of the cross for the kingdom of Jesus Christ, as the soldier of the world strives under the banner or ensign that animates and impels him to struggle and die for his country.

This formula of faith is a plain and simple sign or mark by which Christians are distinguished from non-Christians, who profess either no creed at all or else a false and defective one. This formula of belief is called the Apostles' Creed, because it is highly probable that the apostles themselves compiled it.\*

Rufinus, a Church historian of the fourth century, informs us that the apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, when they were about to disperse to preach the Gospel throughout the world, compiled and adopted this formula or creed in order to have a fixed and uniform foundation on which to base their teachings. A certain legend tells us that each apostle made an article, as follows: St. Peter made the first article,

\* Beside the Apostles' Creed there are three other creeds, or formulas of belief, authorized by the Church. These are:

1. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, more simply the Nicene Creed. It is a testimony against the errors of Arius concerning the divinity of Christ, and was formulated and adopted at the Council of Nice in the year 325 and at Constantinople in the year 381. It is the creed recited by the priest during Mass and known to us as the Credo.

2. The Athanasian Creed, so called from St. Athanasius, who died in the year 373. It has been inserted in the Roman Breviary.

3. The Creed of the Council of Trent, which, during the sessions of the Council held from 1545 to 1563, was formulated by the assembled Fathers as an exposition of the principal Catholic doctrines in opposition to the new and false teachings of the Protestants. It is the form usually pronounced as a solemn abjuration of Protestantism by converts to the Church.

"I believe in God"; St. Andrew, the second; St. James the Greater, the third; St. John, the fourth; St. Thomas, the fifth; St. James the Less, the sixth; St. Philip, the seventh; St. Bartholomew, the eighth; St. Matthew, the ninth; St. Simon, the tenth; St. Thaddeus, the eleventh; and St. Matthias, the twelfth and last.

The different portions of the Apostles' Creed are termed articles, that is to say, members, for of such members is the body of the Creed composed. And as the human body, when deprived of any one of its members, is seriously disturbed and disabled, so is the whole body of the faith paralyzed when even one article is denied. The name "Creed" is derived from the first word of the formula, "Credo," which is Latin for "I believe."

### *FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth."

#### I. "I BELIEVE IN GOD."—THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.—HIS NATURE.

##### **There is a God.**

A BELIEF in the existence of God is the very foundation of all religion. Hence it is that the Christian believer begins his profession of faith, in the Creed, with the words, "I believe in God," that is to say, "I believe that God exists, and I believe all that He reveals or teaches."

Of this fundamental truth of the existence of God we have many powerful evidences, great in number, and unquestionable. Those unbelievers who, in their

folly, say, "There is no God," have no such proofs or evidence to adduce.

The following are some of the chief evidences of the existence of God :

1. The very existence of the universe.

There must be an almighty and eternal Creator since there is a visible material world. By the "world" we mean not only the earth which we inhabit, but also the sun, moon, stars, the whole vast array of the countless solar systems.

Whence has all this vast creation come? Has it made itself? That is impossible. For inanimate matter (such as stones), which is in itself dead, could not have made or created itself. No house, no watch could have made itself. He would very properly be called a fool who would assert that the smallest and simplest peasant's hut had erected itself. On the contrary, from the mere existence of a house we conclude that there was an architect, or at least a builder. Why, then, from the fact that the world exists should we not draw a similar conclusion—that there must be an almighty, invisible Architect and Maker? That is a poor subterfuge to which the pretending unbeliever is driven when, notwithstanding the existence of the world, he tries to deny the existence of a Creator, saying, "All that exists on the earth has been produced by the forces of nature, which work according to fixed laws." At once arise the questions, "Whence come these forces of nature? Whence comes this material earth with which and through which alone the forces of nature can work? Did the matter exist before the forces, or the forces before the matter?"

How plain it here appears that the theories of the unbeliever present to a thinking mind more endless difficulties than does the simple Catholic belief expressed

in Holy Scriptures in the words, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth." The world exists, therefore an almighty Creator must exist, who is God. There can be no effect without a cause.

Every blade of grass that we see, every flower, every tree, every animal, all created things are so many distinct evidences of God's existence. Suppose we admire a fine oak-tree and ask ourselves whence it has come. The answer is, from the acorn. Where did the acorn come from? The answer is that that, too, came from a tree. Again, this tree came from an acorn which, in its turn, was produced by a tree. Hence, in the beginning, either an oak-tree or an acorn must have had a maker as primal cause of an effect. Now, the Creator who can make something out of nothing must be God.

2. The evidence arising from the order and beauty of creation.

The most careless observer of the universe can not shut his eyes to the fact that there is a preconceived plan, aim, and purpose in all things, from the greatest to the smallest. Lifting our eyes aloft to the starry heavens we see a countless array of celestial bodies, almost every one of which is vaster than our earth. They all revolve about a near central body, and again together with this body all revolve about another more distant central body. Every star steadily pursues its regular course, never interfering with the path of its neighbor. All is law, order, and harmony. Then, looking upon our own earth, what beauty and symmetry meet our eyes in all directions! Constant and sure is the succession of day and night. Winter is followed by Spring, and the hot, dry Summer is followed by the Autumn rich in fruits. The rivers irrigate the earth and moisten the soil, the waters from the depths of the ocean rise up

in vapor, sail gently toward the arid highlands and, dissolving into rain, again refresh the parched ground. Examine the structure of each blade of grass: What a display of wonders, all regulated by fixed laws, is found in the youngest, smallest blade! The rose-leaf is of a different make from the tree-leaf; each butterfly is distinct from the other in beauty and variety of color. By the aid of the microscope the naturalist can descry in an insect, invisible to the naked eye, the most perfect organic system of life. Over and above all these stands the proud form of man who, king-like, lords it over all the rest.

Now, we are forced to the conclusion that where there is law there must be a law-maker, where there is order preexisting intellect only could create and establish such order. Where all tends regularly to a certain purpose there must have been a preexisting wisdom which appointed to each created thing its destiny, purpose, and functions. This first law, this first wisdom or knowledge, this first thought or intellect, must come from that Being whom we call the omnipotent and omniscient God.

### 3. The moral condition and nature of man.

Each and every one of us feels within himself a law which tells us what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, what we should do and what we should not do. We call this law conscience. It shows itself in the child and in the grown person, in the poor man and in the rich man, in the good man and in the bad man. Only long years of crime can dull the power of conscience, which wakes up later, usually on the death-bed, and ever with frightful power. Now, whence comes this moral law of nature? Man could not have given it to himself. It exists independent of his will, and only too often, alas! against the will

and desire of the man. It can not be the result or the expression of the spirit of the age, inasmuch as it frequently condemns the principles of that spirit. And yet every law naturally presupposes a law-giver, whom, for human moral law, we can find only in God—for such law-giver can not be in man nor in the material world.

Again, as there exist positive fixed laws of morality, so, too, of justice. These fundamental laws remain always and everywhere the same. They show themselves even in the child. Whence do they come? Like the moral law they come not from men, nor from visible, tangible nature. They come only from an eternal justice which stands above man and the universe. To such a law-giver only can man submit, and only such a one is competent to direct the world.

#### 4. The belief of all nations.

“You may meet with States devoid of walls, houses, colleges, laws, and with no knowledge of finance or commerce, but no one ever saw a nation without God, without prayer, without the knowledge of an oath, without religious usages, without sacrifices.” Thus wrote the ancient pagan Plutarch one hundred years after Christ. Cicero, too, says, “There is no people so rude and wild as not to have a belief in a god, though they may not understand his nature.” Hence we find everywhere a seeking and longing after a knowledge of this God. Although the human intellect, when left to its own powers and without any aid from Heaven, never succeeded in acquiring a clear knowledge of the true God, men erected altars to the “unknown god.” This belief of all peoples, in all ages, in a supreme Being can be explained only by its consonance with human nature.

The vain and foolish conceptions of the human brain never become universal, and die out in time, whereas truth endures forever unchanged. No belief, however,

is so ancient, so universal, and so conformable to human nature, as the belief in one God. It must, therefore, be founded on truth, for it can not possibly be explained otherwise.

If, then, we ask the heavens, the earth, man and his history, the towering mountains about us, the blade of grass beneath our feet, the still voice within us, the beauty and harmony of the firmament above us, all and each cry out to us, with voices clear, strong, and unmistakable, "There is an eternal, almighty God, who created all things and who governs all things. Only the fool saith in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

### God Exists.—Who is He?

God, as His name implies, is good. He is a being who has no fault, no deficiency. But human understanding can never comprehend how good He is. Hence we can only say, "God is infinitely perfect, He is the Lord of heaven and earth, and all good comes from Him; and, as He is the source of all good, He contains all good within Himself. He alone is good, and, indeed, so good that all the attributes He possesses exist in Him in the highest perfection. He has not only one good attribute, He has all. Hence God is, in truth, the sublimest and most lovable Good that can lay claim to the veneration of man; for Him the soul of man should long, for he who has God has all things."

Concerning God we know that He is (*a*) a spirit, (*b*) eternal and unchangeable, (*c*) omnipresent, (*d*) all-knowing, (*e*) all-wise, (*f*) almighty, (*g*) infinitely holy and just, (*h*) infinitely good, (*i*) all-merciful and all-patient, and (*j*) infinitely true and sincere.

## II. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

### God is a Spirit.

WHATEVER is, or exists, is called being. There are two kinds of being: spirit and body. The spirit is a being which thinks and wills, but which we can neither see nor feel; and it can not be divided or dissolved, for it has no component parts—it is simple. Body is a being which does not feel, does not think, does not will, but which is visible and palpable and easily appreciable to the senses and is composed of several concurring elements. Hence body and spirit are essentially different from each other. A stone is a body entirely without spirit. Man consists of a body and a spirit united; hence, we say that man has a spirit, but that God *is* a spirit, because He has no body. God is a being that thinks and wills and has no body.

It is true that in the Holy Scriptures may be found passages which speak of God as if He had a body, as, for instance, in 2 Paralipomenon, xvi. 9, where it is told us that "The eyes of the Lord behold all the earth;" in Psalms xvi. 1, "O Lord, give ear unto my prayer;" and in Psalms cxliv. 16, "Thou openest Thy hand and fillest with Thy blessing every living creature." But these are simply modes of expression adapted to our too material ideas; they are the only terms in which Scripture could make itself intelligible to our understandings. For, although we know and believe that God has no body, we can not portray His image, even in our minds, without the qualities of a body. Hence the foregoing extracts from Scripture, as well as similar ones throughout the whole book, are but figures of language made use of to describe to us God's omniscience and goodness, His love and

fatherly solicitude for all men. Similarly we are compelled to make for ourselves actual pictures of God, more especially as God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Thus God the Father, as a rule, is depicted as a venerable patriarch holding and balancing the world in His hand. It was in this form that God appeared to Daniel the prophet (Daniel vii. 9) and was by him described as "the Ancient of days." The representations of Christ are usually some of those forms in which He appeared in the flesh. The Holy Ghost is usually represented under the form of a dove, such as He really appeared at the baptism of Christ in the Jordan. Deity itself can not be represented. To it belongs what Isaias writes in chapter xl., v. 25, "To whom have ye likened Me, or made Me equal, saith the holy One?"

But, Christian reader, although God is a pure spirit you can have Him before your eyes. Represent Him to yourself simply as your Maker, without whom you could not exist, and whose grace and mercy created you. Place Him before your eyes as your Father, without whom you would have nothing, for from Him all good comes. Represent Him to yourself as your helper, for when you find yourself in need He is always with you, never wanting. Keep Him before your mind as the judge before whom you will one day have to render an account of your stewardship. It is related of St. Simon Salus that when walking through a field he would strike the flowers and plants with his staff, and say, "Be silent, be quiet, do not reproach me with ingratitude to God." Do not live so forgetful of God's being that His creatures, while proclaiming His power and glory, rebuke you for not thinking of the Lord that made you. The best way, however, is to be mindful

in your heart of God, for does not St. Paul say in 1 Corinthians iii. 16, "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

God being a spirit, and, indeed, an infinitely perfect spirit, then the cultivation of our spirit, or the ennobling of our better spirit-nature, should be our supremest duty here below. "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," say Holy Scriptures. For the same reason we must serve God not only with our bodies, with our lips, eyes, and other senses, but also with our soul, or spirit-nature; for, as the Gospel says (John iv. 23), "The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth." It is only the worship of the spirit, a good, pure soul, and an honest, sincere intention of heart that please God. As Christ of old rebuked and condemned the false and pretended sanctity of the Pharisees, so does true Christian religion abhor a mere lip-service. It demands the soul and the heart.

### **God is Eternal and Unchangeable.**

As God has no body He must be essentially, and by nature, unchangeable. Spirit dieth not. God does not cease to exist, He remains and endures as He is. But as He does not cease to be, does not change, so He could never have begun. This incomprehensible mystery we express by means of the words, "God is eternal." He has no beginning and no end. God was before the world was, for He has created it.

"Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world was formed: from eternity and to eternity Thou art God," exclaims the Royal Psalmist (Psalms lxxxix. 2).

And when the world and, with the world, time shall cease to exist, when hours, days, weeks, months, years, and centuries shall have passed away forever, God will be the same as He is to-day. For not only God Himself is immutable, all His attributes are immutable also. Eternal is the will of God; hence His commandments endure to-day as when He gave them forth on Mount Sinai. Eternal are the decrees of God; hence for men, throughout all eternity, there can be no other destiny than to love God and to be happy in His service. Eternal is God's goodness, but only for them who love and fear Him. Eternal is God's mercy; hence no human soul can say that it was never received by God unto grace and pardon. But eternal, too, is the anger of God, if not softened by a penitential conversion on the part of man. Eternal are the judgments of God, and eternally they crush the sinner if he do not prevent God's anger by penance. For with God it is not yea and nay, but only yea. He is to-day as yesterday, and before a thousand years. Hence St. James calls God "the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration" (James i. 17); that is to say, God is immutable.

### **God is Omnipresent.**

The omnipresence of God is that attribute of His, by virtue of which He is at the same time everywhere present and undivided. Hence, in regard to God, there can be no question of far and near. This is only for material bodies, whereas God is a pure Spirit; and in this spirit-nature of God rest the power and possibility of His omnipresence. God is omnipresent, not in the sense that all things lie open before His spirit, in the way in which a wide landscape lies open to our view when we stand on a high mountain.

His omnipresence is actual. Go, therefore, where you will, God is with you and beside you. If you are sad He is present to comfort you; if you do evil He is present to punish you. If you are good and pious He is present to reward you. If you are in need He is present to help you. Wherever you are, you are with God and remain with Him.

You can not flee the presence of God by going to the uttermost bounds of the earth, nor need you go one step to find Him. Whenever you incur the anger of God He is with you, and will find you even if you travel to another continent. You will find Him in the deepest recesses of barbarism and heathenism, however benighted these may be. In the wilds of Africa you can pray to Him, as if you were in your own parish-church.

### **God is Omniscient.**

God is everywhere, therefore He knows all things. He is omniscient. And, as He is eternal, He knows the past, for He was there; and the present, for He is now with us; and the future, for it is foreseen and foreknown in His decrees and is effected by Him. He knows our most secret thoughts, for "the eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men . . . and looking into the hearts of men, into the most secret parts" (Ecclesiasticus, xxiii. 28).

In the heart of man nothing good, nothing bad, can even slumber that God does not know. And, as the Father knows it, so know it likewise the Son and the Holy Ghost. God reads our hearts as we would read a book, and neither falsehood nor concealment can deceive Him nor save us.

**God is All-Wise.**

God knows not only all that is, was, and will be, but He knows also how all things ought to be in order to be right; and, indeed, so right that they can not be made better, nor even conceived to be better. This knowledge-power of God we call wisdom: therefore we say that God is all-wise and that He knows how to direct all things to the most perfect degree.

This wisdom we can discover in the smallest insect as well as in the sun, in the dewdrop no less than in the ocean. Let the reader but consider his own body. How wonderfully artistic it is in all its parts! Man stands erect and looks toward heaven, whither his soul is tending, while the animal, coming as it does exclusively from the earth, to which it is soon to return, looks toward the ground. This upright figure of man consists of a harmonious collection of bones, sinews, tendons, nerves, and veins, all lending their aid to the maintenance of animal life, and so necessary, one to another, that the loss or injury to any one part brings suffering to the body. In the interior of the system are the wonderful vital organs. All the limbs are flexible and work together in perfect harmony. Indeed, each limb is a work of art. The human eye forms a piece of mechanical ingenuity that could come from no other hand than that of an all-wise Creator.

As God, in His wisdom, knows thus how to direct all material things wisely, He knows also how to guide the destinies of men. He directs them in accordance with His own wisdom, and not with regard to our whims and notions. Hence we are often dissatisfied, because, in our imperfect knowledge and limited understanding, we would have things otherwise to please ourselves. For instance, when we are sick we fancy

that if we were only once more restored to health we would never again yield to temptations, that we would even do great works for the honor and glory of God. But God knows that if we were strong and vigorous we would become forgetful of Him and run the risk of losing our souls. Hence, in His wisdom, He sometimes leaves us in bodily suffering in order that we may remember our dependence on Him and be restrained from evil-doing.

Knowing that if we were rich we would become slothful, He leaves us poor, so that we have to work and thus preserve our health and strength. He sends us want that we may be provident. Happiness makes us proud and thoughtless and leads us away from salvation. Where would God's wisdom be if all were wealthy, or if all were equally poor? In the first instance, everybody having enough, who would work to make our clothes, to prepare our food, or to discharge other duties of life toward their fellow-men? Yes, we all have need of one another's services. If all were equally poor who could give employment, or help of any kind, to another?

Sickness makes us humble, privation makes us inventive, poverty makes us patient, necessity compels us to use our hands and heads, and thus arises in the world that wonderful multiplicity and variety in trade and manufactures, arts and sciences, in all which we can not but discern the guidance of divine wisdom. Again, this difference between rich and poor fosters and brings into play the fairest virtues of neighborly love and of charity, all of which will one day meet with a suitable reward. Sometimes it is made quite apparent how God directs the destinies of individuals to a wise purpose. Who has not often pitied Joseph, the Egyptian, when sold into bondage by his unnatural brethren?

But had it not been for this he would never have come into Egypt to be, as he afterward was, the saviour of his people.

Who has not felt compassion for Moses when he was placed, a mere infant, in a basket among the bulrushes on the banks of the Nile? Yet such abandonment prepared the way for him to become a famous liberator of his people. Aman, who would fain destroy the Jewish people, contributed largely to their prosperity. At the proper time Mardochai was raised to Aman's forfeited position, while the latter was condemned to die on the scaffold intended for Mardochai. True, we seldom discover at first sight the wisdom of God in things happening around us. But that is not necessary, for the faith and confidence with which we throw ourselves into the arms of God are of far greater benefit to us than if we saw and understood all things.

### **God is Omnipotent.**

The power of God is no less than His wisdom. He can do all things whatsoever He will. And when He wills to do something He needs no time for it, He needs no tools or instruments, He needs no help, He needs no material to make it from. He can create out of nothing, as He has made the world out of nothing.

But out of what would God make the world? Out of something? But from what would that something come? The first something that would be created would certainly come from nothing.

That to God all things are possible was affirmed by the angel Gabriel to the Mother of God when she wondered how she was to become a mother, since she knew not man. "No word shall be impossible with God" (Luke i. 37). But we ourselves see this from

His countless wonderful works. If He could make all these things, what is there that He can not make? What is there that He can not make, who created the sun, moon, and stars, who holds the earth in its place in the universe, and who marks out to the heavenly bodies their paths and directs their movements over them? What is there impossible to Him who rules the waters of the mighty deep, who controls the elements, who stores the depths of the earth with precious metals, and who peoples the earth, air, and waters with myriads of living beings?

What He can do we may learn from the history of the people of Israel, who had countless proofs that the hand of the Lord was not shortened or weakened after the creation of the universe. Consider, for example, the miracles wrought by Moses in God's name through His power, at the time of the departure from Egyptian bondage.

King Pharaoh was unwilling to let the Israelites go. Then Moses showed him the credentials and proofs of his mission. Throwing his staff on the ground, it turned into a serpent. With the same staff he strikes the waters of the Nile and they are changed into blood, and all the fishes die. He stretches forth his hand over the rivers, brooks, and swamps, and the frogs come forth and cover all the land. He strikes the ground, and all the dust of the earth is changed into insects that beset men and cattle. He calls forth swarms of flies over the country, and the land of Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, was spared. Pestilence came upon the horses, horned cattle, sheep, and camels of the Egyptians, while the live-stock of the Israelites was spared. Moses threw ashes up toward the heavens and running ulcers came upon the beasts of the field and men. He lifted his hand toward heaven and a

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heavy shower of hail fell upon the men and cattle of Egypt, but not on the cattle of the Hebrews. At the order of Moses locusts swarmed throughout the land, and all over Egypt a darkness was spread like a pall for three days, so that no one dared go abroad, while the children of Israel dwelt in light. Finally, God struck with the hand of death the first-born of the Egyptians. Moses wrought all these miracles at the instigation of God.

Again, when the chosen people left the land of Egypt a series of miracles were performed at frequent intervals all through the forty years that they spent on their way to the Promised Land. In a miraculous manner they were guided through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud in the daytime and by a pillar of fire at night. By a miracle they crossed the Red Sea, they were fed on miraculous manna, and were supplied with water from a rock also by miracle. By a miracle they were punished with fiery serpents, by a miracle the strong walls of Jericho fell down. All these things took place before the eyes of thousands of people, who narrated them to their children, just as Moses wrote them.

But the God of Pharaoh and the Israelites is even today Our God, equally terrible in His punishments, equally powerful to protect and to save. Hence, devout reader, learn to rejoice and to fear at the same time. Beware of provoking His mighty wrath and endeavor at all times to deserve His love and help.

### **God is Holy and Just.**

To the perfections of the divine nature belong, above all else, the unbounded abhorrence that God has for evil, and the infinite love with which He is devoted to good. This is what we call the holiness

of God. God is indeed holy. He loves good and hates evil, and for that reason He loves only those who do good and rejects those who do evil. Hence Holy Writ says, "Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity" (Psalms xlv. 8). Of course there are holy men who love the good and hate iniquity, but their hatred for evil is not to be compared with God's hatred for the same.

There have been saints on earth, such, for instance, as St. Joseph of Cupertino, who were troubled and disgusted whenever a sinner was near them. But the saints must contend against evil till the last breath of their lives. Even St. Paul, who was lifted up to the third heaven, assures us that he felt in his members a twofold law, namely, the love of God which attracted him to good, and the natural wickedness of his inclinations which all men have. And yet St. Paul resisted evil even to the shedding of his blood. But God is the origin of all holiness. He is holiness itself. He is so pure that "the heavens are not pure in His sight" (Job xv. 15) and that "in His angels He found wickedness" (Job iv. 18). How deeply averse God is to sin we may see clearly from the deliverance to the Jews of His laws on Mount Sinai. The Lord proclaimed to them these laws amid so much solemnity that terror and awe must have taken possession of the people, especially when they heard the clash of trumpets, the rolling of the thunder, and saw the mountains smoking and felt the earth shaking under their feet.

They had previously received orders to prepare for the publication of the laws, and had even to wash their garments. Consider how dreadful God will be when man stands before Him charged with the transgression of His commandments!

Since God hates evil so intensely, some may think that He ought not to allow any evil to exist in the world. But evil exists in the world, not because God wills it, but rather because He permits it. God permits evil because in many ways it is the cause of good, and because it is necessary that man should choose the good according to his free will, in order to merit reward. For instance, you love your enemy and, as the Gospel tells you to do, you bless those who curse you: how could you exercise such virtue if the evil of enmity did not exist? Why should God reward a man who can not be bad, who can not help being good? Consider the saints in heaven! See their joy, happiness and glory. Many of them owe much of their present happiness to the presence on earth of evil which they resisted and overcame. Evil indirectly contributes much to the honor that is given to God even on earth. This holiness of God is manifested in the lives of men. For He rewards the good and punishes the bad, not according to His whim, but just to the degree that they merit, according to the amount of good or bad that they have practised.

In this respect the great ones of the earth are of no importance before God if they break His commandments, as we see in the case of Saul, whom He had placed over His people as king, and whom He afterward deprived of his crown and his life when he violated the divine precepts. On the other hand, God rewarded the poor widow of Sarephta, who in her benevolence fed the prophet Elias, although she was among the lowliest of Israel's people. God does not look at the greatness of the work, but at the good will, and He rewards as abundantly the simple offering of the poor widow as the handsome gift of the rich man.

He rewards not alone the zeal of Solomon, who built a temple in His honor, but also the drink of cold water given to the thirsty by a charity that can do no more. And in proportion as God's rewards are grand and magnificent, in the same degree are His chastisements dreadful and severe. In His wrath He has destroyed whole cities, as Sodom and Gomorrha. He has prepared destruction for whole nations, as we see in the fate of Pharaoh and his Egyptians. Yes, at the time of Noe He destroyed the whole human race, when their sins cried to heaven! Thus God manifests His holiness through the exercise of His justice.

Let us therefore not be disturbed when we inquire why the world often goes prosperously with the bad, and adversely with the good. The evil man has no more chance of escaping his punishment than the good man has of losing his reward. David said long ago, "I have seen the wicked highly exalted and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus: and I passed by, and lo he was not, and I sought him, and his place was not found" (Psalms xxxvi. 35, 36). All in due time good fortune vanishes, and the misfortunes of the poor come to an end, as it stands written, "The poor man shall not be forgotten to the end, the patience of the poor shall not perish forever" (Psalms ix. 19).

In order to explain why God does not at once punish us we may observe two things:

1. God gives to the sinner abundance of time, that he may improve.

He kept Noe building the ark in the presence of all men during a period of a hundred and twenty years. When chastisement overtook them how could they justify their tardy blindness and wilful perseverance in sin? Many sinners have profited by God's delay, to become better Christians. St. Mary of Egypt lived

in sin for many years. If God in His anger had destroyed her at the beginning, a saint would have been lost to the Church.

2. Complete reward and complete punishment will come only in the next world.

The most wicked sinner has something good in him, which God rewards in this life, since He can not reward it in the next. The best man has his faults, which God punishes in this world in order not to be compelled to punish them hereafter. Thus the justice of God is the same to all men. Of this thought, dear Christian, avail yourself and be so encouraged by it that you may never be found cold and indifferent in the service of God, ever remembering that, come weal or woe, you are always in the hand of God. Misfortune did not condemn Job, neither will good fortune justify you. With St. Augustine pray, "Here, O Lord, cut, here burn; only spare me in eternity."

### **God is Infinitely Good.**

God is the source not only of all power, wisdom, knowledge and holiness, but also of all love. "God is charity," as the holy apostle, John, says. This love is plainly manifested by His benevolence toward all creatures.

"Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made" (Wisdom xi. 25).

He bestows upon us, and indeed upon all creatures, untold benefits. This love or charity we call goodness. This goodness of God has given us life and an immortal soul; it maintains and supports us, and provides us each day with whatever we need. And how manifold are the gifts of God! He might have given

to us the merest necessities of life, for man can live easily on water, bread, milk, and meat. But He gave us an abundance of gifts, which nourish us, strengthen us, and enliven us; which not only sustain life, but make it pleasant and even luxurious. We are compelled in our astonishment to ask, "Whence comes this unlimited love of Our God?" Then to temporal benefits He adds eternal blessings. When, in the ingratitude of his heart, man abandoned God and committed sins upon sins He did not spare His only Son. That was, as St. John says, the greatest proof of His love. "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we may live by Him" (1 John iv. 9). After all this God can not withhold anything from us. After having given us the greater will He keep from us what is infinitely less? What could He deny to us after having sacrificed for our salvation the life of His well-beloved Son? Where is the heart that is not deeply touched at the sight of such love? The very heathens have wept on hearing from their missionaries an account of what God has done out of His love for men. Should Christians, because they hear the story often, be less grateful than the heathens? Let us then love this good God, giving Him our hearts with all our love. The Lord has said, "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke xii. 49). We, too, should desire to see this fire kindled and burning brightly, for what is it but the fire of love that ought to ascend to God from the altar of our heart?

### **God is Merciful and Patient.**

The love of God is manifested not merely in His goodness, but also in His mercy and patience toward

sinner. God is merciful. He willingly pardons all repentant sinners. He is patient, for He waits long before chastising the sinner, in order to give him time to do penance. No sooner had Adam and Eve sinned than He showed His mercy. He punished them, it is true, but He would not abandon them to the hopeless and endless misery in which they would have been plunged if deprived totally of His grace. He did not wish to leave them a prey to the devil, nor to close against them the gates of heaven for which He had originally intended them. Hence, He promised them a Redeemer, the thought and expectation of whom, and the hope in whose coming, consoled our first parents in the grief for their lost happiness and led them on to sorrow and penance. And as He dealt with Adam and Eve so did He deal with all sinners who, after their sinning, came to Him with humble and contrite hearts. He washed away even the remembrance of their transgressions.

But in order that God may be merciful the sinner must be converted truly and really, and not merely apparently. Words are not sufficient, deeds are necessary; not useless tears, but avoidance of evil and doing of good are required. The sinner's conversion must be like that of the Ninivites. Among the innumerable examples of God's mercy contained in the Sacred Scriptures there is none more striking than this case of the Ninivites whom God, through His prophet, Jonas, threatened with destruction. "And the men of Ninive believed in God: and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least" and the king caused it to be proclaimed that men and cattle should fast and that the people should cry to the Lord with all their strength. Nor did he proclaim to his subjects a mere outward fast, as of the body; he said

“ let them turn, every one of them, from their evil ways and from the iniquity that is in their hands.” The Ninivites did this, “ And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way : and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do them, and He did it not ” (Jonas iii). If the sinner’s conversion be only as thorough as was that of the Ninivites he need not doubt of obtaining God’s mercy. God Himself promised it solemnly when He said through another of His prophets, Ezechiel, “ As I live . . . I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live ” (Ezechiel xxxiii. 11). What God thus solemnly promised, His Son, Our Saviour, who Himself came to redeem sinners, has taught us in the beautiful parable of the prodigal son. Can a father’s heart know any pain more acute than that caused by the son who leaves his home and squanders his substance ? Yet the father receives him back with joy and even prepares a banquet to celebrate the return. But first the son must make the advance, throw himself at his father’s feet, remain at home and by humility and obedience repair the wrong he has done. The same truth is taught by Jesus in the parables of the lost goat and the stray sheep. There can be no more tender figure than that of the anxious shepherd seeking the lost sheep, extricating it from the thorns and thistles, placing it upon his shoulders and carrying it home. This good shepherd is Our Saviour, whom the eternal Father has sent in search of sinners. Let us listen, then, to His gentle voice as He speaks to our hearts, “ Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock ” (Apocalypse iii. 20). Is not that mercy for sinners ?

And how long Our Saviour continues to knock before He is tired ! He does not at once hurl His thunder-

bolts on the godless. He waits, as in the days of Noe, to see whether men will become better. "Thou hast mercy upon all, and winkest at the sins of men for the sake of repentance" (Wisdom xi. 24). Like the gardener with the unfruitful tree, God gives the sinner a chance. For three years the lord came seeking fruit on the fig-tree and found none. Then he let it be another year, until it was digged about and manured. It is thus God deals with sinners. When He sees the sinner persisting in his wickedness He not only gives him more time for repentance, but He redoubles the proofs of His love, that the man, touched by the mercy of his Maker, may enter into his own heart. He sends him instructors and confessors. He seeks to bring him by crosses and afflictions. He bestows upon him grace after grace before He withdraws His hand from him and leaves him to his fate. While all this is very consoling, it is, on the other hand, dreadful when the sinner rejects the mercy of God. For, although God is merciful, He is also just. The vessel of divine grace, although capacious, is not inexhaustible. When it is emptied then is the vessel of divine wrath filled. Let us fear this last misfortune, and daily pray that God's excess of mercy may not make our guilt greater.

### **God is True and Faithful.**

As God is infinite charity so also is He infinite truth, and as such He is the source of our faith. God is truthful, that is to say, He can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is man's peculiar trait to err; to err is human. A man with the best intentions is liable to err, for his knowledge is uncertain and defective. Thus it was that the ancient philosophers erred. Al-

though they made the most strenuous efforts and wasted their very lives in the study of God and things divine, they could not answer their own questions on these subjects and fell into the grossest errors concerning the Deity. Some taught that the sun was God, others the air, and others, again, worshiped fire. Many made images out of stone or metal or wood, and worshiped them, while others, again, adored the plants and beasts of the field. We can know God only through His own revelation. Man, when left to himself, is liable to err from youth to his old age, and he must acknowledge that he errs every day of his life. Even with the best intentions he can not always know the truth, nor utter it. On the other hand, it often happens that a man has never any disposition to discover the truth. Thus many of our separated brethren, by reason of their intelligence and education, and because of the opportunities offered to them every day, might easily learn the truth taught by the Church. But, although the Lord has said, "He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth" (Luke xi. 23), they will not embrace the truth. It is to them a matter of indifference what religion they live in. They can not discern Catholic truth, for they have no good will. Nay, more, men often have bad will and distort the truth. Such are they who, from pride or any other cause, fall away from the truth and seduce others to imitate them; such are they who lie, and their number is legion. But God can not do this. He can not err, for He is all-knowing. He cannot deceive, for He is eternal and infallible truth.

"It is impossible for God to lie," says the Apostle Paul, in Hebrews vi. 18. Yes, it is impossible for God to deceive, for by so doing He would contradict

His divine nature—just as it would be contradicting God's nature and essence to love evil and to dislike goodness, which would be essentially contradictory to His holiness. We may, therefore, believe with perfect security whatever He reveals—nay, we are bound to believe it under pain of damnation, for have we not heard that "he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16)? To distort the word of God, or to doubt it, is the greatest sin of which a man can be guilty, as we see in the case of Adam and Eve, who fell because they did not believe firmly.

This faith in God's truthfulness the Catholic Christian should often awaken in his heart, as he arouses his faith in general when he says, "I believe firmly that all which Thou hast revealed is true, and I believe it because Thou art eternal truth and can neither deceive nor be deceived."

But God is not only truthful in His assertions, He is likewise true in His promises. He is true, that is to say, He holds surely to what He promises, and fulfils what He threatens. To the good He has promised heaven, to the wicked He has threatened hell, and these promises and threats He fulfils as surely as He is God. No matter, therefore, how the pious man fares in this world, he is sure of the Lord's inheritance. Though he may die, like Lazarus of old, in sorrow and misery at the rich man's doorstep, Abraham's bosom is ready to receive him, as hell will receive the impious man, though to the end of his life he may live undisturbed in his luxury and crime, like the rich man Dives. Heaven is firm and solid, the earth likewise. Both are borne on invisible shoulders. But God's word is firmer than either. For, as the Lord Himself says, "Heaven and earth shall pass, but My word shall not pass" (Matthew xxiv. 35). What God

has promised will not fail, just because that can not fail which He promises. God is eternal and His word is everlasting; God is immutable and His kingdom is unchangeable. His Church and her teachings are unchanged and unchangeable; immovable, too, stand the decrees of the Lord and, therefore, all is unchangeable that He has promised or threatened.

### III. HOW TO KNOW GOD.

WE have now seen that God is a spirit, and that we therefore can not see Him with corporal eyes. But we can know something about a person without seeing him, as in our every-day life we know many things, things that we learn not from ourselves but from others. Thus we know of God that He exists, who He is, and what He is, without being able to see Him, but rather because He has been pleased to make Himself known.

God has been pleased to reveal Himself supernaturally. In order that man's knowledge of Him might be the more safe and sure He has made Himself known, not in one way only, but in several ways, so that these several distinct ways of revelation, when taken together as a whole, form the most complete and most harmonious system. Deception is impossible, for one revelation is a proof of the other, and a revelation that would contradict another earlier and admitted revelation would most necessarily carry in and with itself the mark of falsity.

1. First of all, God has manifested Himself through the visible world which He made and which He governs. We can see His omnipotence, goodness, and wisdom displayed in the creation of the world, as we can also discover these same attributes of His in the

manner with which He cares for created things. When we hear music at a distance we conclude that there must be performers, although we can not see them. A building that we may never have seen before gives us to understand at the first sight that an architect has drawn the plan which his workmen have reduced to practical form. In passing through a city at night, though we may not meet a soul, we know that it is the dwelling-place of many of our fellow-beings. When a ship has been wrecked on an unknown coast and the rescued crew, on reaching land, perceive smoke rising at a distance, they rejoice and say, "There are fellow-beings dwelling here." The traveler, who, losing his way, wanders about bewildered through 'swamp and moor, heather and woods, when he discovers a distant light shining through the gloom, quickens his steps toward that quarter, for he says to himself, "There must be a house there, where I may obtain food and shelter." All these conclude from what they see to the existence of what they do not see, and so do we all, every one of us, in countless occurrences of every-day life.

Thus from the world we infer there must be a Creator, and from the manner of its creation and maintenance we conclude to the power of goodness and wisdom of the Ruler. Though God's existence is not of itself visible to our eyes it is visible in the created world. Hence St. Paul says, "The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power and divinity also" (Romans i. 20). We may say simply, as there is not anything that has made itself, neither could the world make itself. As it is impossible for anything that has been decomposed by the action of blind forces (such, for instance, as a ruined temple,

which an earthquake, a flood, or a fire has destroyed), to present a regular form or plan and have order and cohesion, so would it be absurd to look for order and harmony in the universe, if it had been brought about by the blind forces of nature or called into existence by any other agency than the will and power of an intelligent Being. Most positively and clearly do the purpose, design, and wonderful construction of the universe point to Him who, as the Holy Scripture saith, has "ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight" (Wisdom xi. 21).

2. Beside those evidences of God's revelation which come to us through the senses from outward nature, each one among us has an inward intuition of God, within himself. This intuition, which is wanting to no one, comes to us through the voice of conscience, and ever speaks plainly and positively to each individual the will of God. While God's power, wisdom, and goodness are made known by the visible world, His holiness and justice are revealed rather through conscience. This voice warns us that we ought to fear the presence of an invisible judge of evil, for it fills the heart of the man who breaks the commandments with fear and trembling. Why does a man feel so much afraid when he commits a sin altogether secret and unknown to anybody but himself? Why is he so timid, why does he, by his trembling, betray outwardly the inward anxiety of his heart? Why does the blush come to his face, even when no one suspects or blames him, why is he so restless, so dissatisfied with himself? Because his conscience bears testimony against him that he has done wrong, that he dare not face God, and that although he may escape human censure he shall not escape the judgment of God. On the other hand, when he has done right and good, even though

no one knows it and he has no reward, that same voice of conscience fills his heart with peace and satisfaction and bids him hope in a just rewarder of good, in God Himself, who can and will reward all things. Thus conscience is a guide for all men, and hence we can understand how it is that men who are without the influence of Christianity have some notion of the difference between good and bad and act accordingly. Hence St. Paul says, "When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law, these having not the law are a law to themselves; who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts between themselves accusing, or also defending, one another" (Romans ii. 14, 15). In vain and falsely do men pretend to say that this interior voice of conscience is a mere prejudice. A man may be able to overcome prejudices when he once knows the truth. Fear and hesitancy disappear when one has become habituated to a thing. But conscience will not suffer itself to be overcome. Although a man, by a false reasoning with himself, and by plunging into the distractions and pleasures of the world, may succeed in stifling and silencing its voice for a time, it will awake and speak in loud tones during the silent hours of the night. While on his death-bed it will insist on sending its sharp and penetrating tones to the very depths of his troubled heart. Nor is this any prejudice in man, it belongs to his nature, for it is the internal revelation and manifestation of his Creator.

3. Moreover, in order that there might be no room left for the slightest doubt, God was pleased to confirm by His own powerful and explicit word all that the visible world proclaims and teaches, and also the

promptings of our conscience. Hence He taught us to know Himself chiefly by a revelation which He hath sent to us, first by His own prophets and afterwards by His own divine Son. From Adam, to whom God first revealed Himself, down to the time of Christ, was a succession of supernaturally enlightened men to whose souls God was pleased to speak either personally or by means of His Holy Spirit. Thus the knowledge of the true God could never be extinguished among men as long as it was preserved by one single nation, the Jews.

But these prophets were merely signals, all pointing to Christ, the Son of the living God, to the Messiah who alone knows God, because He is from Him for all eternity and is God Himself. Although God spoke to Moses He appeared to him under a form that could be seen by his corporal eyes, so that it is ever true "no man hath ever seen God" as He really is, but "the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father hath revealed it to us." Thus the revelation through Christ is the revelation of all revelations, the revelation from God and through God Himself.

### **There is but one God.**

We believe in God, and only in one God. Before Christ, Our Lord, the Redeemer of the world, all men, with the exception of the Jews to whom truth had been revealed by the prophets, believed in many gods. They worshiped not only the sun, moon, and stars, but also their fellow-beings, animals, plants, and lifeless figures of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone. Men feared these gods and brought offerings to them. The whole earth was filled with an idolatry at once horrible and ridiculous.

There is but one God, for He Himself so taught

the Israelites by the mouth of His prophet, Isaias, "I am the first, and I am the last, and beside Me there is no God ; who is like to Me ? " (Isaias xliv. 6-7.) Our own intuition teaches us the same truth. For if God created all things, who could have created Him ? Of course it would have to be some still greater God. Thus we ever arrive at the same conclusion that there is some one who, though giving existence to everything else, must himself have been ever uncreated.

Again, from the purposes, order, and harmony in the world we can infer that there is but one God. If there were two rulers one would run counter to the other. Each would have his own individual will, and there would be disorder, for there would be difference of purpose. If it is not true that there is but one God then there is no God, for in all creation we see the working of but one God. Hence, also, we do not say, "I believe God," but "I believe in God," for we believe no other being as we believe in this one only God. In the expression, "I believe in God," there is implied, beside belief, a surrender to Him of our feelings. Having already contemplated the infinite perfections of the Deity we have learned not only to believe, but also to give ourselves up to Him with unlimited love and confidence. Without this confidence our belief would not be the belief of the children of God. Even the devils believe, but they tremble. Not so with the children of God ; they believe, but they also love Him and hope in Him.

To you, dear Christian, this God now says, "Son, give Me thy heart" (Proverbs xxiii. 26). Even if God did not ask your heart, to whom else would you give it but to Him ? What would you love more than God ? Cry out with St. Augustine, "O my God ! grant me the grace to know and to love Thee."

**IV. "I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER."—  
THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS.**

IN the first article of the Apostles' Creed the Catholic Christian professes his faith in the Deity as God the Father. We style God our Father because we hold the same relation to Him that the child does to its earthly father. Yes, He is indeed our Father ; parents are only His representatives. From God comes all that we possess, from Him comes "every perfect gift" (James i. 17), although conferred apparently by human hands. To Him do we pray confidently, "Abba, Father" (Mark xiv. 36). But there is still another mysterious divine fatherhood. For God is not only one person, but three persons, the first of whom we call Father, the second the Son, and the third the Holy Ghost. Nor are these three names chosen without design and meaning, for they signify the relations the three persons bear toward one another, and in which, too, they have been revealed to us ; for did not Our Saviour tell His apostles to baptize all in the name of the triune God, using the words, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew xxviii. 19)? There is no contradiction here, for we do not say that the three persons are three Gods, or one person is three persons, but we say that "three persons are one God," and they are one God for the reason that they have one and the same being and one and the same nature.

These three persons are all from eternity, all three are equally powerful, equally good, equally perfect. They all three possess the same attributes in the same degree, distinct only in the fact that there are three persons, each of them subsisting in and of Himself,

three persons in one Being. True, we call them the first, second, and third, but we do not call them such because one existed before another, or one is mightier than another, but because in sacred history they appear in that order, and because the work begun by them, namely, the creation, redemption, and sanctification, was begun, continued, and completed in this order of succession.

Yet, in order to distinguish the difference of persons, we say that the Father is from all eternity, the Son proceeds from the Father, the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. But on this account no one is older than another, but all three persons are equally eternal. Yet we are not to believe that the Father does anything without the Son and the Holy Ghost. All that is done by God is done by the Father through the Son and the Holy Ghost. Hence, when we say, Who made you? God the Father. Who redeemed you? God the Son. Who sanctified you? God the Holy Ghost—we must understand that all three of the divine persons began and accomplished this work together. It is only in point of time that these three persons have come to us in revelation. Of course we can not comprehend this, for in order to comprehend God we would have to be more than God. As one circle can be encompassed and encircled only by a circle greater than itself, so God's nature or being could be comprehended only by a nature exceeding the divine nature. Hence the prophet Jeremias says, "Great art Thou, O Lord, and incomprehensible in thought." It is no disgrace for the human intellect to bow down in faith before Him who, though He made that intellect, has set limits to it—"Thus far shalt thou go and no farther."

Let us not forget that we are indebted to the three

divine persons for all that we have, but more especially for the fact that in our baptism we were all dedicated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Let us ever remember what we promised to them through our sponsors at baptism. There are two special days in the year on which we should more particularly honor, adore, and thank the adorable and blessed Trinity, namely, the anniversary of our baptism, when we ought to renew our baptismal promises, and on Trinity Sunday, which occurs each year eight days after Pentecost. For after having contemplated and admired in Advent-time the work of the Father, and at Christmas and Easter the work of the Son, and at Whitsuntide the work of the Holy Ghost, the festival of the Blessed Trinity is admirably adapted to bring back to our memories once more all the blessings for which we are indebted to the three divine persons, and so, by the remembrance of these graces received, to renew and strengthen our gratitude and love. Not only on special festivals, but on each day of our lives, we ought to pay to the three divine persons the tribute of our praise and reverence. It is for this purpose that the Church teaches us to begin and end so many of our prayers and other devotions with that beautiful doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

V. "CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH."—  
THE CREATION AND GOVERNMENT  
OF THE WORLD.

IN the words, "I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," our holy Church teaches us that all which exists beside God, the

visible and the invisible, is His work; that is to say that God has brought all these things into existence out of nothing. This truth is also taught by the Holy Scripture when it says, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth."

From this teaching of the Church it follows :

1. That the world was made by God in time, and therefore it does not exist from eternity. This teaching is also conformable to our reason. In nature we see nothing but progressive action, and when we fancy that we have discovered a cause or a motive-power of certain effects, closer observation discovers over and over again one series of causes and effects. What nature is in its individual parts, the whole world is in general, namely, one vast process or action, that is to say, something brought forth or developed. But it is only God that can have brought it forth, that is, created it, for He alone, as the Omnipotent, can produce something out of nothing. All further attempts at illustration are unsatisfactory. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" are the words of Holy Scripture, simple, plain, intelligible to all.

2. God made the world out of nothing. The meaning of this is (*a*) that God did not form the earth out of preexisting matter, and (*b*) that it has not emanated out of the divine Being. This thought is very beautifully expressed by St. Augustine in the words, "The works have proceeded out of nothing through Thee, but not out of Thee, not out of matter that is not Thine, or that was already brought into existence" (Confessions xiii. 13). That God created the world out of nothing is a doctrine frequently and emphatically taught in Holy Scripture. The opinion that the world is an emanation from the being or nature of God is equally opposed to Scripture and to human reason. This

heresy, or so-called pantheism, had its rise among the ancient pagan philosophers, and recently it has been revived by modern anti-Christian teachers. The fallacy that there exists no supreme being distinct from nature, and that God is identical with nature, so that everything is God and the same being as God, was expressly condemned by Pius IX. in his learned encyclical, and most emphatically and unanimously rejected by the bishops at the Vatican Council. And very naturally. For every man carries within him a certain consciousness that he is essentially something beside the inanimate and irrational world surrounding him. Now, if, according to the teachings of the pantheists, everything that exists bears within itself a portion of the divine Being, such a consciousness of essential individual being could not exist in any man. Moreover, the theory is in full contradiction of God's freedom; and it is in fact a subversion of His freedom to believe God to exist in every created thing. For God, who is essentially and absolutely free, could not be, even as to a portion of His being, restrained to or confined in the stone which the small boy can throw whithersoever he will. Nor could He, although living, be restrained and unconscious in the animal, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, free and self-conscious in man. For the same reason, good and bad, true and false, right and wrong, which all exist in the world, could not be equally emanations from the same Godhead. These and similar absurd contradictions human reason is powerless to understand, much less to explain. They are directly repugnant to reason, and hence pantheism is an unreasonable doctrine.

3. God created the world through His omnipotent will. When contemplating this truth we are confronted with a mystery whose depths we are unable to

fathom. Yet it is not contradictory to or against our reason. A man's will moves his whole body, and all the separate members of it. It commands the hand, for instance, to perform the most skilled works of art, or to procure nourishment for the body; and yet this wonderful connection between mind and matter, the influence of the will over the body, has never been seen or explained by anybody. Nevertheless, we can not deny the existence of the connection. Thus there are, even in natural life, truths which we must admit and recognize, although they are involved in mystery. How unreasonable, then, it would be for us to wish to deny the creation of the world by God, for the bare reason that we can not understand it! Yet what better grounds can be alleged for the existence of the world? Therefore, when the Sacred Scripture teaches that the universe was made purely by the will of God, it teaches a truth which, although incomprehensible to our understanding, is not at all unreasonable or impossible.

Moreover, as God can will only what is good, and with His will has created the world, it follows that He made the world good. "And God saw all the things that He had made: and they were very good" (Genesis i. 31).

It is not the less true and evident that God was free in creating the world, and that He did it because He was pleased to do it. The will of God knows no constraint because He knows no superior lord or master.

4. God created the world to His own honor and glory. An all-wise God can not even act without a method and object, hence He could not create at random and without a purpose. But if God has a purpose when creating, it must be a good one and worthy of Himself. But that can be only God Himself.

Hence He Himself must be the object of creation. From the creation man should learn to know God, to love Him, to adore and to serve Him. That is the purpose of the world : the glory of God, which is offered to God in His creatures.

### **The Six Days of Creation.**

On the question of the meaning of the six days of creation, Schmid, in his Catechetical Repertory, vol. i., page 208, says, "Men are to-day very much divided in opinion regarding the length of time denoted by the words 'six days'; whether, for instance, each one of these six days is our day of twenty-four hours' length or whether it denotes one of those longer and more indefinite periods of time called evolution-periods. However, as the Church has as yet uttered no defined teaching on the subject, every individual is entitled to hold his own opinion.

"Those who hold that they are our ordinary six days point to the almighty power of the Creator, which is only shown forth the more strikingly by the shortness of the time employed in creation. Then they quote on their side the expression used in the Bible after each act of creation, namely, 'morning and evening,' as well as the numbering of the days preceding the Sabbath, as in Exodus xx. 11.

"On the other hand, the advocates of the evolution-periods affirm that by the term 'six days' are to be understood six grand revolutions or transition-periods. For, apart from the fact that the word used in the Hebrew language to designate our word 'day' admits of a more extended meaning, it is also to be remembered that some of those creation-days required necessarily longer periods of time, if we assume that the same laws of change in nature were in operation then that

are now prevailing. To these belong the creation of the earth, the chemical reactions, the dissolutions, the precipitations, the burrowings, and other changes that must have taken place, and also the geological process from imperfect forms to perfect classes, during each single act.

“In his book called ‘The City of God’ (xi. 7) St. Augustine says, ‘It is difficult, or rather impossible, for us to think, and still more so to express, what these days are.’ St. Cyprian estimates the seven creation-days to have been a period of seven thousand years.

“In Hebrew the word for day is *Jom* and denotes an undefined space of time, as we have in Isaias, ‘the Lord shall be exalted in *that day*’ and, again, ‘in *that day* a man shall cast away his idols’ (Isaias ii. 17-20). In English it is often the same, as when we say, for instance, ‘He was a great man in his day, etc.’ In Hebrew ‘every evening’ is *hereb*, and ‘every morning’ is *boker*, which words, while meaning really morning and evening, also signify transition, alteration, order, dispensation, a passing, etc. Now, as each new creation act must begin with a violent disturbance amid the forces of nature and end with the completion of the thing to be created, what term is more applicable than one expressing transition or beginning and ending?”

### Our Sorrows and Trials.

If God, then, is good and beneficent toward all men, if in His providence He cares for them as a father cares for his children, whence come the endless trials and tribulations with which every creature is so heavily and persistently beset and afflicted? This question is often asked. This thought forces itself upon many in their hours of deep distress and desolation. Let such

persons carefully read what follows, and they will soon find themselves reconciled to the mysterious ways of divine providence.

### **Passages from the Scriptures and the Fathers.**

“ Shall there be evil in a city, which the Lord hath not done? ” (Amos iii. 6).

“ Blessed is the man whom God correcteth : refuse not therefore the chastising of the Lord : for He woundeth, and cureth : He striketh, and His hands shall heal ” (Job v. 17-18).

“ My son, reject not the correction of the Lord : and do not faint when thou art chastised by Him : for whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth : and as a father in the son He pleaseth Himself ” (Proverbs iii. 11, 12).

“ As the gold is tried in the crucible that it may be cleansed from all dross, so thou art purified in the furnace of affliction, in order to appear brighter ” (St. Isidore of Seville).

“ Tribulation is a valuable good, and the mother of all virtues ” (St. John Chrysostom).

## **VI. THE ANGELS.**

### **Creation, Ranks, and Nature of the Angels.**

TOGETHER with the earth, God created heaven, the invisible world, the dwelling-place of the blessed, and placed in it the countless spiritual beings whom we call angels. Thus there are creatures higher than men, and who are destined specially to the service of God. When we call these beings spirits, we say what they are. When we call them angels we describe their office as messengers, for the word “ angel ” means messenger.

They are countless in number, for the prophet Daniel, when describing them, says, "Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him" (Daniel vii. 10).

### **Fall of the Angels.—Their Punishment.**

These angels, like man before his fall, were good and happy. They were included in the words, "God saw all the things that He had made: and they were very good" (Genesis i. 31). Not only were they exempt from every fault and imperfection, but they were, moreover, as most of the Fathers of the Church teach, endowed with a special supernatural grace that made them worthy to stand before the throne of God. Besides they were enriched with the gift of perception, wisdom, and strength. But, alas, let us tremble at the thought: Sin crept in among the angels and many of them yielded to temptation. Although we do not know with certainty how this took place, we may easily infer. As the angels had free will it was fitting that they should merit the gratuitous supernatural grace of God which had been given to them, and that they should show themselves worthy of it. Hence God subjected them to a test, in which many failed.

The sin they committed may have been, as it was with man, the sin of disobedience, for with them, too, "The beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God" (Ecclesiasticus x. 14.) Forgetting that they owed all their endowments to the goodness of God, they became proud and haughty, and for this very reason they were punished with the loss of these gifts and graces. From the pinnacle of the most perfect happiness they were hurled by the Almighty into the lowest depths of misery, from heaven to hell, and from bright and happy spirits they were transformed into hideous

devils,—once the friends of God they are now His blasphemous enemies. Nor did God forgive these wicked spirits, “for He spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter ii. 4). Further details of their fall are given in the Apocalypse. “There was a great battle in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels: and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven” (Apocalypse xii. 7, 8). According to the opinion of most of the Fathers this dragon, or leader of the fallen angels, was one of the highest and principal angels, called Lucifer, or light-bearer, which name indicates his high rank and office.

This Lucifer, with his unhappy followers, rebelled against his Creator. But another angel set himself up against this revolt, exclaiming, “Mi-cha-el, who is like to God?” This St. Michael, with his faithful followers, fought and defeated their rebellious opponents, and, thus proving their fidelity, passed safely through the test and were admitted to perfect glory, where they still dwell and shall dwell forever, never again committing a fault. We know not how many angels fell, though in the Apocalypse the following is said of the dragon Lucifer, “His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven” (Apocalypse xii. 4), giving us to understand that, while an appalling number of angels fell, the great majority remained true and faithful.

### **The Relations of the Evil Spirits with us.**

The fallen angels still possess the power and knowledge given to them at the time of their creation, and they abuse them for the furtherance of evil. They are

the enemies not only of God, but of all men, whom they tempt and thwart and whom they endeavor to deprive of their sonship to God and their chances for heaven. Power is also given to them to harm men in their bodies, as we see in the case of the pious Job, who was sorely tormented in his body and even in his worldly substance by the devil in his efforts to shake Job's confidence in God. But from this very history of Job we see plainly that the devil can not hurt our souls unless we will it. Job amid all his afflictions did not give up confidence in God, and hence the assaults of the devil, instead of injuring him, resulted to his benefit and preservation. On the other hand Eve was led to disobedience, and Judas to the sin of despair, by the devil. Such examples prove to us the innate hatred of Satan for us and explain why St. Peter truthfully terms him a ferocious lion greedy to destroy whatever comes before him. "Your enemy," says he, "goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." Thus we see that we have also invisible enemies against whom we must defend ourselves.

The power of the devil to injure our souls depends very much upon ourselves, for we have means to withstand him. These means are prayer and a God-fearing life. For it is sin chiefly that gives the evil spirit power over us. The devil has the less power over a man if he lead a life of purity and integrity. To resist evil is to thwart the devil and to put him to flight. As St. James says, "Resist the devil and he will fly from you" (James iv. 7). We find this truth verified in the case of Tobias and Sara. Sara, the daughter of Raguel, had seven husbands, all of whom were strangled by the evil spirit. Tobias did not fall into his power, because he had not sought Sara from unworthy motives. On the contrary he said to her, "Let us pray

to God to-day, and to-morrow and the next day, because for these three nights we are joined to God : and when the third night is over, we will be in our own wedlock ; for we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God. So they both arose and prayed earnestly both together that health might be given them. And Tobias said : Lord God of our fathers, may the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains, and the rivers, and all Thy creatures that are in them, bless Thee. Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth, and gavest him Eve for a helper. And now, Lord, Thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which Thy name may be blessed forever and ever ” (Tobias viii. 4-9).

Thus prayer and a God-fearing mind were the weapons of Tobias, as they ought also to be ours in our conflicts with the devil. We ought to be fearless in this contest, for the Church places within our easy reach abundant and powerful means to enable us to overcome every assault. For that purpose she blesses water, salt, oil, and other things, even the very house we live in, using prayers calculated to defeat all the devil's evil designs. The sign of the cross, too, is a powerful means of defense against bodily evils.

### **The Good Angels.**

In our struggles against evil spirits we are assisted by the good angels. They love God and pray to Him for us. They guide us in a mysterious way, inciting us to good, upholding and preserving us in adversity. Thus they led Lot out of Sodom and Gomorrah and preserved him from destruction. The holy archangel Raphael conducted Tobias to Rages and back again

in safety. Each one of us has such a celestial guide, whom we call our angel guardian. One of these it was that rescued St. Peter from the prison into which he had been cast, and even the faithful, on first meeting St. Peter after his delivery, would hardly believe that it was he and said that it must be his angel (Acts xii. 15). Here we see the application of David's statement, "He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalms xc. 11).

It is our duty to be very fond of our guardian angels and by our childlike innocence and reverence to show to them our gratitude, that they may be pleased to remain with us. Let us pray every day to our guardian angels and never do anything that may have the effect of turning them away from our side and causing them pain. Moreover, as every Christian has his own special guardian angel, we must honor these angels in the persons of our fellow-beings by respecting our neighbors and avoiding any act, deed, or thought that would trouble these blessed spirits. Like them we, too, should be the guardian angels of our fellow-creatures, for then our own angels will be the happier in guiding and protecting us.

## VII. THE FIRST MAN AND WOMAN.—THEIR FALL.

### **Creation of Man.—His Primitive Condition.**

THE creation of the first man and woman is thus described in the Holy Scriptures, "And God said: let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis i. 26). "And the Lord God formed man of

the slime of the earth ; and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. . . . And the Lord God said : It is not good for man to be alone : let us make him a help like unto himself. . . . Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam : and when he was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman : and brought her to Adam. And Adam said : This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man " (Genesis ii. 7-23). " And God created man to His own image : to the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. And God blessed them, saying, Increase and multiply and fill the earth " (Genesis i. 27, 28).

According to this biblical account it necessarily follows that :

1. Man consists of a body and soul, so that the spiritual and corporeal creation are united in him.

The body of man is taken from the earth and is therefore material, and subject to the laws of matter or the sensible world. Not so the soul. It is the breath of God, though not God Himself ; it is not material but spiritual. The body was created rather for the natural life, the soul for the spiritual life. " The dust returns into its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it " (Ecclesiastes xii. 7). Through his body man is in communication with other visible creatures, has to a certain extent the same needs, the same forces, the same weaknesses, while, with regard to his soul, he stands necessarily higher than all.

The soul of man is an element that we discover in no other visible being, and consequently can not possibly have had its origin in such created things. From

material things only material things can come, while a spirit must necessarily come from a spirit.

2. Man is the image of God, created by God, and for God.

Whereas, with regard to every other created being, God simply said, "Let it be," when about to create man He seemed to invite the cooperation of the three persons of the Blessed Trinity, for His words were, "Let us make man," as if to signify thereby that man was to be in a special sense a work, an image, and a child of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The image of God in man in his primitive state was distinguished as natural and supernatural. The natural image consisted of such qualities as belong necessarily to the nature of man, and without which human nature can not be conceived. Among these attributes are immortality of the soul, reason, and free will. The supernatural likeness does not belong to the essence of human nature, as it is only granted or loaned to it by God in His love, for its fuller perfection and ornament. It consists of sanctifying grace, with its resulting virtues of holiness and justice. Man was a friend, a child of God.

That the soul of man is a reasoning, free, immortal essence, subsisting in itself, is proved not only by divine revelation, but by our own reason.

(a.) The human soul has an existence of its own, and, for that reason, is an image of the eternal God who exists through, of, and by Himself. I am sure, positively certain and convinced that my spiritual being exists, and exists separately from any other. I think, feel, and will freely for myself, and I know that I am not a part of anything else. Equally clear is it to me that my soul is one and indivisible, that it was the same yesterday as it is to-day and will be to-morrow. Equally

do I know that it is essentially something other than the material body in the whole or in a single part of it. I know that this soul of mine is a spirit and that it is subjected only to the laws of spirit.

(*b.*) The human soul is endowed with reason and free will. Man possesses not only a material intellectual power of acquiring knowledge, but also an immaterial one, that is to say, he comprehends not only what is subject to the senses, but also that which can not be appreciated by the senses. By means of his spirit he forms judgments and ideas. He explores in the visible world according to invisible laws. He carries within him ideas, as, for example, ideas of good and bad, of right and wrong, of God, of time, and eternity, and such like—ideas perceptible to the senses, but which he does not find expressed in the visible world.

Man possesses also a free will. He may decide what side he will follow. He may pursue the path of iniquity simply because it pleases him to do so; or he can, if he wish, flee from vice and keep far away from it.

(*c.*) The soul of man is immortal. The Holy Scriptures teach this truth in many places, but especially in those passages where there is question of the everlasting happiness of man, or everlasting pain and punishment for sin. But the Holy Scriptures also teach expressly the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Thus we find in the 28th verse of the 10th chapter of St. Matthew "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul;" and, again, in the 23d verse of the 2d chapter of Wisdom it is written, "God created man incorruptible, and to the image of His own likeness He made him."

3. A divine revelation, through the Holy Scriptures, teaches this doctrine; so, too, does our own reason prove the immortality of the soul.

It can not be doubted for a moment that it is possible for the soul to exist without the body and that it is therefore immortal. It has been previously asserted that the soul has a distinct existence, which truth is often observed in the sick and dying. If the existence of the soul were necessarily bound up in the existence of the body, or if the spirit of man were merely the product of bodily action, it would necessarily follow that sickness and gradual decadence of the body would be attended by gradual decadence of the soul and mind. But we often find the contrary to be the case. Frequently, when the body lies enfeebled and almost dead upon the bed of sickness, the mind continues sound and vigorous, and not only capable of embracing physical perceptions but often it elevates itself in a surprising manner to the supernatural, divine, and eternal. How is this possible? It can be accounted for only because the soul, having a separate existence, leads a life of its own, and thus can exist without the aid of the bodily senses.

The possibility of the existence of the soul independently of the body, and its consequent immortality, is therefore clear. But let us see if this possibility is verified in a real and actual immortality.

(a.) This truth is evident from the soul's longing after happiness. This longing exists in every man. But in what does happiness consist? In such a condition of things where all our desires are granted and gratified. But, as the world with all its goods must come to an end, it is evident that it can not make man happy. The condition of happiness necessarily implies and requires undisturbed and unending possession, which implies in itself the idea of eternity. Now, as every man contains within himself this longing for happiness we conclude with reason that his soul must be immortal, for it can never be appeased in this world

In the attainment of this happiness lies the highest aim of human endeavors, and it would be the same as annihilating the whole dignity of man to assume it as a foregone conclusion that he could not attain this sublime end of his creation. Moreover such an assumption would impugn the wisdom and justice of God. For, as He has implanted in the soul of man this striving and longing for happiness, He must have made it possible to obtain such happiness, which, as has been shown, is impossible in this world and possible only in eternity. To adduce a comparison: We speak of the instinct of the animal. In accordance with this instinct many of them avoid poisonous plants, and when sick know how to find curing and healing herbs. Their instinct is therefore a presentiment, though an unknown one, of some existing antidote. In no other way can we explain this faculty of the animals. In a similar, though infinitely higher way, can we, from the longing and seeking of the human soul, argue in favor of a really existing happiness, a cure for all our evils here below. Hence the soul is immortal.

(*b.*) The immortality of the soul is proved from its own inward consciousness of immortality. To the human intellect the thought is repugnant that with the death of the body all, even the intellectual life, must die. As long as man dwells here below he is obliged to work, to struggle and to strive, and there is no man who in his old age can say he has accomplished his whole destiny, carried out all his plans, attained every object, fulfilled every purpose, fought out the battle of life to a victorious ending, realized all his hopes and gratified all his desires. If, then, human life is a vain strife, if the longings of the soul can not be appeased, it becomes impossible for man to be satisfied with a mere earthly existence. He must appre-

ciate the necessity of an everlasting life, where the highest idea of man will be realized.

Again, this idea of immortality must be founded on divine truth, for man could not have learned it from nature or the world. All that we see in the world is changeable, passing, and liable to decay and death. Whence, then, could man acquire the thought of an immortality? It can come only from God, the Creator; it is a thought of truth.

(c.) It is evident from man's longing after justice, and the moral well-being of the world. It is inborn in man to recognize reward for good and penalty for evil. The man does not live who would desire the contrary. Now, in this world we do not find this fair and just polity. On the contrary. Too often does vice triumph here, while virtue groans under wrong and injustice. If we would not go altogether astray in our notions of God and justice, if we would not conceive false ideas of the real and true, and of moral well-being, we must believe in an everlasting life, in the immortality of the soul, where virtue will be properly rewarded and vice be punished in proportion to its deserts. Hence faith in the immortality of the soul is the best and surest foundation of morality in society. The moral restraint necessary for society is dependent in a great measure on the sacrifice of individual liberty and is attainable only where the individual battles with his low egotism and with his passions and other inordinate inclinations.

If there be no prospective compensation to uphold and to strengthen, where will man find a sufficient motive for persevering in this distasteful and wearisome struggle, even in his own interior, for the good of society? Emancipation from all restraint must follow. The history of all nations proves this. With the

belief in immortality stands or falls the moral code of every people.

(*d.*) The immortality of the soul can also be proved from the universal concurrence of all people in such belief. No nation has ever existed that did not hold and teach, in some form or other, the immortality of the soul, that is to say, a belief in its continued existence in another world. This belief, then, founded as it is in nature, and in the sound sense of mankind, can not be denied without sinning against the testimony of all men.

4. Together with his natural and supernatural likeness to God man possessed, in his primitive condition, before he sinned, many other sublime and supernatural prerogatives, both in soul and body.

The chief prerogative of the soul was its freedom from the domination of the passions. Our first parents, before their fall, knew nothing about a conflict with the inordinate lusts of the senses. In pure innocence they walked before the eyes of the Lord, for sensual perversion was the first fruit of sin.

The chief and most precious prerogative of the body consisted in its having been created free from suffering, and immortal. The Book of Wisdom teaches us this truth in the 23d verse of the 2d chapter, where it says, "God created man incorruptible, and to the image of His own likeness He made him. But by the envy of the devil, death came into the world." St. Paul also teaches, in Romans v. 12, "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death." The human body, beside being free from death, was also free from every pain and infirmity. For pain, infirmity, and evil first made their appearance with sin and in consequence of it.

### **The Trial and Fall of our First Parents.**

God had created man in holiness and justice. But this state depends not on force and compulsion; on the contrary it was becoming that man created in freedom should prove himself deserving of this happy state. Hence God subjected him to a test.

His trial consisted, as the Bible informs us, in the command, "Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death" (Genesis ii. 16, 17). It is here self-evident that the eating of the fruit of this or that tree was not sinful, but that the sin consisted in the transgression of the plainly expressed will of God.

Our first parents failed in this trial, for, yielding to the temptation of the serpent, they ate the fruit. The serpent said to the woman, the Holy Scriptures tell us, "Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? And the woman answered him, saying, Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise we do eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die. And the serpent said to the woman, No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat and fair to the eyes and delightful to behold, and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat" (Genesis iii. 1 *et al.*).

Thus the sin of our first parents was completed. They had transgressed God's command. The manner

and rapidity with which this first sin was begun and developed gives us an insight into the nature of every sin. It was a sin that began first with human weakness and want of foresight. The woman tarried near the tree, listened to the tempter, and looked at the forbidden fruit.

It was a sin of disobedience. Man ceased to obey God, and obeyed, rather, the devil.

It was a sin of pride. The serpent said, "You will be like unto gods, knowing good and evil;" they yielded and permitted themselves to be led into error.

It was a sin of sensuality, both on the part of Eve and Adam. Eve ate out of an inordinate desire for a palatable fruit, Adam ate to please Eve.

### **The Punishment of Sin.**

The punishment which our first parents underwent because of their sin is described in the Holy Scriptures as follows, "And the eyes of them both were opened: and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig-leaves and made themselves aprons. And when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in paradise at the afternoon air, Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God, amidst the trees of paradise. And the Lord God called Adam, and said to him, Where art thou? And he said: I heard Thy voice in paradise: and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. And He said to him: And who hath told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And Adam said: The woman, whom Thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said to the woman: Why hast thou done this? And she answered: The serpent deceived me, and I did

eat. And the Lord God said to the serpent : Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth : upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman and thy seed and her seed : she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.

“ To the woman also He said : I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions : in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband’s power, and he shall have dominion over thee. And to Adam he said : Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work : with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken : for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return. And Adam called the name of his wife Eve : because she was the mother of all the living. And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins, and clothed them.

“ And He said : Lo Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil : now therefore lest perhaps he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever. And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the earth from which he was taken. And he cast out Adam : and placed before the paradise of pleasure Cherubim and a flaming sword, turning every way, to keep the way of the tree of life ” (Genesis iii. 7-24).

This biblical narrative shows to us, as the consequences of sin, the following facts : (a) The awakening of

sensuality. They knew for the first time that they were naked and endeavored to cover themselves. (b) The blinding of the intellect, and a false conscience. They imagined they could hide themselves from God and dreaded His presence. (c) The perversity of the heart. One tries to throw the blame on the other heartlessly and becomes the complainant. Aye, Adam even blames God indirectly for giving him the woman who led him astray. (d) With all this was involved necessarily the loss of sanctifying grace, and with it the fall from a state of holiness and justice. (e) The anger of God, which condemned man to the troubles of life, banished him from the garden of paradise, deprived him of the immortality of the body, left him liable to temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and finally gave him the prospect of everlasting abandonment and rejection.

As regards the consequences of the first sin on man's likeness to God, that likeness, in as far as it was supernatural, was totally destroyed. But the natural likeness was not lost, it was only weakened and disfigured. Reason, especially in its bearing on the knowledge of God and of divine things, was confused, while the free will of man was perverted toward evil. The bonds uniting God and man were burst asunder, and a deep chasm was made between heaven and earth. The heavens were sad and the devil rejoiced.

### **Original Sin.**

The consequences of sin affected not only our first parents, but descended from them to all their posterity, in the natural generation. In this sense the sin of our first parents is called the sin of inheritance.

This doctrine was expressly defined and declared by the Catholic Church in the fifth century against Pelagius,

and again in a special manner at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century. Here she teaches, "If any one hold that Adam's transgression injured himself only, and not his posterity, and that he lost for himself only and not for us the sanctity and justice received from God; or that, after his repentance, he transmitted by the sin of obedience, to the whole human race, only death and the pains of the body, and not sin, which is the death of the soul, let him be anathema.

"If any one hold that this sin of Adam's, which is one in its origin, and which is transmitted to all by generation and not by imitation, is inherent to each one, can be taken away either by the power of nature, or by any other means, save and except the merits of Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."

This is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, in which, however, she expressly declares the Blessed Virgin Mary to be free from original sin. This doctrine also contains within itself the following points :

1. The inheritance of the sin of Adam by all men, except the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As chief progenitor of the whole human family Adam contained within himself the germ of it, to which germ he communicated his spiritual qualities with all their weaknesses and defects, somewhat similar to the way in which ordinary parents transmit their bodily peculiarities to their children. This doctrine is taught by the Holy Scriptures, Tradition, and the testimony of all men. "Behold I was conceived in iniquities: and in sins did my mother conceive me," says the Psalmist in Psalms l. 7, while St. Paul writes, in Romans v. 12: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." As early as the second century the holy martyr St. Justin

taught, "The human race has fallen into death with Adam." St. Athanasius in the fourth century said, "After Adam had fallen sin was poured out upon all men." Countless others teach the same. Moreover, this consciousness of depravity by sin among men is not exclusively Christian, it is general everywhere. Heathens have recognized it, as well as Jews and Christians. "The whole life of man," said the ancient pagan Democritus, "is one continued sickness from his birth to his death." Euripides complains thus: "We recognize good and acknowledge it, but fail to accomplish it." Similar avowals have been made by nearly all the ancient heathen philosophers. They acknowledge the evil consequences of sin, but know not how to explain them.

2. The entailing upon man of all the effects of sin.

As fire leaves behind it a track of blackened, charred devastation, so does sin leave behind it certain inevitable desolating results. We have seen what the effects of sin were upon the first man and woman. These consequences must remain the same for all the descendants of Adam, for Adam's sin itself has been transmitted to them all. They were deprived of their state of holiness and justice, their reason was clouded, weakened, and confused, their will inclined to evil. Afflictions, sufferings, and death are the portion of the human body. Lust of the senses, and sin in all its forms, have become the torment of the soul.

That the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, through the anticipated merits of Jesus, must have been spared from this disaster to human nature, is clear to all if we only remember the one truth: that she was chosen to be the Mother of God, for Jesus Christ, her Son, who is infinite holiness itself, could not assume human nature from a body tainted with sin.

### 3. Redemption possible through Jesus Christ only.

The gulf of separation between God and man was made by sin, and man's guilt before God was infinite. Who could eliminate this guilt? Man being in a state of sinfulness was incapacitated to do it. An infinite guilt demands an infinite atonement or satisfaction which all the men ever created, even if atoning together, could never be competent to effect. God alone is able to effect it. Hence in the fulness of time Jesus Christ came to redeem man, for "He had pity on the multitude."

## VIII. FROM THE FALL TO THE COMING OF THE REDEEMER.

### PREPARATION OF MANKIND FOR THE COMING OF THE SAVIOUR.

#### **From Adam to the Deluge.**

WHEN Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise they were moved by the grace of God to repentance. The Doctors and the Fathers of the Church are all of the opinion that Adam and Eve, after having led a life of penance, died in the hope and expectation of the promised Redeemer. In the Book of Wisdom x. 1, 2, it is expressly affirmed, "Wisdom preserved him, that was first formed by God the father of the world, when he was created alone, and she brought him out of his sin, and gave him power to govern all things." Adam lived to be 930 years old. An old tradition says he was buried on Mount Calvary, and that the cross of Christ was afterward planted in Adam's grave. It is in accordance with this tradition that, in many pictures of the crucifixion, a death's head entwined with a serpent is seen at the foot of the cross. It is the skull of

the first Adam at the feet of the second Adam dying in atonement for the sin of the first.

Adam and Eve lived to see the affliction of having one of their sons murdered and another become his murderer. Cain, their first-born, slew Abel out of jealousy, and thus we see coming on the members of the second generation of the human family the sad and bitter consequences of sin, which drove Lucifer out of heaven and expelled our first parents from the garden of Eden. Cain wandered restlessly over the face of the earth, bearing on his brow the brand of infamy. His guilty conscience would not permit him to dwell in the open country under the light of heaven, and he built for himself walls to protect him. His descendants were as godless as himself. In place of Abel another son was sent by God to Adam, named Seth, who became the progenitor of a God-fearing race of people. But sin continued to prevail more and more on the earth, and even the good were led astray.

In the time of Noe, who belonged to the tenth generation, God saw the sinfulness of men, all of whose thoughts, words, and acts tended to evil. He resolved, therefore, to destroy in a universal deluge the whole race, with the exception of the God-fearing Noe, his three sons and their wives whom He saved in the ark, into which at His command they entered, taking with them a pair of every kind of animal. After Noe left the ark God gave him His blessing, and, as the vegetable world had been very much impaired and lessened by the waters of the Deluge, permission was given to man to use the flesh of animals, though it was not allowed to use meat in blood.

Noe planted for the first time the grape-vine. From that period the days of men decreased and dwindled down to the ordinary length of a lifetime.

### **From the Deluge to Abraham.**

But very soon after the Deluge mankind again became forgetful of its God and His severe chastisements. Men and women, losing sight of their Creator, gave themselves up to the gratification of unholy desires. Yet they should have remembered God, for they saw before their eyes His glory, splendor, majesty, and power variously manifested in every department of creation. But they became unmindful of the Creator and went after the creature. They adored the sun, moon, and stars, supposing that these inanimate creatures brought them the blessing of fruitfulness on the earth, completely overlooking Him who made them all. Men deified their fellow-men who happened to be a little above them, and forgot completely that the intellect of man, which produces such wonderful effects, is an emission of the breath of God. Finally they went so far as to worship even the animals, in fear if they were ferocious and to be dreaded, in thankfulness if they were useful animals.

At last they bent their knees before idols of wood and stone. This was the deepest degradation to which men could sink.

Yet God did not abandon altogether these idolaters to their dismal fate, for He often bestowed graces upon them in order to prepare them for the coming of the Redeemer. He caused extraordinary men to rise up among them, who saw and understood that their worship was unworthy.

He even sent prophets among them, such, for example, as Jonas to the people of Ninive. He even permitted things to come to such a pass among men that the very idolatry in which they lived became their own punishment and the cause of deep misery, and

they began to realize their wretched condition, though they did not know how to help themselves. Hence the Book of Wisdom xii. 23, says, "Thou hast also greatly tormented them, who in their life have lived foolishly and unjustly, by the same things which they worshiped."

Hence, when the doctrine of salvation and redemption was preached by a Saviour and His disciples, all who had good will eagerly drank in this comforting teaching and held to it as their only means of escape from their dreadful misery.

Many other favors did God grant to men as so many means of keeping alive in their breasts the true belief and comforting hope in the future Redeemer. He set apart a chosen people who were to preserve this faith and to perpetuate it. Nor did He choose a nation already existing, but built up for His own purpose a new one which had not been tainted with idolatry.

At Haran in Armenia dwelt a man who, with his father Thare, had emigrated from Ur in Chaldea because idolatry was creeping into his family. But even in that distant land his kinsmen were not free from idolatry. By his subjects this man was called Abram, which means revered father. Afterward God bestowed upon him the name Abraham, which means father of a multitude. To this Abraham came the summons of the Lord, calling upon him to go forth into a strange country, the land of Chanaan, there to dwell away from his family. Without hesitation Abraham obeyed the call of God and, taking Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, gave himself up completely to the leading hand of God, who then made a covenant with him and promised him a generation as numerous as the sands of the sea.

On the other hand, Abraham was required to prom-

ise for himself and his family to worship only the one true God and to keep His commandments. As long as these conditions were observed by these people God was to bless them and to defend them against all their enemies. Out of their race, too, was the future Redeemer to be born. Such was the covenant made by God with Abraham, in token of which he was to have himself and all his male descendants circumcised. This bodily circumcision was the foreshadowing of our spiritual circumcision of heart and intellect by faith and renunciation of passion in the new law.

God kept His promise and blessed Abraham, though He manifested the power of His justice toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, which He destroyed with fire and brimstone because of their sins. Abraham became so powerful that he was soon able to wage war against several kings. Thus on one occasion some hostile tribes made a raid and took away Lot into captivity. But Abraham pursued them, liberated Lot, and recaptured the plunder. On his way home he was met by Melchisedech, King of Salem, who offered him bread and wine, "for he was the priest of the most high God" (Genesis xiv. 18). Abraham gave him the tithes of all.

Abraham was one hundred years old when he begat Isaac. When this son was well grown up Abraham's obedience was subjected to a very severe test, for he received from God a command to offer up in sacrifice on Mount Moria this only son, on whose life depended the fulfilment of the promise of the numerous progeny. Yet Abraham obeyed without a murmur. God, however, arrested the uplifted sword as it was about to fall with certain death on the neck of Isaac, and He renewed His covenant with Abraham, namely, that in his seed all generations of the earth would be blessed.

Thus is prompt, believing obedience followed by its reward. So shall we be rewarded if we obey the commandments of God with faith and confidence.

The offering of Melchisedech and the sacrifice of Isaac are not merely facts belonging to the Old Testament. They are figures or types, that is to say, occurrences calculated and intended to point out and prefigure future and more significant events. The later incident is much loftier and entirely spiritual. All these symbols have a bearing on the mystery of the Redemption. Thus the offering of Melchisedech, king of Salem, is explained to us by St. Paul, the Apostle, where he says, "This Melchisedech was king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him: to whom also Abraham divided the tithes of all: who first indeed by interpretation is king of justice: and then also king of Salem, that is king of peace. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened unto the Son of God" (Hebrews vii. 1-3). Just as Melchisedech appears in sacred history and then disappears, without our knowing whence he came or whither he went, without our having heard of him previously or subsequently, or without any knowledge of his genealogy, so did the Saviour appear in the world and then disappear, and from all eternity He knew no genealogy. He is our King of justice and peace, for by His obedience we have been transformed from disobedient children to just men, and with our reconciliation to God we have again secured peace. As this Melchisedech, because he was a priest of the most high God, brought forth bread and wine, so does Jesus Christ, in His prerogative of eternal High Priest, offer Himself up to His heavenly Father under the forms

of bread and wine. Thus, to-day, in holy Mass, is literally fulfilled all that was prefigured in the sacrifice of Melchisedech. As Abraham for God's sake was ready to sacrifice his only son, so did God offer up His only Son for the sake of mankind.

As Isaac ascended Mount Moria, carrying on his own shoulders the wood for the fire of sacrifice, so did Our Saviour, with the wood of the cross on His shoulders, ascend Golgotha as a willing victim, who opened not His mouth, but was led as a sheep to the slaughter.

Thus Calvary became a second Moria, or mountain of view, for God looked down from heaven upon it and witnessed the painful obedience of His Son. To-day He looks down reconciled on all men ; and we gaze with reverence and devotion at Calvary, our altar and sanctuary, from which came salvation. Thus Isaac and Melchisedech are figures of Our Redeemer.

### **From Abraham to King David.**

The blessing of God descended from Abraham to Isaac, who had two sons, Esau and Jacob. But Esau, although he was the first-born, was from his mother's womb rejected by God, while Jacob was chosen, because God saw that the rough disposition of Esau would render him unworthy to be the patriarch of a chosen people. And Esau was so really uncouth that he sold his birthright, and with it the blessing of God, to Jacob for a miserable mess of pottage. Thus Jacob was not only the choice of God, but also the rightful possessor of the promise.

Jacob had twelve sons. The envy of his brethren toward Joseph, the youngest, was the cause of his misfortune which, when afterward changed into his prosperity, led the simple shepherd-boy to the foot of

the throne of Egypt and placed him in a position not only to save his aged father, his brethren and their families from hunger, but also to assign a place to his family where they grew to be a nation, without coming in contact with other peoples, thus escaping the taint of idolatry. For Joseph, when presenting his father and brethren to the king, had previously instructed them that, to the question of the king regarding their avocations, they should answer that they were shepherds from their youth. They did so, and as the Egyptians had an aversion for all shepherds, the king located them in a territory of their own in the land of Goshen, where they had for themselves a tract of most fruitful country, entirely detached from the other inhabitants of Egypt. Here they grew to be so numerous and powerful that they awakened the fears of the Egyptians. On this account they were afterward oppressed in many ways, and indeed were doomed to extinction, for the king ordered all their male children to be cast into the river and drowned. But when their distress was at its highest point God raised up a liberator for His people. Moses, who as an infant should have shared the fate of other Hebrew children, escaped through the miraculous interposition of Providence, and lived at the court of the Egyptian king.

One day, seeing an Egyptian abusing an Israelite, he slew him, and was consequently obliged to fly, and to spend forty years in the desert, where he tended sheep. There God appeared to him in the midst of a burning bush and sent him, with his brother Aaron, back to Egypt, to demand from the king the freedom of their people. When the king refused, Moses performed those miraculous deeds which we read of when studying the chapter on the omnipotence of God.

At last Moses led his people unharmed through the

Red Sea, while the pursuing Egyptians were drowned. During forty years the Israelites were kept wandering in the desert, where God fed them with the miraculous food called manna, and supplied them with water out of the rock. The whole journey was a continued succession of miracles, in which they could discern and acknowledge the powerful protection of their God.

But they also felt sometimes the power and severity of God's chastisements. Once they found fault with God and Moses, and clamored to be led back to Egypt because there they had flesh and onions to eat, while in the desert they had but manna for their food. Then God sent fiery serpents among them and many who were bitten died. Then they had recourse to Moses who, at the inspiration of God, erected a brazen serpent, and all who looked upon it were healed. In this and in many other ways God proved to them that He would protect them if they would adhere to the covenant, and punish them if they became disobedient.

The above described miracles are again so many symbols whereby the Hebrews were to be prepared for the still greater miracles that would be wrought by Christ. Thus the passage through the Red Sea prefigured the liberation of mankind from the tyranny of sin through the crimson blood of Jesus Christ. Like the Israelites of old, so we, too, shall be rescued by the blood of Christ if we believe. "By faith," says St. Paul, "they passed through the Red Sea" (Hebrews xi. 29).

The manna was a figure of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. As the manna was a miraculous food descending from heaven to nourish the Israelites while they were in the desert, and until they reached

the Promised Land, so is the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar a miraculous food for our souls coming down from heaven to be our nourishment in the desert of this life, until we shall be set free and be permitted to enter the land of glory where faith ceases and seeing begins. Hence it was that our blessed Lord began also to speak of the manna when He promised the Holy Eucharist to the Jews, and in the wonderful food of the manna He showed to them what was possible to the power of God.

The water brought forth from the dry rock by miracle was a figure of the living water which we receive from Jesus Christ, the living rock, namely, the word of God. For Christ said to the Samaritan woman, "He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever; but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting" (John iv. 13, 14).

Finally, the brazen serpent is a figure of Our Saviour raised upon the cross, by whom all will be healed in the necessities of their souls if with faith and confidence they look upon Him as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, as He Himself declares in the words, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John iii. 14, 15).

But the passage through the Red Sea, as well as the feeding with manna, and the water from the rock, all teach us, in so far as they are figures, that what serves to the salvation of some serves to the condemnation of others. The sufferings of Christ, the Holy Sacraments, and the word of God, exercise a salutary influence on those who cooperate with them, while they condemn others though using these same means

of grace. Therefore we should not merely abandon ourselves to grace, we should cooperate with it. Hence St. Paul writes, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud, and in the sea : and did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink (and they drank of the spiritual rock, that followed them : and the rock was Christ), but with the most of them God was not well pleased " (1 Corinthians x. 1-5).

It was during their sojourn in the desert that the Israelites received from God the ten commandments which constituted at once their civil and religious law ; for the Jews were to enter the Land of Promise as a well-regulated nation. Yet, in punishment for their incessant murmurings and pusillanimity, not one of those who had come out of Egypt was permitted to enter the Land of Promise, not even Moses or Aaron. Only two men were excepted, Josue and Caleb. These were to be the leaders of an entirely new nation that would know nothing of Egypt and its idolatries, and who had been brought up in the fear of the Lord in the desert.

Moses lived to be one hundred and twenty years old. From Mount Nebo he was permitted to look into the land of Chanaan. After that he died and "no man hath known of his sepulcher until this present day " (Deuteronomy xxxiv. 6). God deprived the people of Israel of the body of Moses, lest they should be tempted to worship it.

Josue, taking the place of Moses, led the people of Israel into the Land of Promise, defeated the inhabitants who opposed his march, parceled out the territory and established a community. They had now

to live without a leader, for Josue also died. They elected judges; and when they fell into distress God raised up special men who gathered the people about them and saved Israel. Among these judges were Othniel, Aod, Samgar, Barach, Gedeon, Abimelech, Thola, Jair, Jephthe, Samson, and others. The last and most renowned was Samuel, the prophet. From Samuel the people demanded a king, and at the command of God he anointed Saul, the son of Cis, out of the tribe of Benjamin. But Saul, not adhering to the commandments of God, was rejected, and in his place was chosen David, a pious shepherd-boy, a son of Jesse, who, after many undeserved persecutions, was recognized by all the Israelites as their king, after Saul's death.

### **From King David to the Fulness of Time.**

David was a renowned king and prophet who received from God the promise that out of his family the Messiah, or promised king, should be born. He carried on successful warfare against the enemies of Israel, built the castle of Sion in Jerusalem, had the ark of the covenant brought thither in which the stone tables of the ten commandments, some relics of the manna, and the ever-blooming rod of Aaron, which was a symbol of the perpetual priesthood in the family of Aaron, were kept, and he made Israel rich and powerful. But, although a great king, David was greater as a prophet, ordering the mode of religious worship, adding to it dignity and solemnity, and composing the Psalms, those sacred canticles of praise, that have ever since been chanted in divine service. It was because of all this that God promised to him, "Thy house shall be faithful, and thy kingdom forever before thy face, and thy throne shall be firm forever" (2 Kings vii. 16). God also renewed in his favor the covenant

He had made with Abraham, promising him an inheritance whose empire should endure for all eternity. Hence Abraham is to be considered the first, and David the second, progenitor of the Redeemer, according to his earthly genealogy.

David's successor in the kingdom was his son, Solomon, who built at Jerusalem a sumptuous temple in which the divinely-ordained public worship shadowed the graces and mysteries of the New Testament. In beauty and splendor this temple exceeded all conception. It was built on Mount Moria where Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac. There were to be offered up all the sacrifices until the true Paschal Lamb should be sacrificed, and it was strictly forbidden to offer up sacrifice in any other place than Jerusalem. In this temple, too, all the Jews, as soon as they had attained their twelfth year of age, were compelled to meet three times a year in order to assist in the celebration of the three principal festivals.

Solomon was surnamed the Wise on account of his great knowledge, a gift given to him by God the Lord, being the favor that Solomon asked for from Heaven in preference to all others. He died leaving his son Roboam his successor. This king having in many ways displeased and even oppressed his subjects, ten whole tribes fell away from their allegiance to him and chose Jeroboam for their ruler. Only the tribes of Juda and Benjamin remained loyal to Roboam. These two separate kingdoms stood side by side—the kingdom of Juda, composed of the tribes of Juda and Benjamin, whose capital city was Jerusalem, and the kingdom of Israel, whose seat of government was Sichern.

Soon after idolatry made its way into Israel, and later into Juda. In punishment thereof God permitted this people, who forgot their dependency on Him, to

be led into captivity—the Israelites at Ninive, by King Salmanasar—and the Jews, one hundred years later, into the Babylonian captivity, by King Nabuchodonosor.

When, finally, by the favor of God, they were liberated from their severe penalties, they adhered firmly to the divine law, and waged war bravely and successfully against their enemies, having chosen for their leaders such distinguished men as the Machabees and others. They preferred to suffer death rather than to violate the religious precepts given them by God. Thus the aged Eleazar and the mother of the Machabees, with her seven sons, died the death of martyrs.

Later on we find the Jews under the dominion of the Romans, divided into four principalities with four rulers called kings, though their power was little more than nominal, for they were subject to a Roman governor living at Jerusalem. During the time of our blessed Lord on earth Herod was one of these four petty kings.

During this period of their existence God also raised up worthy men who advised and exhorted the people to remain true to their God. These warned the Jewish people, foretelling that they would be overtaken by the chastisements of Heaven. In times of want they encouraged them to turn toward God, who would help them. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit these men assured them that a Saviour would soon rise up among them, who would rescue them from their miserable condition. So truthfully did they portray the person and life of the Saviour that when He did come the Jews should have recognized Him as their Lord and Messias. These men were called prophets, or seers of the future, because they uttered many predictions concerning the future Redeemer of all men.

The following are the most remarkable predictions of the ancient prophets :

1. Concerning the place and time of the birth of the Messiah—at Bethlehem, of a virgin mother out of the tribe of David, at a time when the Jews would be without their own government.

2. Concerning the circumstances of the life and death of Christ. He was to be poor and to live unknown to men, to work many miracles, to be condemned innocently, because of the sins of men to be put to death without opening His mouth, to endure derision and ignominy, to pray for His enemies—even for those who scourged Him and struck Him in the face, to have gall and vinegar administered to quench His thirst, and even to be robbed of His garments, which were raffled by His executioners.

3. Concerning His resurrection and ascension. He was not to see corruption, nor to remain in His grave, but to sit at the right hand of His Father.

4. Concerning the founding and lasting existence of His Church. He was to gather all nations about Him, His grave was to be glorified, He was to establish a kingdom without end, and His throne was to stand for all eternity.

These predictions concerning the Saviour were uttered several centuries before His coming, and found their way largely even among the heathen nations. Thus the Roman historians mention that the Jews believed that a time would come when one man would reign over the whole earth. The Persians, when the star appeared in the East, were prepared to believe that the Messiah had been born. Even in Jerusalem, at the time of the birth of Christ, so prevalent was the opinion that the coming of the Messiah, who was called the Anointed, could not be much longer delayed, that

the venerable Simeon and the devout Anna came every day to the Temple as being the most likely place to learn the truth, for there were the greatest gatherings of the people. When St. John appeared and began to preach it was so confidently hoped that he was the promised Messiah that the elders and chief priests sent an embassy to him to inquire, "Who art thou? And he confessed, and did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ" (John i. 19, 20). And when Jesus said to Nathanael, "Because I saw thee under the fig-tree, thou believest: greater things than these shalt thou see. . . . Nathanael answered him, and said: Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the king of Israel" (John i. 50 and 49). Andrew also said to Simon, "We have found the Messiah" (John i. 41).

### **The Fulness of Time.**

When all was prepared for the great atonement "the fulness of time was come" (Galatians iv. 4), namely, the time when all was fulfilled that God intended as preparation, and that was to be verified in accordance with the prophecies. This was about four thousand years after the creation of the world. And, indeed, the Saviour came only at the end of four thousand years, for it was necessary that mankind should know from long experience how deep was the misery into which sin had plunged them, and that no one but God could save them. At the birth of Christ society was in such a condition that, although it could not much longer tolerate its own wretchedness, it was totally unable to discover a remedy. It had fared as all men in all times fare who deny the one true God and despise His teachings. Men were prostrate in idolatry and other vices, holding good for evil and evil for good. The more intelligent had ceased to

believe in the absurd stories of mythology, yet knew not where to find God. The Jews alone knew the true God, though they knew Him but imperfectly. They had no notion of the Blessed Trinity, knew nothing of cleanness of heart, nothing about endless justness, while their worship of God was little more than perfunctory.

Finally, when spiritual distress was at its worst and spiritual misery the most profound, divine help came, for the Saviour was born.

How miserable and unhappy men were before the Messiah was born! How happy are we in our day who, living after Christ's coming, have received holy baptism and been lifted up in the true faith. Hence we can not thank God sufficiently that to us has been granted the grace and favor to know the promised Redeemer of the world, for whom all the patriarchs longed and sighed. While we love our blessed Lord we must also beseech Him to enter our hearts and to dwell therein forever, in order that we may become partakers of the graces which He purchased for us. To aid us in learning the happiness of the redeemed and the misery of the unredeemed the Church has set apart a period of time and devoted it to pious prayer and meditation, and called it Advent, which signifies "the Approach"—namely, of Christ. Consisting of the four weeks immediately preceding Christmas it corresponds to the four thousand years during which the world waited for the Messiah. On the first Sunday of Advent the Gospel of the day brings us comfort, saying, "your redemption is at hand" (Luke xxi. 28). In the Gospel of the second Sunday our attention is called to the works of Our Saviour: "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached

to them" (Matthew xi. 5), the purpose being to enable us the better to appreciate the grace of spiritual redemption which has illuminated darkness, pointed out the right way, purified the tainted, and aroused sinners from their lethargy.

In the Gospel of the third Sunday of Advent St. John points out to the Jews that Isaias had already foretold the Messiah and His forerunner. Finally, in the Gospel of the fourth Sunday we are told who was at that time the reigning emperor, who was governor, who were the tetrarchs, or four princes, in order that even from a historical point of view it may be proved that Christ, the Son of God, really dwelt on earth. Moreover, in accordance with the tone of the Gospels, the season of Advent should arouse in us a heartfelt longing for Our Saviour, His divine grace, for spiritual food and light of soul. For this object are celebrated the Rorate Masses, so called because the service begins with the word "Rorate"—"Rain down dew, ye heavens, and let the heavens rain the just One, let the earth open and the Saviour come forth."

These are the words of the officiating priest when he begins the Introit, crying out with the prophet Isaias, and giving vivid expression to the profound emotional longing which we should all have for Jesus. These Rorate Masses are celebrated at break of day, in order to signify that the world has reached the end of its dark night and is entering upon the beginning of a new day, the day of regeneration and light.

### **Prophecies Concerning the Messias.**

Besides the 53d chapter of Isaias, which affords a striking portrayal of the future Saviour, the following are very remarkable :

1. "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda,

nor a ruler from his thigh, till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations" (Genesis xlix. 10).

2. His descent from David. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord; and I will raise up to David a just branch: and a king shall reign and shall be wise: and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremias xxiii. 5). "There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isaias xi. 1, 2).

3. His miraculous birth. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, [meaning God with us]" (Isaias vii. 14).

4. Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel, and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Micheas v. 2).

5. His name. "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in God, my Jesus" (Habacuc iii. 18).

6. The offerings of the three kings. "The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents, the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts" (Psalms lxxi. 10).

7. The slaughter of the innocents. "Thus saith the Lord: a voice was heard on high of lamentation, of mourning, and weeping of Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted for them, because they are not" (Jeremias xxxi. 15).

8. The precursor of the Messias. "The voice of

one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see, that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken" (Isaias xl. 3, 5). "Behold I send My angel, and he shall prepare the way before My face: and presently the Lord whom you seek, and the angel of the testament whom you desire, shall come to His temple. Behold He cometh, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachias iii. 1).

9. His miracles. "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap up as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (Isaias xxxv. 5).

10. His entry into Jerusalem. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour: He is poor and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zacharias ix. 9).

11. His gentleness. "He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench: He shall bring forth judgment in truth" (Isaias xlii. 2, 3).

12. The blood-money of Judas and its use. "And I said to them: if it be good in your eyes, bring hither My wages: and if not, be quiet. And they weighed for My wages thirty pieces of silver" (Zacharias xi. 12).

13. His patience (Isaias liii).

14. His crucifixion and wounds. "They have dug My hands and feet: they have numbered all My bones. And they have looked and stared upon Me. They

parted My garments amongst them, and upon My vesture they cast lots " (Psalms xxi. 17, 19).

15. The draught of vinegar. " They gave Me gall for My food: and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink " (Psalms lxxviii. 22).

16. The signs at His death. " It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord: that the sun shall go down at midday, and I will make the earth dark in the day of light: And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation: and I will bring up sackcloth upon every back of yours, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the latter end thereof as a bitter day " (Amos viii. 9, 10).

17. The piercing of His side. " They shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced " (Zacharias xii. 10).

18. His resurrection. " Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell: nor wilt Thou give Thy holy one to see corruption " (Psalms xv. 10).

19. His glory among the heathens. " In that day shall be the root of Jesse, who standeth for an ensign of people, Him the Gentiles shall beseech, and His sepulcher shall be glorious " (Isaias xi. 10).

## *SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

" And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord."

### **I. "AND IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON."— MEANING OF THE NAME JESUS CHRIST.**

AFTER having been instructed, in the first article of the Apostles' Creed, to know God and to recognize Him as Our Father who has made all things and maintains them, we learn in the second article of the same

Creed that the Redeemer whom God promised to us and whom He has sent is the only-begotten Son of God the Father, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Thus He who appeared in the fulness of time is "Jesus who is called Christ" (Matthew i. 16). The two names, Jesus and Christ, borne by Our Saviour, show forth the grace and mercy obtained by Him for us, and signify what He is and what He shall continue to be for us.

They are also names indicative of His character and mission, for Jesus means Redeemer and Saviour, and Christ means anointed. Thus the name Jesus Christ signifies the Saviour, who is the Anointed.

The name Jesus was given to Our Saviour not by human chance; it was assigned to Him by God's decree and command, as the angel declared to St. Joseph in his dream, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew i. 21).

In the Old Law several persons bore the name Jesus. One of these was the son of Nun, who succeeded Moses and led the people of Israel into the Promised Land, for Josue is the same word as Jesus. A second was the high priest Josue, the son of Josedec, who, together with Zorobabel, brought the Jews back from the Babylonian captivity and helped to restore the Temple. A third was the son of Sirach, who has left us splendid lessons of wisdom. These three men are figures of the Redeemer, who is really our Jesus or Saviour. Like Josue, He led us out of the desert of a sin-laden world into the promised land of redemption, introduced the true worship of God by establishing the holy Catholic Church, and left to us the lessons of salvation. It is becoming, therefore, that He should bear the name of Jesus who, like His three prototypes, is at once our figure, leader, and priest.

Jesus has for surname Christ, the anointed one, a

name, among the Jews, expressive of the highest dignity. For among that people anointing was accepted as a sign of God's choosing. Only those persons were anointed whom God had chosen for some special office. Thus Aaron, the first high priest, was anointed by God's special command, "Thou shalt pour the oil of unction upon his head, and by this rite shall he be consecrated" (Exodus xxix. 7). In this way the sons of Aaron were ordained priests. Indeed, in the Old Dispensation, no person could be anointed with holy oil who had not been specially chosen by God.

As the kings were the representatives and ambassadors of God they were anointed, as Saul was anointed by Samuel, at the express command of God. David, after the dethronement of Saul, was also anointed by Samuel, and by the men of Juda after Saul's death. The prophets, too, were anointed as the mouthpieces of God, as, for instance, Eliseus was anointed by Elias.

The very person of such an anointed one was sacred and inviolable, for the Psalmist says, "Touch ye not My anointed." For far greater reasons, therefore, He who was one day, according to the predictions of the prophets, to redeem the people of Israel, was termed the anointed of the Lord, as Isaias makes the future Saviour say, "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me" (Isaias lxi. 1).

The Redeemer who was to come was also called the Messiah. Now this Messiah was considered by most of the Jews to be a king who, descended from the family of David, was to unite the Jews under his rule and to free them from their enemies. Even when St. John the Baptist appeared many questioned as to whether he was not the Christ. Now as it is right and proper that He be called Jesus who is really our helper, so it is right and proper that He be called Christ

who is our only veritable High Priest, our King and our Teacher, from whom all priests, all kings, and all teachers have their mission, and of whom David says, "Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity ; therefore, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness" (Psalms xlv. 8).

## II. THE POWER OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

### Passages from the Scriptures and from the Fathers.

1. THE SAVIOUR HIMSELF declared and described the power of His own sacred name in these words : " 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 " (Mark xvi. 17, 18).

" If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you " (John xvi. 23). " Every one 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 hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting " (Matthew xix. 29).

2. In this name, as St. John writes, we shall have life through faith, for " whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved " (Acts ii. 21).

3. St. Peter assures that in the holy name there is contained something wonderful, mysterious, and powerful, for, after curing the lame man through the name of Christ, he preached to the Jews, " In the faith of His name, this man whom you have seen and know, hath His name strengthened " (Acts iii.

16). From this name proceedeth sanctification and salvation, "for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). To this name are due profoundest reverence and worship, for "God hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Philippians ii. 9, 10). In this name the Christian should do all things. "Whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Colossians iii. 17).

4. "When, in the name of Jesus, we struggle with Satan and his minions Jesus combats along with us, in us, and for us; and the enemies flee as soon as they hear that name" (Justin).

"All our power and dominion over the evil spirits lie in the invocation of the name of Jesus" (Tertullian).

"When you are troubled with vicious or desponding thoughts, when you are overwhelmed with fear, anguish, or despair, when the pangs of sickness bear you down, in all circumstances of danger and anxiety pronounce this sacred name with heartfelt devotion and you will find consolation, aye, very great sweetness. For this name has power to rejoice the heart, to strengthen the mind, to increase devotion and to arouse the soul to happiness in God" (St. Lawrence Justinian).

"The name of Jesus is a sign that places before our eyes all that God has done for our salvation. How much, O Jesus, has it cost Thee to be Jesus!" (St. Bernard).

"The name of Jesus had such great power over the devil that it sometimes has a salutary effect even when uttered by the lips of the wicked" (Origen).

### III. "HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD." — JESUS CHRIST THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.

JESUS CHRIST is called also the only-begotten Son of God because He is the only, true and veritable Son of God by nature and from all eternity. He is the Son of God, for He is begotten of God from all eternity, by a generation in connection with which it is impossible to conceive anything mortal or earthly. He is the veritable and only Son of God, and He has all the same attributes as His heavenly Father. He is, as the Nicene Creed says, "Begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father." Such is the wonderful generation concerning which the prophet Isaias exclaims, "Who shall declare His generation?" (Isaias liii. 8).

1. He is the only Son, for there is no other Son of God than this one who is the second person of the Blessed Trinity, and is equally God with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Thus He is the Son of God by nature and from all eternity according to His very essence. We are children of God according to grace; we are children by adoption, as the holy Evangelist, St. John, says, "As many as received Him, He gave them the power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name" (John i. 12). Thus the sonship of Jesus Christ is one begotten in time and eternity. Our sonship to God is one granted and secured to us by the atonement. Jesus Christ, as Son of God, has neither brethren nor co-heirs, for He is the only Son of the divine Father, while we are the work of His hands. Thus in Jesus Christ it is that the grace of God is made manifest to us. He is the one in whom the

earliest patriarchs hoped, whom the prophets foretold, for whose coming Simeon and all other just men looked forward with such yearning, and for whom even the pagans themselves longed and sighed while groaning under the weight of their misery.

2. Beside Him there is no Redeemer. He, and no one else, is the promised Messiah, for in Him has been fulfilled whatever the prophets foretold concerning the Saviour, so that He Himself could refer the Jews to the writings of those prophets and say, "Search the Scriptures . . . the same are they that give testimony of Me" (John v. 39). For all that Jacob foresaw in spirit, all those things with which Moses comforted the people of Israel, of which David sang, to which the prophets pointed in brilliant pictures, all that Isaiah described in detail, portraying in his prophecies the most perfect picture of the Saviour,—all these can be to-day discovered and pointed out in the life of Our Saviour when He was on earth.

#### IV. JESUS CHRIST IS TRUE GOD.

##### **The Testimony of the Prophets.**

THE very names assigned in the prophecies to the expected Redeemer show that only a God could become Our Saviour. In this sense David speaks of two Lords, one of which is the Son of the other, both being from all eternity. His well-known words are, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand: Until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool. The Lord will send forth the scepter of Thy power out of Sion: rule Thou in the midst of Thy enemies. With Thee is the principality in the day of Thy strength, in the brightness of the saints: from the womb before the day-star I begot Thee. The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent:

Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Psalms cix. 1-4).

To these words of David Our Lord Himself appealed against the Jews when He asked them, "What think you of Christ? Whose son is He? They said to Him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: The Lord said to my Lord: sit on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" (Matthew xxii. 42-45).

In still another place David sings, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Psalms ii. 7). To this passage St. Paul appeals when, wishing to prove the divinity of Christ, he asks, "To which of the angels hath He said at any time: Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee?" (Hebrews i. 5). Isaias prophesied, "His name shall be called Emmanuel, [that is, God with us]" (Isaias vii. 14). Again he prophesied, "A Child is born to us, a Son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace" (Isaias ix. 6). Finally Daniel calls the expected Messiah "the Saint of saints" (Daniel ix. 24).

### **The Testimony of the Heavenly Father.**

All that the prophets foretold was testified to by the Father who sent the prophets. He declared Jesus Christ to be His well-beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased, even twice—the first time, when Jesus was being baptized in the Jordan by St. John (Matthew iii. 17), the second time, when the Saviour was transfigured on Mount Thabor in the presence of Peter, James, and

John, whom He had taken thither with Him, in order that they might see His glory, for they were soon to be witnesses of His degradation and death struggle (Matthew xvii. 5).

### **The Testimony of Jesus Christ Himself.**

Whatever the prophets foretold, all that God the Father testified to from heaven, the Saviour Himself has testified of Himself. Of Himself He has said that He is no other than the Son of the heavenly Father. When Simon Peter pronounced his celebrated profession of the faith, saying, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus said to him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew xvi. 16-17). Again He said, "He that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew vii. 21). Everywhere He represents Himself as the Son of God, but as the one only Son whose sonship is a miraculous and supernatural one, such as no other man can claim for himself. Thus He says, "I and the Father are one" (John x. 30). Again, He says, "He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also" (John xiv. 9), in order to show that He is of one and the same nature with the Father. Again, in order to teach that He has the same power and dignity as the Father, He says, "All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine" (John xvi. 15). He affirms that without Him nothing is done: so "What things soever He [the Father] doth, these the Son also doth, in like manner" (John v. 19). "He hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father" (John v. 22, 23). Hence disrespect for the Son is disrespect for the Father: "He who honoreth not the Son, honoreth

not the Father who hath sent Him " (John v. 23). This belief in His identity with the Father, Jesus required from His disciples, declaring it to be a special revelation from God the Father to St. Peter when the latter acknowledged Him to be the Son of the living God, and a sign of predilection when the doubting Thomas, after touching the wounds in His hands and feet, confessed, " My Lord and my God," and declaring blessed all those who believe Him to be the Son of God, though they do not see with bodily eyes (John xx. 28).

Thus, then, did Christ give testimony of Himself. In words He testified that He is the Son of God, and true God like His Father, but He confirmed this testimony with works. These works He performed in the presence not only of two or three witnesses, not in the presence only of His followers, but before the whole people, before His enemies as well as His friends.

These works were of such an extraordinary character that they were believed not only by His disciples, but so affected those enemies who sought to take His life, that they, not being able to deny their supernatural character, could find no other way of explaining them than to charge Him with being in league with the Evil One and acting through Beelzebub, the prince of devils (Luke xi. 15).

He changed water into wine ; fed at one time five thousand and at another time four thousand men with a few loaves and fishes ; gave to Peter the miraculous haul of fish ; stilled the storm at sea ; walked upon the water ; healed the sick, bidding them stand up and walk, or assuring them of cure, as in the case of the royal centurion, where He was far away from the sick person. The palsied, the lepers, the dropsical, the fever-stricken, the bleeding, the blind, the deaf, the lame, the dumb, the possessed of the devil, were healed—even the very

dead were raised to life before the eyes of the whole Jewish people, who cried out in astonishment, "What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matthew viii. 27). "They feared and glorified God that gave such power to men" (Matthew ix. 8). "And they would come to take Him by force and make Him king" (John vi. 15).

To these miracles of His, Jesus called the attention of St. John the Baptist, when He said to the latter's disciples, "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the gospel is preached" (Luke vii. 22). On account of these miracles the Lord demands belief in Himself and His divinity. "Though you will not believe Me," He says, "believe the works" (John x. 38). Yes, and He even pronounced a solemn adjuration to that effect, that He is the Son of God, for when adjured before the court of the high priest to state whether He was the Son of God He testified solemnly that He was the Son of God and "hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew xxvi. 64). For this declaration He was condemned to death. Thus He sealed this doctrine with His death, as He had previously proved it by His works.

He never recalled a word of what He had said. He did not explain away, nor say that He had been misunderstood. What He said He reaffirmed and confirmed till the last moment of His life, and even in that last awful moment He cried out, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). Not only during His lifetime did He uphold His divinity, but even after His death on the cross He proved that

only His human nature had died, while His divine nature remained with Him the same, for He rose out of the grave, through which it was necessary for Him to pass in order to triumph over it, and to conquer hell. Then did He not afterward, before the eyes of His disciples, lift Himself up from earth and ascend into heaven, as only a God could do? On the Mount of Olives, where they had seen Him in agony, they were to witness His triumph. Thus did the Saviour, from the time of His conception till the moment of His triumphal resurrection, manifest in His human nature the entire fulness of His divinity.

### **The Testimony of the Apostles.**

The apostles always taught that Christ is the Son of God. What St. Peter professed before the death of his blessed Master, what St. Thomas acknowledged when he said to Jesus, after His resurrection, "My Lord and my God," the same did all the apostles ever afterward proclaim, insisting that He who had been so shamefully derided, abused and slain by the Jews, and in His human nature had been conquered, was God, to whom was given all the power and authority of His eternal Father. They taught expressly that Christ is God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John i. 1). "We saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). "We know that the Son of God is come. This is the true God, and life eternal" (1 John v. 20). "God hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world" (Hebrews i. 2). "The Son of God Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, was not, It is, and It is

not, but, It is, was in Him " (2 Corinthians i. 19). " To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him : and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by Him " (1 Corinthians viii. 6). " I live, now not I : but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh : I live in the faith of the Son of God " (Galatians ii. 20). " When the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son " (Galatians iv. 4). " Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things God blessed forever " (Romans ix. 5).

The apostles teach farther that the complete fulness of the Godhead dwelt within the Son of God, that is to say, that He was essentially God. According to His nature He is God, and not merely raised to the Godhead. He is no less God than is the Father, and is wanting in no attribute that the Father possesses and that belongs to divinity. " You are filled in Him, who is the head of all principality and power " (Colossians ii. 10). Here St. Paul reaffirms what Christ in the same words had said of Himself, " I and the Father are one " (John x. 30).

Now as the Son of God is distinct from the Father in person only, and not in nature or essence, Jesus Christ is entitled to the same honor, worship, thanksgiving, praise, and glory. This also is taught by the apostles, that to Him is due the worship of all creatures. When the Saviour appeared to Thomas and that disciple fell overpowered at His feet, did not the latter adore his Lord and Master as very God? And when the Lord ascended into heaven " they adoring went back " (Luke xxiv. 52).

It was an act of adoration also when they called upon the name of Jesus Christ for strength to perform their miracles, as when St. Peter cured the lame man, sitting at the gate of the Temple, with these words, " In the

name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise, and walk" (Acts iii. 6). And what the apostles did themselves they required from others. They taught, "In all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ: to whom is glory and empire forever and ever" (1 Peter iv. 11). "In the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Philippians ii. 10).

All the creatures, too, throughout nature, were to unite, in offering adoration to Him to whom the heavenly hosts offer the sacrifice of worship; whom God the Father wishes to see adored by the heavenly hosts, of whom He says, "Let all the angels of God adore Him" (Hebrews i. 6). He, the Saviour, who redeemed us with His blood, and was slain in sacrifice for us, is adored by those who stand nearest to the throne of the Father, singing hymns of triumph: "The four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints: And they sung a new canticle, saying: . . . The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction" (Apocalypse v. 8-12).

### **The Testimony of the Catholic Church.**

From her very foundation the Catholic Church has taught Christ is true God, and of one essence with the Father. This doctrine she has maintained and defended as the chief and fundamental doctrine of Christianity. The Church Fathers held it as firmly as did the apostles, and the bishops looked upon the doctrine of the divinity of Christ as the bulwark of our holy religion. In the first Church Council that met at Nice, 325 years after Christ, this doctrine was solemnly declared by

three hundred bishops to be the teaching of the universal Church, while the heretic Arius, who presumed to teach that Christ was indeed the most perfect being that ever came from the creating hand of God, but still was only a creature, was excommunicated with abhorrence from the Church. He soon afterward met with a miserable death, which may be considered a chastisement from the hand of God. From that time forward it was inserted in the Creed that Jesus Christ is Our Lord, and in truth the only Lord, for He is God like the Father.

The title of Lord belongs to Our Saviour on a two-fold ground :

1. Because as God He is Lord and Master of heaven and earth, as is expressly taught in the Bible. "All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made" (John i. 3); "by whom also He made the world" (Hebrews i. 2).

2. Because, as Redeemer, He purchased us with His blood. For as we "are bought" by Christ "with a great price" (1 Corinthians vi. 20), we are Christians, as St. Paul says; "you are Christ's: and Christ is God's" (1 Corinthians iii. 23).

With His own life He purchased life for us, so that we are His body-servants and He is Lord of our persons. St. Paul styles himself "a servant of Jesus Christ" (Romans i. 1). Thus the Church, when she calls Christ Lord in her Creed, only maintains the doctrine of the apostles, in whose writings Jesus Christ is styled Lord not less than seventy-eight times.

Thus in Jesus is united all that is given to us in help, grace, consolation, and happiness. His name is the epitome of salvation, and hence is no less worthy of honor than the name of God itself. Just as he commits sin who takes the name of God lightly and irreverently, so, too, does he sin who utters the name

of Jesus, the most holy One, without that reverence which should animate the heart when the name is on the lips. This sacred name is also a dreadful name for the enemy of our salvation, who was overcome by the same Jesus Christ on the cross, and who flees terror-stricken as the devils in the possessed man fled and trembled before the Lord.

When uttered with devotion the holy name of Jesus is our shield, with which we defend ourselves against the attacks of the evil spirit. Therefore call often and with devotion on the name of Jesus, that you may light up in your heart the fire of holy charity, more especially in time of temptation, in order to remain faithful to Him who has said, "Have confidence, I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33), and who promises the crown of life to all those who persevere when He says, "To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna, and a new name" (Apocalypse ii. 17).

When the Psalmist, in Psalms xxxiii. 2, says, "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be always in my mouth," these words refer as well to the Father as to the Son, who to the benefit of creation and existence has added the grace of redemption. Hence it is that we pronounce the holy name of Jesus in order to break forth in joyous thanksgiving. Christians remind one another of the goodness of their Saviour when they say to one another, "Praised be Jesus Christ." This mode of salutation is an outward mark of Catholic Christians, akin to the sign of the cross. In a most marked manner it expresses outwardly what every Christian should feel inwardly, while the response, "Forever and ever. Amen," expresses the sentiments aroused by the salutation.

This mode of greeting, far from being irreverent, as those to whom the holy One is least holy pretend, is a

continual act of worship to the Lord, in which the homage of the Church on earth is united with the worship of the saints in heaven. It is the homage of the Church, for she has approved it and made it her own. She recommends it to the faithful, to whom she grants indulgences if they pronounce it, not thoughtlessly, but with pious sentiments; thus she grants an indulgence of fifty days to those who make it and respond, and a plenary indulgence at the hour of death to all those who practised this pious salutation during their lifetime.

Beside all this the Church, in order to still farther glorify the sacred name, has established a special festival known as the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, which occurs on the second Sunday after Epiphany. It is kept by all good Christians in order that men may know that this is a mysterious name, a name that contains within itself the whole mystery of the Incarnation, redemption, sanctification, and justification.

## V. JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE PROMISED REDEEMER.

### **Prophécies Concerning the Time of His Coming.**

IN the whole history of the world there has never been a public person who engaged the attention, whether of his contemporaries or of succeeding posterity, so universally and so profoundly as did Jesus of Nazareth. Comparing His life on earth with all that had been foretold of Him for thousands of years, He corresponds exactly in every particular with the character and history assigned to Him from the earliest times. We have no other alternative than to admit that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, or that the Messiah

has not come at all. Now even the Jews no longer expect the Messias, their most distinguished teachers having long admitted that all the conditions and signs have been fulfilled that were to precede the Redeemer.

There are three special prophecies whence we learn that the signs have been verified and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

1. He came at a time of universal peace. In striking language the prophet Micheas foretold this period. "Every man shall sit under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and there shall be none to make them afraid" (Micheas iv. 4). This period of general peace occurred only in the reign of Cæsar Augustus, under whom Christ was born. Neither before nor after that time was there any such period of tranquillity.

2. He entered into the second temple. When the second temple was built it was so far inferior to the first that those who had seen the former wept with disappointment. But then the prophet Aggeus predicted, "The Desired of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory. . . . Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first" (Aggeus ii. 8, 10). This second temple has been destroyed and none other has ever taken its place. All efforts to rebuild the second temple were rendered futile by the power of God.

3. Daniel's weeks of years had elapsed. "Know thou therefore and take notice: that from the going forth of the word, to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the prince, there shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks: and the street shall be built again, and the walls in troublesome times. And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain: and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be waste,

and after the end of the war, the appointed desolation. And He shall confirm the covenant with many in one week: and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail: and there shall be in the Temple the abomination of desolation: and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end" (Daniel ix. 25-27).

Now the Jews obtained permission to rebuild their Temple in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes (2 Esdras xi.), or in the year of the world 3550. After sixty-nine weeks of years, for so they were intended to be measured, came the year 4033, the thirtieth year in the life of Christ, when He began His public ministry. His death occurs exactly in the middle of the seventieth year-week.

4. The prophecy of Jacob: "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations" (Genesis xlix. 10). The scepter was taken from Juda. Herod, who ruled over the Jews, was a heathen from Idumea who had had himself circumcised. Thus it was that the prediction of Jacob came to be fulfilled, and it was time for the Desired of nations to appear.

### *THIRD ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

#### I. "WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST."—THE INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE third article of the Apostles' Creed teaches us that the Son of God became man, that is to say, by the operation of the Holy Ghost He took a body and a soul

like unto ours. Hence this article teaches us the fundamental dogma and mystery of Christianity. It teaches us what was predestined from all eternity in the decrees of the adorable Trinity for the salvation of the human race, what was done by the Son of God for us poor sinners, and the great and wonderful things accomplished through the intervention of the Holy Spirit. So enormous was the guilt incurred by the human race through Adam's sin that man alone was unable and incompetent to atone for it. All men were tainted with sin, no just man could be found, for Adam's sin reached all. Were it possible to find a man who could voluntarily take upon himself for others the guilt of others, that man would first have to be created by a miracle of the divine mercy, for of all those born according to the natural order each and every one fell under the penalty.

If such infinite guilt were to be assumed by any substitute or representative he must needs be an infinite being; but, as outside of God there is no such infinite being, the human race would have perished for all eternity if the Son of God had not, out of love for us, taken upon Himself the work of redemption, the cleansing of sin, and the punishment it had duly and properly entailed upon mankind. Hence the Son of God laid aside the garments of His majesty and became man, "taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Philippians ii. 7). He assumed a human body and a human soul, and united His divinity with His humanity, without mingling the divine with the human. He took a body that we might be able to see Him, a true body that He might be able to suffer, a real human soul to enable Him to feel all anxiety and grief. This is the unspeakable mystery of the Incarnation of the

Lord, which we profess in the words of St. John, the Evangelist, where he says, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (John i. 14). This Word, namely, the only-begotten Son of God, who expresses the thought of the eternal Father, and who is come to reveal the will of that Father, has become flesh, that is to say, man, while His divinity dwelt unchanged within Him. Thus He was at one and the same time God and man—God from all eternity and man born in time. Such is the substance of what we are taught to believe in the third article of the Apostles' Creed.

In this union of the divine with the human is shown as well the love of God as the wisdom of the divine decree. In order to lift mankind up to heaven divinity came down to humanity. In order to create a new man God Himself is made man, that thus to grace a model should not be wanting.

As God revealed Himself to Adam, so did He again manifest Himself and make known to men, in a human way, His holy will. Thus we believe firmly, and profess openly, that the divinity of Christ is united with His sacred humanity.

Thus, when we say that God became man, we do not mean that the divinity was submerged in the humanity, nor that the divinity was changed into humanity. We do not here understand any transformation or even transubstantiation, but an assumption of human nature without any detriment to the divine nature. Hence in Christ there are two natures, not one only—namely, the divine nature, because He is God, and the human nature, because He is man. Each of these natures exists and dwells beside the other, and yet both are inseparably united, so that there are not two persons, but one only, and that one is divine.

This human nature the Son of God took from the

immaculate Virgin Mary, who had been selected by God from among all the maidens of Israel to be herself a miracle of divine grace. Descended from the family of David, of a royal race, but poor now by reason of the vicissitudes of life, she lived in retirement at Nazareth, under the protection of a simple carpenter named Joseph, whose only wealth and honors were the title of just man given him by the Holy Scriptures (Matthew i. 19). She is the incomparably pure and stainless one, who from the moment of her conception was destined to be a vessel of divine mercy. For as it was not becoming that the soil from which the root of Jesse sprouted should ever be in the possession of the evil enemy, she was not indeed, like Jeremias and St. John, sanctified in her mother's womb, after she had been conceived, but, more than that, her body and soul were sanctified by the Holy Ghost in the very moment when that body and soul were first united. Thus there was never a moment in which she was tainted with sin. Rightfully, then, is she called the purest Virgin, because she at all times remained an incomparably pure Virgin, before as well as after the birth of her divine Child, Jesus Christ. For the body of Our Saviour was formed in the pure body of the Blessed Virgin out of her pure substance, by the power of the Holy Ghost, at the very moment that the Angel Gabriel spoke to her the words, "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High" (Luke i. 31, 32).

At this moment, and while the angel was announcing the sublime mystery, the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, as the same angel declared afterward to St. Joseph in his sleep in the following words, "Joseph, son of

David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew i. 20). This solemn moment, when the declaration was made by Gabriel of the Incarnation of the second person of the Blessed Trinity, we commemorate as the beginning of our salvation, as the rosy dawning of the coming day of brightness, and we praise and honor the Blessed Virgin as blessed among women, as the angel himself styled her when he said, "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee" (Luke i. 28).

For this purpose the Church has placed the festival of the angel's announcement to Mary on the 25th day of March, the birthday of Our Saviour falling on the 25th day of December, or nine months later.

Now, in the very moment when, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the body of Our Lord was formed out of the substance of the Blessed Virgin, and the eternal Father united a reasoning soul to that miraculously formed body, in that same moment the divinity became united to the humanity; and as thus the divinity was, as it were, born in the human frame of Mary, she became truly the Mother of God.

With right and truth is she called the Mother of God, for she bore, not an adopted Son of God, but His very Son, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead, and "of His fulness we all have received," according to St. John i. 16. Such is the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation.

The Council of Trent says, "To reap from the mysteries abundant fruits of salvation the faithful should particularly call to their recollection, and frequently reflect, that it is God who assumed human flesh, but that the manner of its assumption transcends the limits of our comprehension, not to say of our powers of expression; finally that He vouchsafed to

become man in order that we mortals may become regenerated children of God. When to these subjects they shall have given mature consideration, let them, in the humility of faith, believe in and adore all the mysteries contained in this article, nor indulge a curious inquisitiveness by investigating and scrutinizing them,—an attempt scarcely ever unattended with danger” (4th Chapter, 7th Question).

Christ our Lord—may He be praised and adored for all eternity!—had therefore Mary for His veritable Mother, in so far as He was man, but as man He had no father, for St. Joseph, the virginal spouse of Mary, was only His foster-father. On account of his purity he was entrusted with the guardianship of the Blessed Virgin, who preserved untainted the lily of virginity both before and after the birth of Our Saviour. To him she was espoused, not as a wife, but that she might have in him, who was of the same chaste sentiments as herself, a protector for herself and a wise guardian for her divine Child on earth, one who would care for Jesus in His youth and at a time when, according to the sublime decrees of the ever adorable Trinity, He was not to appear as a miraculous personage, but was to pass His years in the character of an humble and obedient Child and an example to youth.\*

The mystery of the Trinity was concealed from men, and hence Jesus was commonly considered to be the son of St. Joseph. But He was not such, for He held His human nature, by the power of the Holy Spirit, from Mary.

Thus were the words fulfilled that David puts in the mouth of the Messias when appearing spiritually be-

\* When Christ, later in life, spoke of His “brethren” He did not use the word in the sense in which we use it, but in the sense of “kinsfolk,” for the Hebrew word often means cousin.

fore him: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire: burnt-offering and sin-offering Thou didst not require. Then said I: Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will. O my God, I have desired it" (Psalms xxxix. 7-9). The Son of God has come. Freely He became man that He might be able to suffer and to die for us, for as God He could neither suffer nor die. Thus did He fulfil the will of God, yielding to the charity of His divine heart, and made the atonement possible which could only be accomplished by the death of an innocent victim. In His holy life and death we are to find the source of our eternal life. In His humiliation lies our elevation, in His poverty our wealth. Therefore should we be grateful to the Lord, and be ever mindful of this grace-laden mystery, especially when the solemn tolling of the Angelus bell strikes upon our ear, coming as the invitation of our holy Mother, the Church, to salute the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of God, in the words of the angel—and then, in the inspired words of St. John, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," to adore her divine Son, Our Saviour. To these sentiments of praise, thanksgiving and adoration let us add Mary's words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," and with her let us consecrate, as a return-gift to the infinite oblation of the Son of God, our hearts and minds, our bodies and our lives.

## II. "BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY."—THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST ON EARTH.

### **The Birth of Christ.**

FOUR thousand and four years had elapsed since the creation; one thousand years had passed since the

time of building the Temple of Solomon. For five hundred years no prophet's voice had been heard. The pagans no longer believed in their own detested deities; the Jews were demoralized in their lives, and their piety had degenerated into perfunctory observances; the tribes of the Jews were divided into sects, the longing for a Saviour was general among men, and equally general was the belief that His advent was close at hand. Then God made use of the Roman emperor to verify the predictions of the prophets concerning the birth of the Messiah, for Cæsar Augustus issued an edict that throughout the whole Roman empire an enrolment of all his subjects should take place, and that each person should be registered in the locality where his family belonged.

Joseph, being a descendant of the house of David, was thus compelled to repair to Bethlehem, and went to that old kingly city accompanied by his virginal spouse. On reaching the end of their journey they found every house filled with strangers, leaving them comfortless and shelterless and thus verifying the words of St. John, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John i. 11).

In the outskirts of the city was a lonely cave which served as a shelter in stormy weather for the shepherds of the vicinity while watching their flocks. Here Mary and Joseph were compelled to seek refuge. Here at the solemn midnight hour the Saviour of the world was born. He, whose throne is the heavens, whose footstool is the earth, was wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in the manger. No one in all the land of Juda knew that the day of salvation had come forth from the long night of darkness.

It was Christmas eve, the holy night commemorated by the Church each year on the 25th of Decem-

ber, not arbitrarily, but because that date, according to the best calculations, was really the birthday of the Saviour.

But what God concealed from the great ones of this world He made known to the poor and lowly. Simple shepherds, while guarding their flocks on the plains, were the first to learn that the real true Shepherd had come, who would one day lay down His life for His sheep. To these shepherds the angel said, "I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

Thus were the joyous chants of angels mingled with the wondering, happy voices of the poor men. The shepherds hastened to Bethlehem to adore the Lord, and the words were true, "The poor have the gospel preached to them." Then they hastened to their neighbors and informed them of what they had heard and seen, and so prepared the people of Israel for the Gospel, the happy message of salvation. Eight days later the divine Infant was circumcised and received the name Jesus, in compliance with the angel's order. The Son of God submitted to this painful law in order to give us an example of obedience. If He, the Lord and Master, and Maker of the law, was obedient, how can we presume to be disobedient?

But the glory of the new-born Infant was also to be manifested to the heathens.

Twelve hundred years before had the prophet Balaam

prophesied against his will, "A star shall rise out of Jacob" (Numbers xxiv. 17). This prophecy still lived in the memory of many heathens. Now a strange apparition is seen in the starry heavens. A star of unusual size and brilliancy, or rather a cluster of stars, appears among the lesser lights of heaven. The prophecy is fulfilled and the Magi, or three wise men, rise and prepare to follow the course of the new star, in the certain expectation of finding the Saviour.

They thought not of the difficulties and dangers of travel, they heeded not expense or loss of time, nor neglect of home duties; with sentiments of faith, confidence, and hope they went their way. Arriving at Jerusalem they asked where the new-born king of the Jews might be. Herod was alarmed. Could there be another king beside himself? Was his throne in danger? All Jerusalem shared his alarm and fears, for they knew the savage cruelty of their tyrant and feared his anger. He at once summoned the scribes and high priests to his presence and inquired from them where Christ was to be born. They replied that He was to be born in Bethlehem and of the tribe of Juda, for so it stands written by the prophets, "And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule My people Israel" (Matthew ii. 6). Thus spoke the priests well versed in Scripture, but they had no thought of going in search of their Lord and Master, and the three wise men went alone. Filled with renewed courage they followed the guiding star to Bethlehem, to the crib of the divine Infant. They drew near to the stable, they entered and adored the Child in the Virgin's arms, offering to Him presents as tributes of their faith and allegiance. Their gifts

consisted of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold they offered to their King, incense to their God, myrrh to their suffering and dying Redeemer. Then, admonished by an angel, they returned to their homes by another way than that which would lead them back to Herod.

### **Jesus is Presented in the Temple.**

Forty days after His birth Jesus was presented in the Temple to the eternal Father, in compliance with the law given to Moses, "Sanctify unto Me every first-born, for they are all Mine," said the Lord to Moses (Exodus xiii. 2).

In this sanctifying of the first-born was to be expressed the perfect dominion of the Lord over the whole people whom He had rescued from destruction. This first-born was to be ransomed with five shekels of silver, and at the same time a lamb was to be offered in sacrifice for the purification of the mother. If the parents were too poor to present a lamb they offered instead a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

Joseph and Mary brought the offering of the poor, and thus poverty was sanctified through the poverty of Our Lord. As the simple group entered the Temple they were met by Simeon, a God-fearing old man, whom the Holy Spirit led there. For God had promised him in reward for his fidelity that he would not die until he had seen the Anointed of the Lord. Now, inspired by the same Holy Spirit, he recognizes his Saviour, takes Him lovingly and joyfully in his arms and says, "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace: because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the

revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel " (Luke ii. 29-32).

This joyous recognition of the Saviour as the Light that has come to enlighten every man that cometh into the world, is to-day commemorated in the Church by the blessing of candles. Hence this Mass is termed the Mass of the candles and the feast itself is styled Candlemas day. The procession carried out on this day is commemorative of Simeon's inspired advance to the Temple to meet his Lord.

While Simeon was still speaking, the gentle, simple group was joined by the devout Anna, an aged, God-fearing woman, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser and also a prophetess. She dwelt constantly in the Temple, serving God day and night in much prayer and fasting. Sharing deeply in Simeon's joy, and sympathizing with the happy parents, she spoke to those who were waiting for the redemption of Israel, of her happiness in having seen the Saviour. Thus were the Jews admonished that their Redeemer would soon appear, and hence, on the first public appearance of Jesus in their midst, we hear them asking whether He is such or not.

After complying with the law Mary and Joseph, with the divine Infant, returned to Bethlehem, whence they soon moved to Nazareth. The Lord in His wisdom decreed that for a time the wonderful Child, for whose appearance all Israel was waiting, should be secluded from observation, till such time as Herod's arm should be powerless to smite Him.

### **The Flight into Egypt.—The Slaughter of the Innocents.**

Herod, in his wicked cunning, had said to the three wise men from the East, "Go and diligently inquire

after the Child; and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him" (Matthew ii. 8). The tyrant, having spoken thus with a view of finding out Jesus in order to destroy Him, and now finding himself thwarted by the good wise men, issued the dreadful order to murder all the children of two years of age and under in the town of Bethlehem.

He wanted to be certain of his Victim. But an angel of the Lord bade Joseph fly into Egypt with Mary and the divine Infant. The faithful and obedient foster-father lost no time in departing with his precious charge. And as they journeyed along the road, so run the legends, the palm-trees dipped their branches in salutation, the leaves on the trees murmured hymns of adoration, in recognition of their Creator; the blossoms whispered to one another that their Maker was passing by and offered their tribute of fragrant perfume; roses and lilies sprang up beneath the feet of the Blessed Virgin, while behind them at Bethlehem arose the shrieks of the horrified mothers as Herod's minions massacred their innocent offspring. Rachel's voice, the voice of the ancient mother in Israel, issued forth from the grave and united itself to that of the inconsolable mothers at Bethlehem.

Joseph remained in Egypt with his little family until he was notified by the angel to return to their native country, for now Herod was dead and Archelaus was reigning in his stead. He accordingly set out for Galilee and took up his abode in Nazareth.

### **Jesus' Life at Nazareth.**

From this time forward, till His thirtieth year, our blessed Lord dwelt in retirement in the humble home of His parents and was obedient unto them. This

He did in order to teach children obedience to their parents. From His conduct they were to learn that neither their advanced age nor their imaginary intelligence could absolve them from this duty, and that they ought to pride themselves on their complete and unqualified submission. During this long lapse of years Jesus lived so secluded that even the Evangelists seem unable to tell us much about that part of His life. Only one incident is given and that occurred during His boyhood.

The Jews were obliged by law to repair three times during the year to the Temple at Jerusalem, that is, at the time of the Passover, at the Harvest Festival, and on the Feast of the Tabernacles. This duty was incumbent on all males who had attained their twelfth year. When Jesus, therefore, had reached that age, He accompanied Mary and Joseph to the festivals. Mary went from devotion, for the law did not bind the women. In Jerusalem the paschal lamb was purchased, then slain in the Temple, and afterward served up at table in the inn where, amid prayers and other ceremonies by the house-father, it was eaten by the members of the family. With it were eaten unleavened bread, with bitter herbs, and cakes baked in the form of bricks. All this was done in commemoration of their captivity in Egypt, their escape from the destroying angel, their hasty march from Pharaoh, their passage through the Red Sea and their final deliverance. The chief festival day was followed by seven so-called Easter days, after which the pilgrims returned to their homes.

But while Joseph and Mary were on their way to Nazareth Jesus remained behind at Jerusalem. His parents did not miss Him, supposing that He was somewhere in the company, which was large and con-

sisted of friends, neighbors, and kinsfolk, all traveling together. In the evening, on arriving at the inn where the members of the different families met together, the boy Jesus did not appear. The parents became alarmed indeed and hastened back to Jerusalem. They sought everywhere, but could find no tidings of their lost treasure. After wandering in vain up and down the streets of Jerusalem for two weary days, at last, on the third day, they met Him. Where? In one of the outer halls of the sacred Temple, where the doctors learned in the law were in the habit of meeting to impart instruction.

There He sat amid the teachers. He, divine Wisdom itself, was humble enough to seek information from mortal men. Like a studious, inquiring school-boy He asked for information, though His able and searching questions raised in the minds of some listeners suspicion of His heavenly knowledge. The doctors answered His inquiries, yet were astonished at His cleverness. Mary approached the group and, embracing her Son with warm motherly feeling, asked, "My Child, why hast Thou done so to us? Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." What was the boy's answer? Oh, beloved parents, what a deal of unnecessary suffering you have undergone. How could you suppose Me disobedient, or think that I had separated from you without good and sufficient reasons? You should have supposed from the first that I was in the Temple. "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49). At that time the joyful Mother did not quite understand the meaning of His words. But she treasured them carefully in her heart, and they ever afterward strengthened her in her affliction, more especially during the awful hours passed at the foot of the cross on Calvary.

When all was dark and threatening her faith and perfect confidence in God shone forth brightly.

This incident in Our Saviour's life has for us a deep meaning. It shows how all other claims must be silent when there is question of discharging a duty that we owe to God. He stayed in the Temple in order to show us that we should find our happiness in prayer and Christian instruction, and that we should love to visit God's temple. While He wished to enliven our zeal for the cause of God our Father, He also showed that, above all things, we should give to God what belongs to Him before we give to men what they claim from us. God before all: The kingdom of God first of all. Then the world, then parents, then the civil power, then relatives and the necessities of life. There is no contradiction in all this, nothing hard to bear, for God commands us to discharge our duties to our parents, our civil rulers, our neighbors and ourselves, but in such a way as not to neglect Him, as not to render to others what belongs to Him, as not to forget Him in remembering ourselves and others; in fine, the example of Jesus teaches us that we should draw from prayer and the word of God strength and grace to fulfil our duties.

Then Jesus went with His parents back to Nazareth and lived there a life of quiet obedience and affection and "advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men" (Luke ii. 52). His divine character grew with His bodily growth in such a manner that all who knew Him beheld Him with eyes of wonder and perplexity.

### **St. John the Baptist.**

It was customary among the Israelites for no teacher to begin his public career until he was about thirty

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years of age. Our blessed Lord, wishing to observe strictly both laws and customs, remained peaceful in Nazareth until He reached the required age. During this long period He furnishes us with an example retired, obscure, and humble life, teaching us that greatness is always retiring, and that excellence, even greatness, can be attained only in a hidden way. At last He emerged from the obscurity of His home and, leaving Nazareth, went away about hundred miles to the bank of the river Jordan. There for some time, that missionary sent from God appointed to prepare the way of the Saviour, St. John the precursor, had been engaged at his duties. His history is most closely allied with the history of the Saviour.

Mary had a cousin named Elizabeth who was married to Zachary of the priestly family of Abiathar, who dwelt in the priestly city of Hebron on the mountain of Judah. These had no children and were now far advanced in years. One day, while Zachary was in the Holy Temple offering incense to the Lord, behold! an Angel from heaven appeared to him, standing near the incense-altar. St. Luke thus describes this event: "And there appeared to him an Angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

"And Zachary seeing him was troubled, and fell upon him.

"But the Angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary, thy prayer is heard: and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John:

"And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice in his nativity:

"For he shall be great before the Lord: and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he shall be with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.

“And he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God :

“And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias : that he may turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just, to prepare unto the Lord a perfect people :

“And Zachary said to the Angel : Whereby shall I know this ? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years :

“And the Angel answering, said to him : I am Gabriel, who stand before God : and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these good tidings :

“And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and thou shalt not be able to speak until the day, wherein these things shall come to pass, because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time.

“And the people were waiting for Zachary : and they wondered that he tarried so long in the Temple :

“And when he came out he could not speak to them, and they understood that he had seen a vision in the Temple. And he made signs to them, and remained dumb :

“And it came to pass, after the days of his office were accomplished, he departed to his own house :

“And after those days Elizabeth his wife conceived, and hid herself five months, saying :

“Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein He hath had regard to take away my reproach among men ” (Luke i. 11-25).

No sooner did Mary receive the news from the angel than she hastened to her cousin, Elizabeth, to mingle her joy with her own. When Mary entered the house and greeted her cousin the infant leaped for joy in the womb of Elizabeth, who, being then and

there filled with the Holy Ghost, cried out to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke i. 42). Then both together united their voices in a hymn of thanksgiving to God, Mary continuing her act of praise in chanting the Magnificat, saying, "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

A hymn of beauty, called the Magnificat, has ever since been cherished in the Church and sung with deep devotion in Vespers on Sunday and on many other solemn occasions. Mary tarried with her cousin about three months, probably till after the birth of St. John. Eight days after this event Elizabeth's neighbors and kinsfolk came to congratulate her and to attend at the solemn ceremony of the circumcision of the child. It was urged by some friends that he should be called Zachary, after his father, "and his mother answering, said: Not so, but he shall be called John. And they said to her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father," for he was still dumb, "how he would have him called. And demanding a writing-table, he wrote, saying: John is his name. And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened, and he spoke blessing God. . . . And filled with the Holy Ghost he prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people." These words of Zachary, with the rest that follow, form the beautiful hymn of praise which we call the Benedictus, a fit companion to the Magnificat of Mary, and which, like the latter, has ever been cherished in the Church and inserted in her holy office. In it Zachary foretold the

duties which, according to the decrees of divine wisdom, were to be discharged by St. John.

Both these canticles, the Benedictus and the Magnificat, continue to be two permanent thanksgiving hymns in the Church because they are outpourings of grateful, happy hearts, expressing forcibly the feelings of all Christians who, in repeating them, acknowledge that God has wrought great favors in their behalf. "The child grew and was strengthened in spirit: and was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel" (Luke i. 80).

Then, preceding his Lord and Master by about six months, he came forth with the power of an Elias, as the messenger who should go before the Angel of the covenant, as the last of the prophets, but the greatest of them all.

The public appearance of St. John created a profound commotion. In the desert he had led a life of severe penance and mortification, a mode of life which he continued to the end of his days, as the angel had foretold he would. "He had his garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his meat was locusts and wild honey" (Matthew iii. 4). As it was already rumored among the people that the Messiah had come, they studied John closely to see whether he were the promised Redeemer. He continued to preach with earnestness and effect, "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He insisted emphatically on "fruits worthy of penance" and taught the Jews that they were to find salvation in such works and fruits of penance, and not in their being descendants of Abraham.

As a symbol of cleansing from sin he gave to those who came to him a baptism in water—a figure, too, of the Sacrament of Baptism in and through the Holy

Ghost—assuring them at the same time that He who was to come after him would baptize with fire and the Holy Ghost, that is to say, would, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, enkindle the fire of divine charity in the hearts of men and purify those hearts as iron and gold are purified in the crucible. All Judea was now flocking to hear the words of this extraordinary man. Even the high priests despatched messengers to him to learn from him if he were the promised Messias. “Who art thou?” they said to him. “Art thou the Christ? Art thou Elias, who did not die, but was taken up to the Lord, and will come again on earth? Art thou the prophet concerning whom the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will raise them up a prophet out of the midst of their brethren like to thee: and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak all that I command him?’” (Deuteronomy xviii. 18).

All these distinctions St. John disclaimed for himself and added, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. . . . But there hath stood One in the midst of you whom you know not. The same is He that shall come, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. . . . But that He may be made manifest in Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water” (John i. 23-31).

Before entering on His public duties Our Lord went first to St. John that He might be made manifest to Israel. And He was made manifest. At first St. John hesitated to baptize our blessed Lord. “John stayed Him, saying: I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering, said to him: Suffer it to be so now: for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice” (Matthew iii. 14, 15).

When St. John baptized Our Lord, behold! the

heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, while from heaven was heard the voice of the eternal Father saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus was manifested the glory of the Son in the manifestation of the Father and of the Spirit.

Then Jesus went out into a desert place, there by prayer and fasting to prepare Himself for His public life. After He had fasted for forty days He felt the want of nourishment for His body. Then came the devil to Him to tempt Him by the enticements of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and avarice and pride. But Jesus rejected the temptation, simply referring to what is written in the Scriptures, thereby affording us an example of how we should reject at once all and every temptation, that is, by simply remembering the presence of God instead of imitating Eve, who permitted herself to be misled because she held parley with the serpent instead of turning to God.

Meanwhile St. John continued to preach of Him whom he had baptized and whom he had openly recognized as the divine Messias.

When Our Saviour again came toward St. John the latter pointed with his finger at Him before the Jews, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). After that St. John withdrew from the public gaze, for the Saviour was to replace him, as the Baptist himself tells us in these words, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 30). Not long afterward he was thrown into prison by Herod and then beheaded at the instigation of Herodias, all because of his heroic love of virtue and truth. The Church celebrates his festival on the 24th of June. And even nature verifies history and prophecy, for about the time of St. John's day the

light of the day begins to decrease, while about the 25th of December, Christmas day, which occurs among the longest nights, the light of day begins to increase. The duties of St. John the Baptist were now all fulfilled. Henceforward the way was to be prepared for the human family by the Angel of the Covenant Himself.

### **The Public Life of Jesus.**

Our blessed Lord now began to appear in public, and to call His disciples about Him, to whom He gradually communicated His teachings. He spoke not merely to a small gathering of chosen ones, but to the entire people. He traveled through Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, seeking every opportunity to proclaim the doctrines of salvation. He taught in the Temple at Jerusalem, in the synagogues of the towns, and in the public highways, having so many hearers that He was compelled to find special places in order to make Himself heard and understood. Thus one day He ascended a mount in order to address the throng from the height. Another time He boarded a ship, that He might not be crushed in the immense gathering of eager listeners. Often thousands and thousands of people would follow Him and remain about Him for several days at a time, as we learn from the account of the miraculous feeding of the hearers in the desert place. But He chose also a circle of select disciples whom He named apostles, or messengers, who were in a special manner to be the guardians of His teachings, the faithful custodians of the commissions to be bequeathed to them, the pillars of the future Church, the authorized expounders of His word and will.

The names of the twelve apostles are as follows : The first was Simon, surnamed Peter ; Andrew, the

brother of Simon ; James, the son of Zebedee ; John, the brother of James ; Philip ; Bartholomew ; Thomas ; Matthew, the publican ; James, the son of Alpheus ; Thaddeus ; Simon, the Chanaanite ; and Judas Iscariot, the same who betrayed Him (Matthew x. 2-4). These Jesus sent forth, even in His own lifetime, to preach. They were to direct the people's attention toward Him and to prepare them for His mission. Thus He became the teacher of all Israel.

He taught all that we ought to believe, hope and do in order to be saved. He taught us to know God the Father, and with that same Father, Himself as the Son of God, and the power and operation of the Holy Ghost. He pointed to the perfect holiness of God, before whom even the angels are not pure, and taught us to be holy like that God. He pointed to the infinite justice of God which punishes the smallest as well as the greatest, and rewards the smallest no less than the greatest ; to the infinite wisdom of God who knows what each one needs, and gives to every one what he is entitled to ; to the love of God whom we are permitted to call Father ; to divine Providence, without whose consent not a hair of one's head may perish. He demonstrated that we should love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves, but that our neighbors are not merely our near relatives, but all those who are most in need of our assistance ; that not our friends alone, but also our enemies, have a claim upon our love ; that this love of neighbor consists of practical good works ; that the essence of justice is not merely in the perfunctory observance of external laws, but in the purity of intention ; that we are not permitted to desire evil, even in our hearts ; that our conversation is to be truthful ; that God's name is to be honored ; that one day a reckoning of every man's stewardship will be demanded ; that the

reward of the good in heaven, and the punishment of the wicked in hell, will be everlasting.

He thereby taught us to know the infinite love of the Father, who sent His only-begotten Son into the world as the foundation of all our hopes.

He taught us that by true repentance, and by faith in Him, and in virtue of the grace of the Holy Ghost, sin will be annihilated within us and we shall be called to the sonship of God ; that no creature is excluded from the mercy of God if he repent, but rather that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that doeth penance than over ninety-nine just who need not penance.

All these teachings were new. Nothing like them had ever been heard of. No worldly philosopher, no prophet enlightened by the Holy Spirit, had ever presented such simple yet such sublime truths.

They were truly divine teachings, brought from heaven, made known by a God. Though they needed no proof Our Lord *did* prove them. He showed that His teachings were true and divine, first by the holiness of His own life and, secondly, by miracles and prophecies. The life of Our Saviour was the most perfect expression of His teachings. He not only said, "Be ye holy," but He was holy. He who, according to His divine nature, was supremely holy, was holy also according to His human nature, for this last is intimately united with the divine nature in Him as one person.

Hence He was free from all sin, so that He could stand before the people and say, "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" (John viii. 46). He not only preached virtue, He practised it. He submitted obediently to the law to which He was not subject ; He was untiring in doing good ; mild and gentle toward

the weak, merciful toward sinners and full of love even toward His worst enemies, praying for them even on the cross. To His heavenly Father He was obedient unto death, even to the death on the cross. So perfect a model was He of all virtues that He could say to every one that "He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12).

But whenever Divinity manifests itself it does so under extraordinary circumstances. These circumstances, inasmuch as they do not lie in the ordinary course of things, but exceed nature, are called miracles. Such are those extraordinary works which can be accomplished only by the almighty power of God and not by natural forces.

When, for instance, a sick person is restored to health by the application of human science and human remedies there is no miracle performed, it is merely the natural consequence of natural causes. But when a blind man recovers his sight, a cripple regains his suppleness, a deaf man his hearing, a dry, withered hand revives and regains its perfect circulation of blood, a dropsical patient is cured, a dead man is raised to life, instantly, without any natural remedy, merely by the words, "I will, be thou healed," such events are beyond the forces of nature, and, in the absence of motives pointing to diabolical intervention, true miracles indeed.

Such extraordinary occurrences accompanied Our Lord at almost His every step. To prove His divinity it was necessary that He should perform miracles, and He did perform them. The working of these miracles is a proof of the divinity of His doctrine. For God is not with evil, not with deception, not with falsehood,

but being truth itself He is on the side of truth, and miracles are the evidences of a divine mission. How Our Lord worked His miracles, how He changed water into wine, fed five thousand men with five loaves of bread, calmed the winds and the waves by a simple word of command, how He cured diseases of all kinds, expelled devils, and raised the dead to life, has been related in a former chapter.

All these wondrous deeds served powerfully to give force to His teachings and to open a way for His every word. This we see specially exemplified in the changing of water into wine, His first public miracle, when He won over His disciples, for "this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee: and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him" (John ii. 11). Such miracles showed them that God was with Him, that He Himself was God, sent by God to speak to men. Hence it was that even Nicodemus said to Our Lord, when visiting Him at night to secretly obtain instruction in these doctrines, "No man can do these signs which Thou dost, unless God be with Him" (John iii. 2).

To these miracles Christ added His prophecies or predictions of future events that could be known only to God. Nor did He make these predictions in a way that was open to several interpretations, for He said plainly to St. Peter, "I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest Me" (Luke xxii. 34). Of Judas He foretold positively, "Amen I say to you, one of you that eateth with Me shall betray Me" (Mark xiv. 18), and when Judas asked Him, "Is it I, Rabbi?" Jesus said to him, "Thou hast said it" (Matthew xxvi. 25).

Speaking of Himself He foretold that after the temple of His body should be destroyed He would raise

it up in three days (John ii. 19), and that the Son of man would be three days in the bosom of the earth as Jonas was three days in the whale's belly (Matthew xii. 40). He foretold that He would be lifted up, meaning on His cross, but that by this lifting up He would lift up many toward Himself, that is to say, He would free them from sin and place them in the condition of children of God (John xii. 32). Speaking to Mary Magdalen He thus foretold His ascension into heaven, "I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God" (John xx. 17). To His apostles He predicted, too, that He would send the Holy Ghost saying, "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever" (John xiv. 16).

But there are three highly important facts which we have seen existing through many centuries, which could not have resulted from any other source than divine wisdom, and which could not have been accomplished save by the power of an almighty God. Twelve poor men were sent forth to proclaim a new doctrine, one never before heard of, apparently unintelligible to all, which was to effect a complete change in the family, in the state, in religion, and in individual life and practise. These men had learned nothing more than that divine wisdom imparted to them. They had no other power than that entrusted to them by God. They were to wage war against heathenism and all the cherished vices and darling lusts of heathenism. And they did combat manfully, and preach successfully, and before them bowed the proud nations of the earth. They set up their altars in the strongholds of paganism, they overturned pagan idols, annihilated superstition, and introduced the worship of the one true God.

The world rose up against them, but they remained steadfast ; unbelievers slaughtered them, but could not silence them. In their places arose new champions of the faith whose mission was duly inherited by their spiritual sons, just as kings or princes succeed one another. These sons, too, were martyred, but their blood became the seed of new confessors in the faith. Though fourteen millions of Christians fell in the sanguinary struggle, Christianity kept aloft its standard of the cross, while paganism sank at last into the tomb.

Heretics arose in the bosom of the Church, persecutions were renewed, the Church suffered, and bled, but triumphed in the end. At no time did the Church enjoy peace, for when tranquil in one land, she was combating in another. Such struggles, too, in all ages, but served the more effectually to form models and examples for mortals on earth, as well as intercessors in heaven.

While these twelve fishermen stood erect as twelve pillars of the Church of Christ, the proud vaults and arches of Jerusalem's Temple sank to the earth. When wicked men would raise that edifice again in order to set at naught the predictions of Christ, flames of fire burst from the earth and gave testimony of Him.

Who could have foreseen such a revolution—who could even have thought of it? Our divine Lord foresaw and foretold it, saying, "Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15), knowing, as He well knew, that human power could not hinder the fulfilling of such a commission. He foretold that the gates of hell, namely, the power of evil, would not prevail against the Church, and that of the Temple in Jerusalem not a stone would be left upon a stone, for the edifice would be brought to utter and hopeless desolation.

These are predictions that have been working out their fulfilment before the eyes of all through the long lapse of many ages. While the growth of the Church is a perpetual triumph, the people of Israel, scattered up and down over the face of the earth, are a lasting memorial of the divine anger. These two last facts proved the Saviour to have uttered the truth when He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass" (Matthew xxiv. 35).

If, finally, we scrutinize the life of our blessed Lord from the moment of His Incarnation till the time of His Passion we find example after example. He has pointed out to us the way we are to follow, in order that in us God may see His well-beloved sons in whom He is well pleased. Industry, obedience, zeal in prayer, heartfelt piety, delight in the word of God, charity, goodness, mercy, meekness, stainless purity, and a quiet, humble demeanor are the chief features in the character of Our Lord. Now Christ has left us an example in order that we should follow it. He lived long enough among men to bless and to sanctify all the circumstances and relations of life. He Himself appeals to us, "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also" (John xiii. 15). We can not help knowing our duty. In fact we have but one duty to discharge on earth: To imitate Christ and to pursue a course of life having for its accompaniments those most precious gifts of God, wisdom and grace.

**FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.**

“Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.”

**I. “SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE.”—  
HISTORY OF THE SUFFERINGS AND  
DEATH OF OUR LORD AND SA-  
VIOUR JESUS CHRIST.**

DURING three years and a half Our Saviour had gone about teaching, counseling, pointing out the divine chastisements that overtake the unrepentant, diffusing blessings, doing good. His time was now come, for Daniel's weeks of years were drawing to a close. Israel could no longer exculpate itself, for so astounding had been Jesus' miracles that only wickedness itself could withstand their force. While some few had opened their hearts to the influence of God's words, the majority had neglected the time of grace and salvation. The great event was drawing nigh, from which blessings were to flow down upon all mankind. The sufferings of Jesus began.

For some time past snares had been laid to entrap the Saviour, for He had unmasked the hypocrisy of the priests and Pharisees. Hence Our Lord for some time had avoided the city of Jerusalem. Four days previous to the feast of the Passover when, according to ancient custom, the paschal lamb was killed and eaten, He appeared again publicly in the city. When approaching Bethphage on the Mount of Olives He sent two of His disciples to Bethania to engage a foal of an ass, on which He seated Himself and rode into Jerusalem, in order that the vision of the prophet Zacharias might

be fulfilled : " Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem : Behold thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour : He is poor and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass " (*Zacharias ix. 9*).

Just then there was great commotion throughout the entire city, for only a short time before He had raised Lazarus to life after the body had been three days in the tomb, and this miracle could not be denied, explained away, or hushed up. The people rejoiced, while the priests were enraged. When the news spread that the worker of miracles was approaching, the people went out in crowds to meet Him, paying Him kingly honors, for on the road under His feet they strewed palm and olive branches, a distinction seldom shown to any one other than a royal personage, at the same time singing, " Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel " (*John xii. 13*). Thus was Our Saviour recognized as king, and they proclaimed, " Hosanna! " who five days later cried out, " Crucify Him! "

Now, the devil entered Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, who was eaten up with the passion of greed, and who went stealthily and plotted with the high priests and chiefs of the nation to deliver up his blessed Master to them. They were pleased, and promised him money, some thirty pieces of silver. Then came the day of the unleavened bread, on which the paschal lamb was to be slaughtered. This was the day on which Our Saviour's Passion really began, for He was the real paschal lamb that was soon to be slaughtered for the sins of the world. Again had come the hour of Phase, that is to say, the passing of the destroying angel, for from this day forth the destroying angel would pass harmlessly over those sprinkled with

the redeeming blood and marked with the sacred name of Christ.

The Saviour first ate the paschal lamb in order to fulfil all that the law prescribed. Then He instituted the sublime memorial of His boundless love by giving Himself to His apostles as their food, offering Himself up in a bloodless manner, which they would thenceforth continue by offering Him up as the eternal High Priest and Victim, and which He Himself was to consummate on the next day in the bloody sacrifice of the cross. It is also probable, as indeed it has been revealed by God in more than one vision to pious souls, that it was in this solemn hour that Our Saviour appointed the apostles who surrounded Him bishops in the future Church. Then He joined His disciples in singing a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, after having instructed them of what He was to undergo, encouraged them, strengthened them with the promise of the Holy Ghost as their new Comforter, and prayed for them and for the whole Church in those touching and deep-meaning words which compose what has ever since been called the high priest's prayer. Then they all went together over the brook Cedron to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemani, a spot which the Saviour had often before chosen as a place of prayer, and where, during whole nights, He had interceded with His heavenly Father for poor, distressed mankind, and had often fortified His own human nature for His future superhuman sufferings. This place was well known to Judas as a spot where Our Lord might easily be captured without alarming the people or causing any tumult. Jesus, knowing the treachery of Judas, went in this way to meet him, for now His hour was come.

When they reached the usual spot Jesus said to His

disciples, "Wait ye here till I go yonder and pray." Taking with Him Peter, John, and James, His favorite three, the same who had witnessed His transfiguration on Mount Thabor, He said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death, wait ye here and watch with Me." But fatigue and drowsiness overpowered the three disciples. They fell fast asleep, and Our Lord had to encounter His dreadful agony alone. Three times He prayed, "Lord, if it be possible let this chalice pass from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." Then an angel appeared, comforting Him. "And being in an agony He prayed the longer and His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground" (Luke xxii. 44).

What could have produced such anguish in the heart of our blessed Redeemer? Three dreadful images rose up before His sight, the contemplation of which overcame Him, and forced the drops of blood from His pores. First, He saw the sins of the whole world pass before His mental gaze. This dreadful affliction, this cruel, overwhelming burden, He was about to take upon His shoulders and to offer satisfaction to His heavenly Father. This was the first shock.

The second horror that overwhelmed the Saviour was the thought of the excruciating cruelties awaiting Him, and before which His human nature shuddered and recoiled. Here, in this bloody sweat of anguish, in the strength sent from heaven, and which He needed, and in His imploring prayer, we see at once and plainly that Christ was really and truly man, and that His divinity had no influence in softening or alleviating the sufferings of His body.

The third cause of His agony was the knowledge He had that after all these dreadful sufferings, after this thrice and sorely proved love of His, after His

ignominious death, so many would remain unbenefited, so many would persist in their sins, so many would be lost.

Such were the frightful internal sufferings which, as forebodings of grosser external torments, came upon our beloved Redeemer. After Our Saviour had passed through this struggle and, by complete resignation to the will of His Father, become master over His three trying temptations, as He had in the beginning of His public life overcome the threefold temptation of the devil by obedience, He stood up and, awaking His disciples, said, "Come, rise, let us go, he who will betray Me is at hand." Then Judas approached, showing the way to a crowd of soldiers armed with sticks and swords. They had been sent by the high priests for the purpose of capturing Jesus. Judas knew the way, for he had often before trod it when accompanying his blessed Master to the solemn exercise of prayer.

Stepping forward, he imprinted on the cheek of Jesus a treacherous kiss, as a sign to those whom he had brought with him. Jesus advanced and said, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." He said, "I am He." Then the mob staggered back and fell to the ground. The Lord was pleased to show them His power, to show them that man could have no power over Him without His free consent. Then again Jesus asked them, "Whom seek ye?" They answered again, "Jesus of Nazareth." Whereupon Jesus replied, "I have told you that I am He. If you seek Me let these go their way."

Then Simon Peter, drawing his sword, cut off the right ear of a high priest's servant, named Malchus. This act was done against the wish of Our Saviour, who wished no blood shed except His own. Hence He

rebuked Peter and commanded him to put away his weapon, "Put up thy sword into the scabbard, for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I can not ask My Father and He will give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" Then He replaced the ear of Malchus, healed the wound, and of His own free will allowed His enemies to bind Him and to take Him captive.

Christ was not constrained to suffer and to die. No, He suffered voluntarily, as Isaias had long before foretold that He would, saying, "He was offered because it was His own will" (Isaias liii. 7). He submitted out of love for us and was pleased to drain to its bitterest dregs the chalice that we ought to drink.

At first the disciples were frightened, and dispersed in all directions. Only Peter and John followed their captive Master, and they kept at a distance, as He was led to Caiphas, the high priest, where the elders and scribes had gathered together, and where charges and accusations of all kinds were made by false witnesses who were really unable to prove their assertions. Two of these witnesses, the last who came, said, "We have heard Him say, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and after three days to rebuild it.'" To the enemies of Our Lord such an assertion seemed to be blasphemy, for only God could perform such a miracle, and in their blindness they did not discern the divinity of Him who stood before them. Then the high priest said to Him, "I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou art Christ, the Son of God." Jesus replied, "Thou hast said it; I am." Thus did Our Saviour affirm on oath, before the whole assemblage, that He was true God, inasmuch as His reply was based on the adjuration to the living God made by the high priest. He also added, "I say to you, hereafter

you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God and coming in the clouds of heaven." This solemn assurance of Our Saviour explains and confirms all that He had previously said when speaking of Himself as the Son of God, showing beyond all doubt that He did not consider Himself merely the Son of God in the sense that all men are sons of God, or even as a specially chosen man sent by God, but as the real, true, and consubstantial Son of God, participating equally in the power and glory of His Father.

Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, "He hath blasphemed. What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy, what think ye?" The crowd condemned Him and shouted that He was guilty of death. Then the men who held Jesus bound mocked Him and spat in His face. They buffeted Him and, having covered His face, they struck Him with their fists, saying, "Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?" And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him; and the servants of the high priest smote Him with the palms of their hands.

While Jesus was enduring in silence these atrocious indignities from His enemies, still another was added by one who but a few hours before had boasted, "Although all shall be scandalized in Thee, I will never be scandalized. Although I should die together with Thee, I will not deny Thee."

St. Peter's denial of his Master is thus described by the Evangelists: "Now when Peter was in the court below, a portress, one of the maid servants of the high priest came, and when she had seen Peter sitting by the fire, warming himself, and had looked at him, she said: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But

he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath: That I know not the man. And after a little while they came that stood by, and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them: for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse and to swear that he knew not the man. And immediately the cock crew."

Our divine Lord was then led from the council-chamber into the outer court, where He was subjected to the jeers and insults of the soldiers. As the cock crew the Lord, turning, looked at Peter; and Peter, remembering the word of the Lord, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice," went out, weeping bitterly. How low was the fall of Peter, of him who considered himself so staunch and faithful! A solemn warning to us all that we should not be too presumptuous, lest we fall into sin. During his whole subsequent life Peter ceased not to bemoan his want of constancy. A pious legend relates that he was never again heard to laugh, and that his tears gushed forth afresh every time he heard the cock crow.

Unjust and unlawful as were the proceedings of the Jews against Christ, they maintained an outward show of legality and justice. "And straightway in the morning, as soon as it was day, the ancients of the people and the chief priests and scribes met together, took counsel that they might put Jesus to death, and they brought Him before their council, saying: If Thou be the Christ, tell us. Jesus said: You say it, for I am. And the whole multitude of them rising up brought Him bound and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor." Unlike Galilee and the other

portions of the Jewish territory the country of Judea was not under the jurisdiction of the tetrarchs, but was governed by the Romans, who had appointed there a governor named Pontius Pilate. The Jews kept their own code of laws, however, but having lost their right of life and death their sentence needed the ratification of the Roman governor. Pilate therefore said, "What accusation bring you against this man?" They answered and said to him, "We have found this man perverting our nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is Christ the King." Already had Our Lord taught these people publicly, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." Pilate called Jesus and asked Him, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now My kingdom is not from hence."

On hearing these words Pilate saw at once that on the part of Jesus no danger threatened his own power, or that of the Roman empire, and said to the chief priests and the people, "I find no cause in this man." But they were more earnest, saying, "He stirreth up the people, teaching all over Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." When Pilate heard that Jesus was a Galilean and was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem in those days. Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad, for he had been long desirous of seeing Him, because he had heard many things of Him and hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. Herod questioned Him with many words, but Jesus answered him nothing. Our Saviour was silent, not out of contempt for lawfully instituted authority, but because He knew

and felt that all these questions were put, not with a view of discovering truth and securing justice, but from the merest idle curiosity. Herod mocked Him and, putting on Him a white garment, as it were to deck Him out as a would-be king, sent Him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day, for before they were enemies to each other. Pilate, calling together the chief priests and the magistrates and the people, said to them, "You have presented unto me this man as one that perverteth the people and, behold, after having examined Him before you, I find no cause in Him in those things wherein you accuse Him. No, nor Herod either, for I sent you to him and, behold, nothing worthy of death is done to Him. I will chastise Him therefore and release Him." Now, upon the solemn festival day the governor was accustomed, of necessity, to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner who was called Barabbas, a robber, who was put in prison with some seditious men who had committed murder. The multitude, therefore, being gathered together, they began to desire what he had ever done for them. Pilate, answering, said to the multitude, "Whom will you that I release to you? Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?" The chief priests and ancients moved the people to ask that he release Barabbas to them and that he destroy Jesus, and together they cried out, "Not this man, but Barabbas. Away with this man and release to us Barabbas!" And Pilate, again answering, said, desiring to release Jesus, "What will you, then, that I do to the King of the Jews, who is called Christ?" They cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers plating a crown of thorns

put it upon His head, and they put on Him a purple garment and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they gave Him blows. Jesus Christ, tied fast to a pillar, the whole upper portion of His sacred body exposed to the cruel gaze of the mob, and so unmercifully lashed by scourges in the hands of six or eight soldiers that His precious blood flows in warm streams to the earth, is the dread picture now before our thoughts. Such is the atonement made for our sins of the flesh, for the effeminacy, luxury, and lust of mankind.

When the soldiery conducted the lacerated, bleeding, and thorn-crowned Saviour into Pilate's presence he was shocked and frightened at the result of his orders, and thinking it would not be possible for the Jews to remain unmoved at the deplorable appearance of their victim he accompanied Jesus to the balcony and showed Him to the crowd. "Pilate therefore went forth again and saith to them: Behold the man!" What a man to behold! How gentle and patient in His suffering; how chastened and broken; how dreadfully punished, He who had never been guilty of transgression against God or man! "When the chief priests therefore and the servants had seen Him, they cried out saying: Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Alas! what a sudden change from "Hosanna in the highest!" to "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Only five days to convert Palm Sunday into Good Friday! And the Jews cried out, "If thou release this man thou art not Cæsar's friend." Now indeed they were sure of accomplishing their wicked designs against Our Saviour. Pilate had good cause to fear the emperor's anger, for already many complaints had been lodged against him with that ruler. To be charged with showing favor to the enemies of the emperor would bring Pilate into

disgrace and imperil his position as governor. His hesitancy to put Jesus to death was now overcome, and calling for water he washed his hands as a sign of his own innocence and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man." And the whole people, answering said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." This awful malediction which the Jews called down upon themselves attained its fulfilment forty years later, when their city was laid in ruins and they themselves scattered over the face of the earth.

Then Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, seeing that his Master was condemned to death, repented, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients and said, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? Look thou to it." Casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple he departed, and went and hanged himself with a halter. The chief priests, having taken the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because they are the price of blood." And after they had consulted together they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying-place for strangers. For this cause that field was called *Haceldama*, that is, the field of blood.

The soldiers took Jesus and led Him away to crucify Him. Though weary, worn, and exhausted, Our Lord willingly accepted the heavy cross, and placed it upon His shoulders to carry it to the distant scene of His impending death. The way was rough, He was weak, and He fell three times during the journey. Hence His persecutors seized upon a man named Simon of Cyrene whom they met, and compelled him to carry the cross of Jesus, while they did not cease to taunt and insult Jesus and urge Him along the way with blows. It was carrying the wood on which he was

to be offered that the guiltless Isaac once went to the altar of sacrifice. Some few pious women, overwhelmed with grief and compassion, followed in the footsteps of their Lord, and one of them, named Veronica, handed to Him her handkerchief to wipe the sweat and blood from His blinded eyes. This handkerchief received the impression of the divine countenance, and it is still preserved in the Church, an object of profound veneration. To these pious souls Jesus said, "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves and for your children," meaning that they and their children would live to see the dire, dark hour of vengeance when Israel would pay the penalty of this crime.

Just outside of the city of Jerusalem was a slight eminence called Golgotha, the ordinary place for executions—hence its other name, the place of skulls. To this spot our blessed Lord was dragged. Here He was stripped of His garments, bound to the cross with ropes, and finally nailed fast to it by hands and feet. Thus cruelly nailed in hands and feet He was raised aloft between heaven and earth, and "with Him they crucify two thieves: the one on His right hand and the other on His left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith: And with the wicked He was reputed" (Mark xv. 27, 28). Pilate wrote also an inscription or title over His head. It was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and meant, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

The chief priests, therefore, of the Jews said to Pilate, "Write not the 'King of the Jews,' but that He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." Thus it was that heathenism proclaimed to the world that Judaism had rejected its King and Saviour.

When the soldiers had crucified Him they took His

garments and, excepting His coat, made four lots of them, a lot for each soldier. Now, the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said to one another, "Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it and see whose it shall be." And thus the Scripture was fulfilled: "They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture they cast lots" (Psalms xxi. 19). And the soldiers did these things indeed and sat down and watched Him. As we see these hard-hearted robbers plying their nefarious work at the very foot of the cross, are we not forcibly and painfully reminded of many self-called Christians who deliberately wrong God's servants and rob His sacred sanctuaries and homes of piety and learning?

To the cruelties of the soldiers were now added the jeers and derision of the wretched bystanders, who taunted Jesus, saying, "He saved others, Himself He can not save; if He be the King of Israel let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe in Him. Let Him save Himself if He be Christ, the Elect of God. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He is pleased with Him, for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" "

Amid His cruel agony of body, amid these worse cruelties on the part of the bystanders, our beloved Saviour suffered in silence. He looked toward the West, for such was the position of the cross. The East had rejected salvation; it was to pass to the West. During the space of three tedious, agonizing hours Jesus hung upon the cross, dying. At last He uttered the words, "It is consummated," and died.

The day on which Our Saviour died was the Parasceve, that is, the day of preparation, or the day preceding the great Easter Sabbath, on which, from the hour of three o'clock in the afternoon, called by the

Jews the ninth hour, the preparation for the next day's festival began. Although it was prescribed by law to eat the paschal lamb on the second day before the great Sabbath it had become customary to eat it on the Parasceve itself. Our Saviour, in strict accordance with the law, had observed the rite on the appointed day, and on the following day had permitted Himself, the true Paschal Lamb, to be led to the slaughter and to be slain for our sins.

As it was not allowable for the body of a dead malefactor to remain hanging on the cross during the great Sabbath, the Roman soldiers came to take away the bodies. Seeing that the two thieves were not yet dead the soldiers broke their legs in order to kill them; but seeing that Christ was already dead they did not break His legs, but one of them ran a spear into His side to prove, as it were, that death had already done its work.

From the wound thus made with the soldier's lance, flowed blood mingled with water, the blood being the symbol of Christ's divinity, the water of His humanity. That is the sacred bath of regeneration, the living stream with which Christ the Lord overflowed the Church, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians v. 27). Thus, too, were fulfilled the words of Holy Writ, "The Lord keepeth all their bones: not one of them shall be broken" (Psalms xxxiii. 21); and, again, "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced" (Zacharias xii. 10).

After these things, and when evening was come, there came a certain rich man, Joseph, of Arimathea, a city in Judea, who was a noble counselor, a good and a just man, and had looked himself for the kingdom of God and was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear

of the Jews. This man came and went in boldly to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. But Pilate, wondering that He should be already dead, sent for the centurion and asked him if Jesus were really dead. On receiving an affirmative reply from the centurion he gave the body to Joseph. The latter came, therefore, and took away the body of Jesus, assisted by some few devout women. Nicodemus also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Joseph bought fine linen and wrapped the body in linen cloths with the spices, after the manner of Jewish burial. In the place where Jesus was crucified was a garden, and in the garden was a new sepulcher which Joseph had had hewn out in a rock, and wherein no man had yet been laid. There, therefore, because of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, the sepulcher being nigh at hand, and rolled a great stone to the door of the monument.

### **Blessings Resulting from the Death of Christ.**

As there is a meaning in the fact that Our Lord died the death of a sinner, and thus made use of the sinner as the instrument of His death, so there is a symbolical meaning in the death on the wooden cross. For He was the second Adam, come upon earth to atone by death upon a tree for the sin committed by the first Adam in connection with the tree in the garden of Paradise. From the wood of that tree death came to us; from the wood of the cross life was to be restored to us. From the tree of knowledge sin came to us; from the rod of Jesse came forgiveness. Thus the tree of the cross has become for us a second tree of knowledge, as the Church sings in her "Preface of the Cross," "Eternal Father, who didst effect the salvation of man-

kind on the wood of the cross: that from whence death came, thence life might come forth; and that he who overcame by the tree, might also by the tree be overcome."

It was thus that Christ the Lord became the Saviour, that is to say, the divine Mediator who brought us salvation, everlasting life, beside which there is no other salvation. Truly is the "Salvator Mundi" the Saviour of the world, for He bore the sins not of one person only—He atoned not for the sins of one alone—but became the atoning Mediator, "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2).

There is no kind of sin that Our Saviour did not carry. He bore original sin committed by Adam and inherited by us, as well as all the actual sin which men committed from the time of Adam. We may safely say that at the moment when the curtain of the Temple was rent in two, our bill of debts to the almighty God was torn in pieces. Looking in one glance at all that Our Saviour has done for us, we may sum up and say, "He is our Deliverer and Friend." He removed from us those things that bore us down, and secured for us all those blessings of which we stood in need. He took from us

1. Sin, an evil from which no human being could free himself. Though we were to live all through life without committing even the slightest sin, we would be tainted, for Adam's sin was on our souls. While we were in sin we were in the power of the devil, who acquired a certain mastery over us at the moment when Adam and Eve yielded to his temptations. From that sad state Christ delivered us.

2. From the dominion of Satan, who was the enemy of the human race from the beginning, and who by

cunning and deception dragged down men ever deeper and deeper into vice and misery, into idolatry, carnality, war, murder, and all the other evils that have been bred of human passions ; not only dulled their sense of right, but inflamed their inordinate affections, waked up dormant though innate wickedness, and also persecuted and distressed them in their bodily affections, as we know from the case of Job and from the case of the possessed man in the Gospel. From such dominion has the Lord freed us. Christ crushed the head of this serpent and freed us from his coils.

3. He freed us from everlasting condemnation, for no man could enter the kingdom of heaven laden as he was with the impurities of sin. Now from all such stain our divine Saviour cleansed us with His precious blood. St. John assures us, "Jesus Christ hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Apocalypse i. 5); thus, by the graces which He pours out upon us, He makes us as acceptable before God as Adam was at the time of his creation. We are now reconciled with God, heaven is open to us, precious graces have been obtained for us by Christ, Our Saviour, that we may become holy and happy, that we may overcome every hindrance thereto.

The whole treasury and the fulness of divine mercy has been poured out upon us, transforming us from enemies of God into His friends, and even making us His children. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Romans v. 10). And Christ merited this happy blessing for all men without any exception since He died for all men ; "for," says St. Paul, "Christ died for all ; that they also, who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians v. 15).

But the death of Christ did not secure eternal happiness for us absolutely and unconditionally. It purchased for us the right to such happiness, a right that we had forfeited. The happiness itself we must earn and merit through faith and good works. For, as St. Augustine teaches, "He who created you without your cooperation will not sanctify you without your cooperation." We can lose our souls; it is possible for the blood of Christ to have been shed in vain for us. Indeed this was one of the most agonizing thoughts of Our Saviour during His Passion, namely, that, notwithstanding His infinite pains and atoning death, many persons would derive no benefit from such love. But such unhappy people are lost through their own fault, for, on their part, they do nothing that is necessary to obtain eternal salvation. They desire heaven, but they desire to secure it without struggle, pain, or any effort whatever.

They will not surrender their intellects, which means that they have no faith. They follow their own will and reject the will of God, thus disobeying His commandments. They neglect, or perhaps refuse, to avail themselves of the means established by God for obtaining divine grace,—they do not approach the sacraments. Does this make God responsible for the loss of such souls? "Behold," says the Lord, "I stand at the gate and knock" (Apocalypse iii. 20), while men let Him knock, and refuse to open the door of their hearts. Jesus says to all men, "Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matthew xi. 28). But they do not come, they do not seek relief or assistance. Through their own fault they falter and lose strength, and finally fall into the power of the devil, from whose dominion the Lord had delivered them. If they trample the sufferings and

death of Christ under foot who is to blame if they are lost and Christ's precious blood is lost for them? If men die in their sins and are lost, who can blame that Saviour who, as the Evangelist says, "gave to as many as received Him, power to be made the sons of God" (John i. 12)?

Never, O Christian soul, forget the great love of Jesus Christ. "For thee, O man, have I suffered," exclaims Our Saviour from the cross, "what art thou doing for Me?" Make, then, your resolution, that as the three pagan wise men knelt at the manger and offered their gifts, you will kneel at the cross of Jesus and offer up your most precious treasures of mind and body. Offer yourself. Promise to live for Him who died such a painful death for you. He desires no other offering but yourself. He wishes love for love, and life for life, and will then address you from His cross, as He said to the believing centurion, "As thou hast believed, so be it done to thee" (Matthew viii. 13).

#### *FIFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

"He descended into hell, the third day He arose again from the dead."

In this fifth article of the Creed two points are offered to our belief, namely, (1) that Jesus descended into hell, and (2) that on the third day He rose again from the dead.

#### I. "HE DESCENDED INTO HELL."—THE DESCENT OF OUR LORD INTO LIMBO.

THEOLOGIANS teach that there are three distinct places in which those souls that have not reached eternal happiness are detained after death. According

to the Catechism of the Council of Trent the first place is an extremely dark and awful prison, in which the souls of the damned are punished in an everlasting and unquenchable fire together with the evil spirits, called the fire of hell, the abyss, and in a stricter sense hell. Secondly, there is a purgatory, in which the souls of the good are punished for a time and purified, that they may be made worthy to enter into the presence of God, where nothing defiled can enter.

A third place of waiting is the one in which the souls of the just who died before Christ awaited without any positive punishment the hour when they would be freed by the coming of their Redeemer. It was to these souls that the soul of Our Saviour went when His body was placed in the sepulcher. This place is called Limbo, and many theologians hold the opinion that it is here that the souls of unbaptized infants are now detained.

Christ went to Limbo, in the first place, to announce to the souls of the patriarchs, prophets, and just persons of the Old Testament that He had at last redeemed the world, reopened the long-closed heaven, and would soon take them with Himself into paradise.

These souls of the patriarchs, prophets, and other just persons of the Old Dispensation, who had departed this life before the coming of Christ and the completion of the atonement, could not enter heaven, for it was closed against them and the whole human family by Adam's sin. It was first necessary that the Redeemer should come into the world, and by virtue of His death-sacrifice atone for the disobedience of the first Adam and so reopen the portals of paradise to the human race.

A second reason why Christ descended into Limbo is that He desired to manifest, even down there under

the world, His charity, power, and glory, in order that all knees should bend, of those that are in heaven, on the earth and under the earth (Philippians ii. 10).

Great indeed must have been the joy and exultation of these holy souls when they saw the divine Redeemer, whom they so long and so anxiously had expected. It may well have surpassed the joy and exultation of the Israelites when, after seventy long years passed in slavish captivity in Babylon, far away from fatherland, they regained by the victory of Cyrus, king of the Persians, permission to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple of the God of Israel. For as the Israelites in Babylon could not forget their beloved Sion, it being ever uppermost in their thoughts as the only object of their sighs, of which they loved to speak to strangers, and of which they loved to sing praises on the banks of Babylon's rivers, so, too, did the ancient fathers of our race and the other just souls in Limbo sigh and long for the celestial Sion, until at last the heavenly King, Jesus Christ, came to their relief and restored them to their true fatherland.

The descent of Christ into Limbo should have the effect of stimulating us to descend in spirit often, while we are yet on this earth, into hell. Not indeed into Limbo, but into hell itself, where the damned souls are burning, groaning, and writhing — into the place of torture, the abyss of misery, where God punishes mortal sin for all eternity. Such a practise will be a salutary one, and will have the effect of keeping us out of hell when we die. "By fire," says a pious teacher, "the hungry lion is frightened away from his prey; so, by keeping hell-fire before our minds, we shall be frightened away from the commission of sin." "The fire of our passions," says

Tertullian, "is often extinguished by thoughts on the fire of hell." On the same subject St. Chrysostom writes, "He who, while out of hell, goes down there sometimes in thought will surely not be sent there after death." And St. Bernard warns us to "descend voluntarily into hell often during life, that after our death we may not be compelled to go there."

## II. "THE THIRD DAY HE AROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD."—CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

AFTER Christ had consoled and freed the souls in Limbo His soul united itself with His sacred body that had lain in the tomb, and on the third day, which was Easter Sunday—counting Good Friday, the day of His death, as the first—the Saviour accomplished His resurrection from the dead. The Holy Scriptures relate: "And the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate,

"Saying: Sir, we have remembered, that that seducer said, while He was yet alive: After three days I will rise again.

"Command therefore the sepulcher to be guarded until the third day; lest perhaps His disciples come, and steal Him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead: and the last error shall be worse than the first.

"Pilate said to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know.

"And they departing, made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards.

"And in the end of the Sabbath when it began to

dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.

“And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven : and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it :

“And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow.

“And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men.

“And the angel answering said to the women : Fear not you : for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified :

“He is not here : for He is risen, as He said ; Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid.

“And going quickly tell ye His disciples that He is risen : and behold He will go before you into Galilee : there you shall see Him ; lo I have foretold it to you ” (Matthew xxvii. 62—xxviii. 7).

Christ then was really risen. He rose, too, of His own inherent power and was not simply called out of death by God, as were the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Naim, Lazarus, or those dead who came forth from their graves at the death of Christ. The divinity of Christ was not separated from His body while it was in the grave, nor from His soul while it was in Limbo. He rose from the dead by His own divine power, and in the way described by Himself in one of His predictions, that is, “I lay down My life that I may take it again : . . . I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down : and I have power to take it up again ” (John x. 17, 18).

It was therefore of no avail for the Jews to seal the stone on the sepulcher and to place there a vigilant guard. Their precautions came to grief and shame. In fact Our Saviour made use rather of His enemies

and their malice in order to neutralize all the objections that doubt and unbelief could raise up against the truth of His resurrection. His own enemies were compelled to testify that they could not prevent the resurrection, that God indeed is greater than the forces of men, that God's will is unassailable and unconquerable, and that He renders vain and idle the wicked efforts of His creatures.

On the same day Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalen, who remained weeping at the sepulcher (John xx. 17), and in the evening to the disciples, who were gathered together with the doors shut for fear of the Jews (John xx. 19). On the same day He showed Himself to the two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus, journeyed in their company, explained the Scriptures to them and broke bread with them (Luke xxiv. 13-30). On that same day, too, He appeared to Simon Peter (Luke xxiv. 34). But He was not seen only by these few women and the disciples, who might have been deceived; He again appeared on the next Sunday, when Thomas, who was absent the first time was present, and was permitted to touch the very wounds of his risen Master and could therefore, as he did, profess his faith in the resurrection and proclaim it before others (John xx. 28). Another time, when the disciples were engaged in their pursuit of fishing, Jesus joined them, ate with them, and after they had dined committed to Peter the care of the spiritual sheep and lambs purchased by the blood of Calvary (John xxi. 15).

After His resurrection Jesus remained forty days among His friends, communing with them on things concerning the kingdom of heaven. He initiated them into the mysteries of His holy Church, explained to them the meaning of the Scriptures, and promised to them the speedy coming of the Holy Ghost to comfort

them. If there is in history any fact that is fully and firmly proved, it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Elevated above all doubts it stands forth as the crowning and completion of the redemption of the world.

On the truth of the Saviour's resurrection rests the whole groundwork of Christianity, which stands or falls with this doctrine. For if Christ truly rose from the dead He is God; if Christ is God then the religion brought by Him is a true religion revealed from heaven; in a word, all is true that was taught by Christ. "For," as St. Paul says, "if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians xv. 14).

Countless Christian heroes have confessed, professed, and defended with their life's blood this fundamental truth of the resurrection of Christ. There was not one among the apostles who was not willing and happy, in his belief in the resurrection of the Lord, to undergo a cruel martyrdom, "that they might find a better resurrection" (Hebrews xi. 35).

For us the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ is extremely important and deeply consoling, for it fortifies us in our faith in the divinity of Christ and in our hopes for our own happy resurrection. On this point St. Peter writes, "God raised Him up from the dead, and hath given Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter i. 21).

The doctrine of the resurrection of Christ strengthens our faith in the divinity of Christ. For must not He necessarily be God who came forth from the grave glorious and immortal, by His own power? Can any man give life to himself and by his own forces come out of death? No. Christ alone could do that, because He is true God, and the Son of the living God.

By the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, our

hopes are renewed and sustained for our own happy resurrection.

St. Paul says again, "If Christ be preached that He arose again from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again" (1 Corinthians xv. 12, 13).

"Knowing that He who raised up Jesus, will raise up us also with Jesus, and place us with you" (2 Corinthians iv. 14).

Therefore we may be consoled and say with the patient Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day, I shall rise out of the earth: and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold: this my hope is laid up in my bosom" (Job xix. 25-27).

If we would rise like Christ out of the grave to a new and glorious life in heaven we must first of all rise up from the death of sin to a new life of virtue, as St. Paul admonishes us, "As Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. . . . Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin: but present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead: and your members as instruments of justice unto God" (Romans vi. 4, 12, 13). Again, "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Colossians iii. 1, 2).

If you are really risen to a new life you should shine with purity of morals, innocence, sanctity, modesty, justice, benevolence and humility (Roman Catechism).

The best evidence that we have risen with Christ is our appetite for "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy" (Philippians iv. 8). "For," as the Catechism of the Council of Trent says very aptly, "as the appetite is used to mark sickness or good health, so when one finds in his heart a liking for heavenly things it may be taken as a sign that he who is thus affected has risen together with Christ into a new life."

*SIXTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

"He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty."

I. "HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN."—THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

OUR blessed Lord remained forty days with His disciples and then returned to His Father in heaven. He conducted His disciples out to Mount Olivet, where He delivered to them this commission: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." There He pointed out the way by which they were to lead men to heaven: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." There He promised the power of miracles to those who would have faith in Him, as a means of proving His teachings to others. "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" (Mark xvi. 15-18). There He gave to them and through them to His Church for all time His blessing (Luke

xxiv. 50). "And when He had said these things, while they looked on, He was raised up: and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven" (Acts i. 9-11).

Christ the Lord ascended into heaven by His own inherent power. By that same inherent power whereby He arose from the dead did He raise Himself up from the earth to heaven. Henoah was taken up into heaven by God; Elias was also carried up from the earth; the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up by the power of God; but Our Saviour was not taken up as these favored persons were, for He ascended into heaven by His own indwelling power of divinity. Hence the Church chants His praises for having ascended of Himself into heaven; and again for having "assumed thee, O Virgin, into heaven."

In this triumphal ascension the Saviour was accompanied by all those to whom He had proclaimed the Gospel in Limbo. The souls of these just persons He conducted into heaven after having broken their prison bonds and delivered them from captivity. Thus did He, who was mocked and derided by the Jews, become really and truly a king, holding His triumphal march amid the hosannas of the redeemed into the heavenly Jerusalem.

Christ ascended into heaven in order to celebrate His complete victory over death and hell, and to exchange His temporal life of suffering for an eternal life of glory. St. Paul writes, "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death: even to the death of the

cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names : that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Philippians ii. 8-10).

But it was not only to take possession of His glory that Our Lord ascended into heaven, but also to become our Mediator and Intercessor with the Father. It was that He might become such that He came down to earth and suffered His cruel Passion and death. Now this work being accomplished, the graces which He had thereby secured for men should be applied to them. The Holy Ghost, too, should come with His divine assistance and consolation, and to send Him down Our Saviour went up into heaven. We would need help in our weakness, and an advocate to whom we could resort with confidence. This advocate and mediator with the Father, Jesus Himself wished to be, for, as He had borne and suffered all, we would be likely to have more confidence in Him and would be more willing to approach Him. St. Paul exhorts us to have recourse to Jesus when he says, "Looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself : that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds" (Hebrews xii. 2, 3).

Nor was His desire simply and merely to help us and to speak to the Father for us ; He wished besides to prepare a dwelling for us, into which He will receive us as soon as we have fought the good fight and run the race and kept our faith. There will be our dwelling in accordance with our merits, and it is the Lord Himself who will one day admit us to it, as He promised

in the words, "In My Father's house there are many mansions; if not, I would have told you: that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you: I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am, you also may be" (John xiv. 2, 3). This return of the Lord will take place on the Last Day, when He will reward every man according to his works, sending the wicked into everlasting fire, but saying to the just, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew xxv. 34).

When we say that Christ rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of His Father, that is to say, that Christ shares with the Father equally in His glory and honor, and is entitled to the same supreme adoration, this is not to be understood as so much regarding His divinity as His humanity. His divinity never left heaven, but continued to dwell there, even when His humanity was in agony in the Garden of Olives and was dying on the cross. Therefore when the Apostle, St. Paul, says, "which He wrought in Christ, raising Him up from the dead, and setting Him on His right hand in the heavenly places; above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and He hath subjected all things under His feet: and hath made Him head over all the Church" (Ephesians i. 20 *et seq.*), the meaning is, that Jesus Christ shares in the power, glory and divine majesty of the Father, even in His humanity. For He ascended into heaven with His earthly body, His human soul and His five wounds. The body that ascended was none other than the one that lay lifeless in the tomb; the soul was none other

than the one that departed from His body on the cross and went down into Limbo. This was the only way by which fallen humanity could regain its lost dignity, namely, for divinity to come down and lift up humanity to itself in heaven.

On the spot whence Our Saviour ascended into heaven were left two footprints in the rock, which St. Jerome saw still there in his time. To-day only one of these footprints is to be seen, the Turks having chiseled a piece of rock out and placed it in one of their mosques. It is said that a peculiarity about this footprint is that it fits any foot. What does that signify? It is simply a suggestion of the doctrine that all should follow the footsteps of their blessed Master and that they can do it. As Christ raised Himself up to heaven in His body, so the Christian should raise himself up to heaven in spirit. For this reason the Church sings, "*Sursum corda*" (Lift up your hearts).

Lift up your eyes and your hearts to heaven, remembering the words of the Apostle, Paul, "Our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians iii. 20). There lies our true fatherland, for heaven is our only home, the earth being simply a place of exile. True, it costs an effort, but the reward to be obtained is great. It is the reward promised to Abraham, to whom the Lord said, "I am thy reward exceeding great" (Genesis xv. 1). Then God Himself is the reward we obtain, that is to say, the joys of heaven, an eternity of happiness.

Surely there is no prize to be obtained without an effort; no battle, no victory; no struggle, no success; no cross, no crown. Shirk no pains to secure this exceeding great reward; "blessed is the man that

endureth temptation : for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him " (James i. 12).

### *SEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

"From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead."

#### I. THE LAST OR GENERAL JUDGMENT.

CHRIST the Lord is Our Saviour. He has done for us everything that divine love could do. Those who were the children of the Father, but by sin had become slaves of the devil, were redeemed by Him. Hence they again belong to Him and to the Father. He has become Our Lord and Master for the second time, having purchased with His blood a dominion over us and thus acquired the right to be our judge. This judgment He will exercise over every man. No one shall escape it, for no man is beyond the reach of God's arm. Every man shall be judged not once only, but he must appear before his Judge twice, the second time in the company of all his fellow-men. This truth we are taught in the seventh article of the Apostles' Creed, which teaches us that Jesus Christ will come in great power and glory at the end of the world to judge all men, the wicked as well as the good. This second coming of the Son of man will be very different from His first coming. Then He came as a Saviour, now He will come as Judge. Then He came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world, now He will come as the Lion of the tribe of Juda, who has conquered and trodden under foot His enemies, who will demand a reckoning from all men, and hold them to a strict accountability. Then He came poor, now He will come in power and glory. He will come

clothed in His inherent majesty, whose splendor no man can stand, for it will cause fear and trembling. He will be accompanied by hosts of angels, who will call all men to judgment, while before Him will stand the visible sign of the cross, the standard of the Son of man (Matthew xxiv. 30), who will appear in the heavens. This judgment to take place at the end of the world is called the General Judgment, but at it all the men who ever lived in the world will be judged at one and the same time. It is also called the Last Judgment to distinguish it from the first, to which each man will be subjected at the moment of his death. It is called also the Last Day, after which eternity only will exist. It is well to keep a clear knowledge and remembrance of this Last Judgment before our minds, in order that, in our self-deception and wilful blindness, we may not be eternally lost.

For as our whole destiny depends upon this day—and it is an eternal destiny—it behooves us most solemnly never to let it out of our mind. We are like a man involved in a lawsuit, on the result of which his whole existence depends. With what deep and unceasing anxiety such a man looks forward to the decision of the court! How eagerly he consults every friend who he thinks can advise him! What pains and labor he will expend that his case may be presented in the strongest and most favorable light before the jury! Even if the case drags through a number of years his assiduity and zeal never flag for a day. Now, the case that is to be tried and decided on the Last Day is a most formidable one, for the question is about our immortal souls and to whom they shall belong for all eternity.

The result of this process depends altogether on the condition in which the soul shall be at the moment of

its departure from this life. This moment itself depends upon the life that is now going out and is flown forever, for as the life itself has been, so, in most cases, will be its ending. "As the man lives so he dies," is an old saying too often, alas, verified. Hence it is the whole life of the man that will be investigated and adjudged. All men will be judged, the living and the dead; that is to say, all those who will be living in the world at the time that the Son of man will come, as well as the dead, who will be summoned from their graves to judgment. All will be judged, both those who have lived in the grace of God and those who have been dead in sin; the living and the dead will be judged on all their thoughts, words, and works, and on their omission of the good and right.

Our thoughts, then, will be judged. They are an exact expression of our souls, for a man often acts against his will, while the thought does not appear and is unknown to his fellow-men. Evil thought is the root of the wicked act, as the good thought is the seed of a virtuous action. Whatever is most profoundly hidden in man, though it is never concealed from God, will be first judged. Thus will be made known how many a Christian, who outwardly was apparently blameless, was permeated with evil and covered with sin. Much of the pretended virtue, so well and carefully acted that no eye can detect its hollowness, will on that day be exposed in its true light.

Then will come the judgment of words. By words very often more harm is done than even by deeds, for they are busy messengers, scattering either good or evil. Words are nearly always more powerful and more speedy in inflaming a man's passions, arousing his desires, and deadening his conscience, than they are in inciting and prompting him to virtuous actions.

Words are nearly always a fruitful seed of evil, sending their poisonous effects through several generations. Many a man, because of an evil word, finds himself burdened with a chain of sins that he does not even think of, that he will never suspect till Judgment Day, when his soul will be startled and horrified to find itself not only laden with its own sins, but borne down to the very earth by the sins of others.

Then our works will be judged. Both good and bad deeds will be judged. But how different the judgment of God from the judgment of men! Many a seemingly good work will lose its pretended value, for God knows the motives that have actuated the doer of the deed—such as an easy natural disposition, a desire to please, hope of honor and recognition before men, expectation of a reward or a return of the benefit, getting rid of a troublesome petitioner, or some one or other of the ignoble motives that often result in a good work. On the other hand, many a bad deed will appear worse, for all those delusions with which men deceive themselves will fall to the ground.

And, again, what a difference between the reckoning of good works and the reckoning of evil ones! Good works will not be reckoned so fully and exactly, for we have accomplished them with the aid of divine grace; whereas the evil works will be scrutinized severely, for we have been guilty of them, although sustained by the grace of God, warned by the voice of conscience and advised by good, sound instruction. We have acted in the light of our knowledge of the maxims of the Church, even of the Holy Ghost Himself.

Alas, then will come the accounting for the good we have omitted, the graces offered and rejected, or even abused, for the time that we have frittered away or used for evil purposes, the talents that we have neglected,

the money that we have squandered. All such will form subjects for divine investigation.

God will reveal the good and the evil, even the most secret thoughts, of every man, as well as the graces granted to him in life. How little avail to the sinner to have kept his misdeeds from the eyes of men, since the Day of Judgment will reveal them all, and to all ! "The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Corinthians iv. 5). All will come to light. So great will be the sinners' shame and terror that they will cry out to the mountains to "fall upon us, and to the hills to cover us" (Luke xxiii. 30).

With the Psalmist we find ourselves compelled to say to the Lord, "If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities : Lord, who shall stand?" (Psalms cxxix. 3). After the conscience of every man shall have been laid open to the whole world and everything secret shall have been unveiled, then the sentence will be pronounced, a sentence of love and consolation for the good, of frightful disaster for the wicked. To the good the Lord will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." Thus the good, receiving the fulness of God's blessings and graces, will enter into those many mansions that are in the heavenly Father's house. But to the wicked the Lord will say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew xxv. 34-41). Thus the good will enter into heaven, to the beatific vision of God, to the company of the saints, to the dwelling-place which the Lord has prepared for the throne of His majesty. The wicked will enter into hell (Matthew xxv. 46), to the devil, to the worst enemy of mankind, to the angels of the devil, to all those who have been led

astray by him and who willingly followed him in his wickedness. Into this place of horrors they will be all thrown together, where the pains of the soul will be augmented by the pains of the body, for, according to the words of Christ, hell is an unquenchable fire, where for all eternity there shall be an unceasing weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew xxv. 30). There the worm never dies that gnaws the wicked, there the fire that burns them never goes out (Mark ix. 43), there undying anguish awaits them, and everlasting torment.

Meanwhile the good will be in heaven, a place of never-ending happiness, a happiness that is as unbroken as is the misery of the damned, a perfect happiness, exceeding all that we can conceive, satisfying every wish and every longing, and which can never be interrupted. Between these two places there is such a vast, yawning gulf, that the saints in heaven, even if they sought it, could no more come to the relief of the damned souls in hell than could the poor Lazarus go to the relief of the rich glutton, Dives, who only asked that Lazarus would dip the tip of his finger in water and place it upon his burning tongue (Luke xvi. 24).

## II. THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

God in His justice does not wait till the end of time to judge men. He judges each one immediately after he leaves this world. At the very moment of the soul's departure from this life it stands before the judgment-seat of God to receive its sentence. "For," says Ecclesiasticus xi. 28-29, "it is easy before God in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways. . . in the end of a man is the disclosing of his works."

Even then and there the soul will receive not indeed the mere promise of future happiness or unhappiness ;

it will be consigned at once to one or the other, according to the judgment rendered and the sentence pronounced. But its happiness or unhappiness, as the case may be, will not be full and perfect till after the resurrection of the body, which will then become a sharer of the destiny of the soul. This judgment is called the Particular Judgment.

### III. NECESSITY FOR A GENERAL JUDGMENT.

THE question may be asked, "Why should there be a General Judgment, when the soul is already judged at death, when its fate is decided and it has been committed to the lot assigned to it?" Let us bear in mind that the General Judgment will be held chiefly for three reasons: (1) on account of God, (2) on account of Jesus Christ, and (3) on account of man himself.

This General Judgment is to be held on account of God, that His wisdom and justice may be made manifest to all men. To us, as long as we are in the flesh, the ways of the Lord are unfathomable. But when all those things shall be accomplished which the Lord in His mercy decreed from the beginning, we shall see and understand how all that He does in our regard is good; and how we ourselves, having misunderstood and withstood His wisest counsels, are responsible for all that is evil. We shall then see and understand why one man is born rich and another poor, why one is healthy and another feeble all through life, why one is snatched early from life, and another lives to reach an advanced age, why one enjoys prosperity and another suffers adversity. Then will it be shown that right was done to all; that he who had to suffer for Jesus' sake will be compensated, and that he who prospered wickedly will be punished. Thus the words

of the wise Sirach will be verified: "The affliction of an hour maketh one forget great delights" (Ecclesiasticus xi. 29). Then will be understood the history of whole nations, as well as the fate of individuals, for the causes and motives of every thought, word, and deed, will be laid bare before the eyes of all.

The whole economy of salvation, down from the fall of Adam, will be made clear and manifest, compelling the sinner to strike his breast with fear and anguish, and to exclaim in the language of David, "The Lord is just, and hath loved justice" (Psalms x. 8).

In the second place a General Judgment is necessary for the sake of Jesus Christ, that He may be glorified before the eyes of the whole world, for He is the Judge, who with His angels and apostles will sit in judgment. Those persons who will not now be sharers in His mercy and goodness, who are the enemies of His holy cross, must be compelled to see Him in His awful majesty. All those who blasphemed Him, struck Him, calumniated Him, who put Him to death and derided His cross, rejecting it instead of carrying it; those who permitted themselves to be shipwrecked in their faith, who despised His Church, persecuted His priests, and ridiculed sacred things, all these will see the Lord for a moment, in order that they may recognize Him whom they have despised. But it will be a moment of horror for them. They will fall prostrate and, like the devil, they will believe, but they will shudder. "The devils also believe and tremble" (James ii. 19).

These sinners will bend their knees at the very name of their Judge, but His sentence of condemnation will lift them up and hurl them into hell. Then will the just souls intone a canticle of praise in honor of the Saviour who died on the cross, and with joyful hearts

they will follow the lead of their Good Shepherd into the realms of eternal bliss (Apocalypse xiv. 4).

In the third place a General Judgment is necessary in order that the good may obtain their well-merited honors, and the impious receive their richly-deserved humiliation. During life the wicked deride and despise the virtuous. Poor, patient Job, like his suffering Redeemer, was mocked; the just Lazarus lay like a hungry dog at the door of the rich glutton; the poor blind man, who, regaining his sight, professed his faith in Jesus, was expelled from the synagogue; St. Stephen was stoned to death; the disciples of Our Lord were hunted from town to town, persecuted, and finally put to death. Crime and impiety were honored and flattered in the person of Caiphas, the high priest, while injustice was enthroned in the person of Pilate, and the homage of the people was laid before the royal insignia of a cruel Herod (Acts of the Apostles xii. 21). On the Day of Judgment God will esteem what men disregarded. Those before whom men in their folly bowed down in reverence while on earth, will themselves be trodden in the dust. Then will the wicked discover with horror that what they doubted is the real truth. Their much-boasted wisdom they will then recognize to be the merest folly, and worse. Those whom they hated and ridiculed they will see now beaming with splendor and happiness.

Then will be fulfilled in their regard the words of the Book of Wisdom, "Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them, and taken away their labors.

"These, seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation.

"Saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning

for anguish of spirit: These are they, whom we had sometime in derision, and for a parable of reproach.

"We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor:

"Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.

"Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us" (Wisdom v. 1-6).

Thus shall the good be justified before the wicked, —another reason why there should be a public judgment as well as a private one at the hour of death. But there is another circumstance to be added. Good works continue to have their value after death. Evil works are not less restricted, for their dreadful consequences extend, as we see every day, far and wide; and evil is constantly begetting evil. Hence full retribution can come upon the evildoer only when time is at an end. Although sinners go to hell immediately after their Particular Judgment, although the perfectly just souls go to heaven after death, their works live after them, and their guilt and their merit can be fully measured only on the Last Day, when, at length, full penalty on one side and complete reward on the other will be meted out.

### **What will Precede the Last Judgment.**

Although we do not know the time or place of the General Judgment, we find in the Holy Scriptures several indications of what will precede that dreadful day. Indeed the times just previous to the end of the world will be so awful that no man could be saved, "but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened" (Matthew xxiv. 22).

About that time, toward the end of the world, a general separation of the good from the bad will take place, and the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil will stand arrayed against each other. All temporizing and half-way conduct will disappear; evil will be unmasked and will attack the good.

At first false prophets will arise (Matthew xxiv. 4-6) who, with the aid of Satan, will work such wonders that even the elect would be deceived and led astray (Matthew xxiv. 24), if their faith did not teach them to detect the devil, who will clothe himself like an angel of light. These false prophets will be antichrists, that is to say, they will deny the divinity of Christ (1 John ii. 22). Among these deniers of Christ one man especially will put himself forward; he will gather about him all the other false prophets and all those that have fallen away from the faith; being the king of all the enemies of Christ, he will on that account be called especially the Antichrist. This person will unite within himself all the vices, as the true Christ united within Himself all the virtues.

According to the general opinion of the Fathers he will be born in Babylon, be of Jewish descent, and of the tribe of Dan. This Antichrist, who will be born out of wedlock from an impious and cursed mother possessed of the devil, will, when he grows to manhood, establish himself in Jerusalem, where he will rebuild the Temple, deceive the Jews who will be expecting Christ, and will induce them to adore himself as the true Messiah. These things Christ Himself foretold when He said, "I am come in the name of My Father, and you receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive" (John v. 43).

The Gentiles will unite with him and the Jews. According to the Apocalypse xi. 2, he will reign forty-

two months, surpassing all the other princes of the earth in power, conquering ten kings, three of whom he will slay; and he will give liberty to the other seven. Then there will be a great falling away from the faith (Luke xviii. 8), and a triumph for the impious (Matthew xxiv. 12). There will be civil and political disturbances over all the earth, "for nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be pestilences and famines and earthquakes in places" (Matthew xxiv. 7). Then God will send His two witnesses, Henoah and Elias, who are yet living, for Henoah was only taken away (Genesis v. 24) in order, as St. Paul says, that he might not see death (Hebrews xi. 5). Elias was carried alive up to heaven (4 Kings ii. 11). These two men will preach for twelve hundred and sixty days, Elias to the Jews (Matthew xvii. 11), and Henoah to the Christians who have fallen away (Ecclesiasticus xlv. 16).

While they will be preaching no one will have power to hurt them, but they will have power to hurt and to chastise, in order, like Moses of old, to show their authority and to prove the right of their mission. But when those days shall have elapsed the Lord will suffer them to be killed by Antichrist, and their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem during three days and a half when, at last, the Lord will recall them to life, to the terror of thousands of witnesses, and will take them to Himself in heaven (Apocalypse xi. 3-12).

Then will open the battle between the archangel Gabriel and the dragon, in other words, Antichrist will be conquered and slain by the heavenly armies, for human power must yield to divine authority.

Then the plagues of Egypt will be repeated all over the earth. There will be pestilences, famines, earthquakes; the sun will be darkened, the firmament will

be agitated, the sea will overflow its boundaries, threatening to deluge the land, and men will wither away with fear (Luke xxi. 25). Finally, the cross, the sign of the Son of man, will make its appearance in the heavens, and the Saviour will come surrounded by His Father's angels, who will sound the trumpets and gather together all the nations of the earth into the valley of Josaphat. Our Saviour Himself will plant His cross on Mount Calvary, and to those who have not been His followers He will show the places where He has suffered and will give testimony against their unfaithfulness.

Then will follow the Judgment, where He will judge and sentence those who judged and sentenced Him.

### **Means of Acquiring Courage to Meet Our Judgment.**

If, Christian reader, you would be able to contemplate the Day of Judgment without fear and trembling you have many means thereto. The first means is the contemplation of the Passion and death of Christ, which will give you confidence and preserve you from pusillanimity, for the Passion of Christ is the source of our salvation. When St. Eleazarius was receiving Extreme Unction he prayed, "Through Thy cross and sufferings save me, O Lord," adding, "This is my only hope, in this will I die." When now and then a fear tormented him, he would exclaim, "Great is the power of the evil spirits, but the death of Jesus Christ and His power are far mightier; they have broken the power of the Evil One and put him to confusion and flight."

The second means is a pure and upright life. St.

Hilary says, "Happy is he who so manages his affairs in life that he can always think of judgment."

The third means is to judge yourself, and then you will anticipate God's judgment, and discover in yourself the defects you ought to remedy. Examine your conscience, therefore, every day, that the wants of your soul may be relieved. St. Augustine says, "God does not condemn him who condemns himself."

The fourth method is a sincere repentance. David was forgiven because of his penance. Manasses, on the same account, recovered his kingdom, and the inhabitants of Ninive were pardoned. "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish," saith the Lord in St. Luke's gospel, chapter thirteenth, verse third.

The fifth method is the frequent reception of the sacraments. That is the judgment which effects for us the forgiveness of God. For in it God judges us already on earth, and, St. Bernard tells us, "God will not judge us twice on the same cause," and Sirach says, "before sickness take a medicine, and before judgment examine thyself, and thou shalt find mercy in the sight of God" (Ecclesiasticus xviii. 20).

The sixth method is to practice mercy toward others. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew v. 7).

The seventh method is to invoke the saints of God. They are our patrons, first of all the glorious Virgin Mother of God, Mary. Of her St. Chrysostom says, "God chose her to save, by her compassion, those whom the justice of God could not save."

#### IV. PURGATORY.

BESIDE heaven and hell, there is another place assigned for the reception of departed souls, namely, purgatory,

or the place of purgation. This is a place which the mercy of God has set apart and destined for such souls as leave this world in a state of grace, though not perfectly purified from defects and weaknesses. To this place are sent, not indeed the souls of impious men, but the souls of the just who have departed, tainted perhaps with venial sins, or who have not sufficiently atoned for mortal sins that have been forgiven them. For we must remember that although a soul may leave this earth perfectly free from mortal sin, it may happen that it has not done sufficient penance for former sins. For as God in His wisdom has decreed that man must be punished in order to be purged and improved, He allows some to tread the path of penance in this world, while others do atonement in the next.

There is, therefore, a place in which it is possible that a complete purification is gradually attained, and where imperfectly atoned for sins may be completely burned out. This doctrine is so clearly taught by the Scriptures that to deny it would be to contradict the Holy Ghost. Our Saviour says emphatically that every man should become reconciled with his brother in order that he may not fare like the man who, owing the money to his fellow-man, was brought before the judge and cast into prison where he was to remain until he had paid his debt.

Now, the debt we owe is charity toward our fellow-men, a debt we must discharge. He who does not discharge it in this life will be cast into the prison of divine judgment, for Our Lord says, "Verily thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing" (Matthew v. 26), that is to say, till you shall have atoned fully for your slightest deficiency.

The Apostle says with equal distinctness, "If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he

shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn," that is, can not stand the test because there remains something to be purified, "he shall suffer loss." Yet he shall not perish, "but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire."

Thus it is plain that there is a fire which, although not earthly nor material, nevertheless burns and is capable of purifying the soul. Where this place is a matter of indifference. That it is a place of torment is a truth not only maintained by the Church, who has said in the Council of Trent, "There is a purgatory," but it is a truth founded on the teachings of the most ancient Church Fathers. Most of these teach that the pains of purgatory differ from the pains of hell only in duration, for while the pains of hell are eternal, those of purgatory come to an end. (This is not an article of faith, however.) But we must not confound hell and purgatory, and fancy that they are one and the same place, out of which some are saved and others never. The society of the utterly wicked is incompatible with the society of the imperfectly just. Those who die in the grace of God are not delivered over to the devil, like the souls who are eternally damned.

It is important that we observe two things regarding purgatory, in order that we may have no false ideas about it.

In the first place purgatory, although a place of punishment, is at the same time a proof of the divine goodness and mercy, being instituted not alone for punishment but also for atonement. Protestants reproach the Church with making God a cruel jailer. But whoever rejects purgatory does so, while those who accept it do not. Who could lie down on his death-bed and be sure of reaching heaven in an hour?

If, as Job says, "In His angels He found wickedness," what will He not find in each one of us?

Now, we know that nothing defiled can enter heaven. It would, then, be making of God a pitiless tyrant to hold that there are but a heaven and a hell, and to accuse Him of damning all those souls who depart this life with a few defects of human weakness upon them, although free from all mortal sin. Again, it would be impugning God's holiness to charge Him with taking unholy persons to Himself.

But, although the just suffer pains in purgatory, their prospect is far different from that of the damned souls in hell. We find among them not the despair of damnation, but an inward submission to the will of God. Near to heaven, they are filled with the longings of the patriarchs in Limbo, and, according as their purgation and purification advance, their love for God becomes more intense. They thank God who has not rejected them, but even given them means of coming to Him. They are children of God and children of the Church, full of faith, hope and charity.

In the second place, we must remember that the purification of the suffering souls is such that it is only by suffering they can help themselves. They can only suffer the penalties patiently, but they can not make any step forward. They can not recover anything that they have lost. They can not of themselves make themselves better in purgatory; they must have been good at the moment of their death, for, as the preacher in Ecclesiastes saith, "If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be" (Ecclesiastes xi. 3).

On the other hand, we can help them, for, as they belong to the communion of saints, we can do for them what the saints in heaven do for us. We can pray

for them. We can apply to them, through the sacrifice of the Holy Mass, the fruits of the atoning death of Jesus Christ. This we can do either by assisting at Mass or having it offered up for them, or by offering up our communions for that intention. Again, we can perform good works to their aid and benefit, for inasmuch as they are members of the Church of God they have a share in the good works of the other members, the Church of God being the new Jerusalem, "which is built as a city which is compact together" (Psalms cxxi. 3).

Such was the belief in the Old Testament, as we read plainly in the second book of Machabees. A great number of Jews had been slain in battle. "Judas Machabæus making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection.

"(For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.)

"And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them.

"It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (2 Machabees xii. 43-46).

When at last the time of purgation shall have expired, our suffering brethren shall enter into heaven. After the General Judgment there will be but heaven and hell. Purgatory will cease to exist. God's Church triumphs, hell groans, and this triumph and this groaning shall be for all eternity witnesses to God's eternal justice.

Let every man make whatever application he chooses

of the doctrine of divine judgment, he can not escape such judgment, for God is omnipotent. He need not imagine that no one sees him doing evil, for God is omniscient, God's eye is all-seeing. Live, then, in such a way that you may be ready to die at any moment. "He is a poor Christian," says St. Augustine, "who lives differently from whatever way he would like to appear at judgment. The best means of securing in future a favorable judgment is to fear God." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ecclesiasticus i. 16). "The fear of the Lord driveth out sin" (Ecclesiasticus i. 27). Hence the preacher in Ecclesiastes concludes his warning with the words, "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is all man: and all things that are done, God will bring into judgment for every error, whether it be good or evil" (Ecclesiastes xii. 13-14).

### **Various Methods of Helping the Poor Souls in Purgatory.**

1. Holy Mass. Once, when Father John Alverera, a priest of the Franciscan Order, was celebrating Mass with great fervor and piety, on All Souls' day, and during the Memento was imploring the heavenly Father, by the blood of His divine Son poured out on the cross, to help the poor suffering souls, he saw at the same moment a great number of rescued souls in the form of sparks of fire leaping from purgatory and ascending toward heaven.

Once, during his midnight meditation, St. Nicholas of Tolentino heard the voice of a poor soul who cried out to him, "I am the soul of a poor pilgrim who in life often served thee, and I am now suffering grievously in purgatory. I beg thee to offer up a Mass for

me." The saint excused himself, saying that on the following day it was his turn to officiate at the solemn Mass in the monastery chapel, and he could not, therefore, celebrate a requiem. Then the soul replied piteously, "Behold, I am sent by a number of poor souls who join in begging a Mass from you. That you may not doubt me, come and see." Then the soul showed to the saint a great number of souls in the place, who besought his compassion and mercy. This spectacle touched the heart of St. Nicholas so forcibly that he wept bitterly, and straightway hurrying to his Superior, told him all. He received permission to celebrate Mass for the poor suffering souls, not only on the following morning, but every morning for the ensuing week. He added, moreover, many works of penance and mortification for the same intention. Eight days afterward the poor soul again appeared to him, and gratefully informed him that, not only itself, but all the other souls whom he had seen, had been delivered from their place of imprisonment and suffering.

2. Prayers for the dead. St. Francis Xavier entertained such sentiments of charity for the poor souls in purgatory, and was so eager to assist them, that he often traversed the streets of the town ringing a bell and calling on the people to pray for the dead.

Animated with the same sentiments, he appointed a man in Malacca, who was to go about at midnight with a lantern and a bell, and cry out, "Pray for the Christian souls that are suffering in purgatory."

3. Works of penance; indulgences. St. Ursula, of the Order of Theatines, had great compassion on a dying sister religious, named Christina, in anticipation of the pains that might be then awaiting her in purgatory. But as she knew, from the case of St. Catharine

of Sienna, that a person still living in the world can alleviate immensely the sufferings of departed souls, she prayed fervently to her heavenly Spouse for grace to enable her to assist her fellow-religious. Her prayer was heard. For while the nun was dying, Ursula fell into a trance, and when she came to she broke forth in the joyful words, "I thank Thee, my Lord and God, for the great mercy Thou hast shown to my sister Christina, by hearkening to my prayers in her behalf, and granting her speedy relief." Then she had the *Te Deum* sung, and soon afterward was afflicted with great sufferings, which continued till her death.

4. Almsgiving and other good works. To St. Bridget, of Sweden, her deceased husband, Alfo, once appeared, and ordered her to sell the silverware and costly horses which he had left behind, and in which he had taken too much pleasure when on earth, and to bestow the proceeds of the sale on the poor for the benefit of his soul. He also ordered his silver cup to be given to the Church for the service of the altar, for such alms are pleasing to God.

## V. HELL.

THE doctrine of everlasting punishment in hell is frequently assailed as one not consonant with reason, and as repugnant to the feelings of the human heart. Now, it is remarkable that during the three hundred years since the time this article of faith was first assailed, the attacks have invariably been made by persons who are hostile to all the fundamental teachings of religion, while Christians of all denominations are agreed on this point. Yes, like the belief in the existence of God, the belief in hell is general. The Jew, the Mohammedan, the pagan, the savage, all believe

in a place of punishment, like the Christian. If you ask where it is, every one of these will point down to the ground, as believing it to be under the earth, as he points toward the sky when asked where is heaven.

The ancient Greeks believed in their Tartarus. Plato says, "The wicked will be precipitated into Tartarus, never more to come out." Xenocrates taught that the souls of the wicked wander about in dark places under the earth, which are enclosed with iron bars on all sides. Plutarch held that the wicked after death are confined in a place that no man can open. The Latin poet, Virgil, in his *Æneid*, portrays to us the never-ending sufferings of the damned souls. The Jews term the dwelling-place of lost souls Gehenna, that is to say, the place of burning, in the valley of the sons of Ennom, near Jerusalem, in which human beings were sacrificed to the god of fire; for which purpose a fire was kept perpetually burning.

The Hellheim of the ancient Druids, whence our Saxon word hell, was a place of unceasing misery, full of unrest and pain, and corresponding to the "land of misery and darkness, where the shadows of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth" (Job x. 22).

Thus speaketh and expresseth itself the universal belief that this is a revealed doctrine, while Plato declares in his *Phædon*: "After having maturely weighed all things and tested them severely, I have found nothing that is more compatible with wisdom, reason and truth."

Yet excessive sentimentalism objects that (1) God would be unjust if He were to punish a finite sin with an infinite penalty; (2) God can not have created men to permit them to fail in reaching their last end, and

so be eternally lost; and (3) that if God foresaw that some souls would be eternally damned, His love should not have permitted them to be created.

But we answer (1) that sin is finite only in regard to man, while with regard to an infinite God it is infinite; (2) that man is not hindered by God from reaching his last end, but rather deprives himself, by his own free will, of the crown that constitutes his end and purpose; and (3) that if God had not created men because He foresaw that some of them would be eternally lost, though of course it is through their own fault, He would be unjust toward those whose merits entitled them to heaven.

It was necessary that God should stimulate human slothfulness by promises of reward and threats of punishment. What would become of society if there were no belief in eternal retribution? The reward of the good should be eternal; how, then, can the everlasting punishment of the wicked be unjust? Threats of eternal sufferings are more clearly stated in the Sacred Scriptures than any other doctrine. If they are not to be understood literally, if they are to be taken in any other sense, then no true idea of doctrine can be gathered from the Bible.

Man is undoubtedly created for eternity. When his end comes, there is not another world in which he can fit himself for heaven, for in the next life there are not the same duties to be fulfilled as in this. If he have squandered time, money, and talents, how will he regain his loss? Can he discharge acts of charity toward his neighbor? If he have not fulfilled his duty toward his parents, his fellow-men, or his country, can he repair the harm in the next life? If he die unfit for heaven he will remain unfit. In the next world a man may suffer, and thus satisfy for the punishment

due to forgiven sin, but he can not retrieve in eternity what, on account of his worthlessness, he has never earned, or yet make good what he has omitted.

The stubborn, persistent sinner has offended God knowingly and willingly. He would not amend his life, and was suddenly overtaken by death in the midst of his disobedience. He died in unmistakable hostility to God. He had thwarted all the views of a merciful Providence. He despised all that Christ had done for him, all the lessons He had taught him through His priests, all the graces He had given him through His Church. Had he lived longer he would have lived only to sin again and again, and without any contrition. Hence, in eternity, there is no forgiveness for him, because there can be no conversion. His punishment never ceases, because his stubbornness is unbroken.

St. Gregory, with truth and justice, concludes that "the impious would, if they could, live forever, in order to be able to sin forever. They thereby show that they wish to live in sin, for as long as they do live, they do not cease sinning. Moreover, the exalted wisdom of the Judge demands that they be never without punishment, because, when in this life, they would never be without sinning. The almighty God, who is merciful, does not rejoice at the sufferings of the damned, but, as He is just, He never shirks the office of punishing the wicked."

### **The Punishments of Hell.**

Concerning hell the Catholic Church teaches three things: (1) that there is a hell; (2) that its pains are everlasting; and (3) that the pains are different in degree and measure in proportion to the enormity of the sin. Although she has nowhere spoken explicitly

on the mode and method of hell's punishments, St. Athanasius says, in his Creed: "Those who have done evil will go to hell."

Other Church Fathers also hold strictly to the words of the Bible, and enumerate the penalties as (1) darkness; (2) howling and weeping; (3) hunger and thirst, according to the words of Isaias, "Behold, My servants shall eat, and you shall be hungry: behold, My servants shall drink and you shall be thirsty" (Isaias lxx. 13); (4) stench, for "their lot will be cast in a stinking pool of fire;" (5) fire; (6) the worm; (7) the horrors and disgust of the place itself; (8) the company of the damned; (9) despair; and (10) the eternity of suffering.

## VI. HEAVEN.

### Passages from the Scriptures.

1. **THERE** is a place of reward after death. "Where is thy hope, for which thou gavest alms, and buriedst the dead? But Tobias rebuked them, saying, Speak not so. For we are the children of saints, and look for that life which God will give to them, that never change their faith from Him" (Tobias ii. 16-18).

"They that trust in Him shall understand the truth: and they that are faithful in love shall rest in Him: for grace and peace is to His elect" (Wisdom iii. 9).

"And I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke xxii. 29).

"Making commemoration of you in my prayers, that . . . the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what the hope is of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"

(Ephesians i. 16, 18 ; Colossians i. 4-5, and iii. 24 ; 2 Timothy ii. 11-12).

2. The reward is everlasting. "Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations" (Psalms cxliv. 13).

"This is the will of My Father . . . that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in Him may have life everlasting" (John vi. 40).

"Every one that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die forever" (John xi. 26).

"Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that can not fade, preserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter i. 3-4).

"That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians iv. 17 ; 1 John ii. 25).

3. The reward is exceeding glorious. "The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds. They shall judge nations, and shall rule over peoples" (Wisdom iii. 7, 8 ; Matthew xix. 28).

"The just shall live for evermore, and their reward is with the Lord. . . . They shall receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord" (Wisdom v. 16).

"You shall have a song as in the night of the sanctified solemnity, and joy of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe, to come into the mountain of the Lord" (Isaias xxx. 29).

"Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew xiii. 43).

"Father, I will that, where I am, they also whom Thou

hast given Me may be with Me, that they may see My glory, which Thou hast given Me " (John xvii. 24).

" Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, . . . what things God hath prepared for them that love Him " (1 Corinthians ii. 9).

" You also shall appear with Christ in glory " (Colossians iii. 4).

" When the Prince of pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory " (1 Peter v. 4).

4. Reward in proportion to merit. " In My Father's house there are many mansions " (John xiv. 2).

" There are bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial, but one is the glory of the celestial, and another of the terrestrial; one is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars. For star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead " (1 Corinthians xv. 40-42).

" We must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil " (2 Corinthians v. 10).

" He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings " (2 Corinthians ix. 6).

### **Who Shall Go to Heaven ?**

This question was asked by King David in his fourteenth psalm. " Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle? or who shall rest in Thy holy hill? " The same Psalmist answers, saying, " He that walketh without blemish, and worketh justice." Therefore not only the man who does not steal, nor murder, nor commit adultery, nor yet he who is simply unconscious of having committed any mortal sin, having nothing to accuse himself of when in the confessional, but the

man who uses all his powers in an effort to become perfect, as Our Father in heaven is perfect, and who therefore strives zealously to do good and to appropriate to himself all Christian virtues.

Not to commit sin is simply our duty, while merit is a lifetime filled with good works. But David continues: "He that speaketh the truth in his heart, who hath not used deceit in his tongue" (Psalms xiv. 3). Hence it is not enough to be free from deceit. We must dare to speak the truth from our hearts. We must not be silent for fear of displeasing people, nor yet chime in with the advocates of indifference or unbelief. Again the Psalmist continues: "nor hath done evil to his neighbor, nor taken up a reproach against his neighbors," for duty toward our neighbor consists in something more than in merely abstaining from harming him; beside that we must not even listen to any evil against him; we must defend him in his absence if he be attacked, restraining not only our tongues but our ears also. Again the Psalmist continues: "In his sight the malignant is brought to nothing: but he glorifieth them that fear the Lord." Here he means that we should not offer our homage to the unworthy rich, while we pass over the virtuous poor, and perhaps despise them; but that we must honor those whom the Lord honors if they come begging their bread at our doors. And then the Psalmist concludes with the words, "he that sweareth to his neighbor, and deceiveth not; he that hath not put out his money to usury, nor taken bribes against the innocent." He would warn us here that many souls are lost who think themselves justified, and that the devil gains more souls by flattering their vanity than are lost through their own sins of lying and deception, perjury, usury, and robbery.

### **The Small Number of the Elect.**

Our blessed Lord has said, "God sent His Son into the world, that the world may be saved by Him" (John iii. 17). Notwithstanding this fact, there are men to be found of whom it is true to say that "He came unto His own and His own received Him not" (John i. 11). Nor are these the few; they are, sad to say, the greatest in number. This is, indeed, a truth that every instructor in religion would gladly exclude from his sermons, if he could, or dared to do so. But painful as it may be to preach it, this truth is vouched for plainly in the Sacred Scriptures. How clear are the words of Our Saviour Himself: "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew xxii. 14). Again, He says, "Enter ye in at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!" (Matthew vii. 13-14). He then exhorts, "Strive to enter by the narrow gate: for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able" (Luke xiii. 24). Yes, indeed, many, even of those who are popularly supposed to be far advanced in virtue, will be lost, for Our Saviour says again, "Many will say to Me in that day: Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity" (Matthew vii. 22, 23).

This dreadful fate, which most men will encounter through their own fault, is clearly foretold in the Old Testament. The covenant which God sealed by the Circumcision was a sign of election, but God limited

it to Abraham and his descendants only. A figure of those who strive for heaven may be seen in Gedeon's army of thirty thousand men, but three hundred of whom survived to enjoy the victory. The similes in the New Testament point out the same truth no less clearly. Of the seed sown by the husbandman only one-fourth part brings forth any fruit. Of the twelve virgins appointed to wait on the bridegroom—that is, who were called to heaven—only one-half were found prepared. St. John the Evangelist saw the books opened, out of which men were judged; but still another book was opened, the book of life, thus showing that one book would contain the names of the survivors in the struggle for heaven.

St. Peter, when contemplating the awful truth, exclaims: "If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter iv. 18). The same doctrine has been taught by the Fathers of the Church. St. Chrysostom preached to the people of Antioch, "How many, do you suppose, in this populous city, will be saved? The truth is a shocking one to preach, yet I will say it: Out of this densely populated city, out of these thousands of inhabitants, perhaps hardly one hundred will be saved. Yes, even this number may be too high an estimate when we consider the slothfulness of the aged, the wickedness of the young, the unrighteousness of all."

Massillon, the distinguished Bishop of Clermont, in France, was once preaching in Paris in presence of the king on this very subject. Among other things he said, "Let us suppose, dear brethren, that the present hour is the last of our lives. We see the heavens open above us. Time has passed forever, and eternity is upon us. Jesus Christ, Our Saviour, appears, and

we are to be judged, every one according to his works; we here now assembled are to hear this moment, from His divine lips, our sentence of eternal life or of eternal death. And now, I ask you, my brethren, I, who am as deeply afraid as yourselves—for I do not separate my fate from yours in those tremendous circumstances amid which we must all appear before our stern judge—I ask you, if Jesus Christ were to appear now, and to separate the just from the sinners, who would be the most numerous? Do you think the numbers would be equal? Would there be ten on the side of the just? Aye, I ask you, would He find one just man among us?”

What ought we to do now that we may be enabled at least to look with confidence toward the judgments of God? St. Anselm gives us the following advice, “If you wish to be surely counted among the elect, then labor to be among the few.” Our Lord led the blind man whom He cured away from the multitude. Do you also separate yourself from the crowd, from the habits and ways, conversations and strivings, of the thoughtless crowd of worldlings. First of all, and above all, use the powerful means of prayer. Approach the sacraments frequently, watch vigilantly over yourself; help the poor and destitute, for the alms you give to the poor is the price of heaven.

### *EIGHTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

“I believe in the Holy Ghost.”

#### **I. THE DIVINE NATURE OF THE HOLY GHOST.**

OUR Lord Jesus Christ having accomplished our redemption by the infinite merits of His obedience, it

became necessary that the fruits of such redemption should be imparted to us. Divine grace is a treasure that is not only intended for us, but one also that must be given to us. Christ is like unto the kings of this earth. As earthly kings keep a treasury and keep an almoner, who deals out to the poor whatever their royal masters set apart for their relief, so, too, has Christ, the celestial King, a treasury and a treasurer. This treasury is the Catholic Church; the treasurer is the Holy Ghost.

It is only in the Church, then, that we can receive the grace of God. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth (John xvi. 13), and the Church is the pillar and ground of truth (1 Timothy iii. 15). Consequently the Holy Spirit can be found only in the Church.

The Holy Ghost is the third person in the Deity and is as truly God as are the Father and the Son. In His nature there is nothing wanting that is essential to God. He has the same strength, the same power and glory as have the Father and the Son. This identity of nature is clearly stated in the Scriptures, "the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1 John v. 7). As the Father is from all eternity, and the Son is begotten likewise from all eternity, so is the Holy Ghost from all eternity, though by procession. He proceeds indeed from both the Father and the Son. This last tenet Our Lord Himself taught emphatically when He said, "But when the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me" (John xv. 26). Again, in another place He says, "All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: He," that is, the Holy Spirit, "shall receive of Mine, and shew it to you" (John xvi. 15). Hence the Holy Ghost proceeds

from the Father, but He is sent by the Son, and what He promises is the property of the Father as of the Son. Therefore must the Holy Ghost proceed equally from the Father and the Son. It is for this reason that we call Him Spirit. Not, indeed, because the Father and the Son are not Spirits likewise, but because the procession of the third person of the Blessed Trinity from the Father and the Son may be compared to the emission of the divine breathing.

## II. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

ALTHOUGH the Holy Ghost is everywhere, since He is God, yet He is in a special manner present in the Church and in the souls of the righteous. This presence of His is somewhat analogous to the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. As Christ with regard to His divinity fills all heaven and earth, and yet is present in the Eucharist with both His humanity and divinity, so is the Holy Ghost in the Church and in the souls of men. Thus the soul receives not alone the grace of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit Himself with His graces, and becomes really and truly a temple and a tabernacle of the living God.

This divine Spirit who, in conjunction with the Father and the Son, cooperated equally in the two great works of creation and redemption, came, on the fiftieth day after the Saviour's ascension, into the hearts of His disciples who had gathered together for common prayer. He came in the form of fiery tongues that lit upon the heads of the Apostles, and was accompanied by a strong wind and a trembling of the earth, not unlike the coming of God on Mount Sinai. Fear and perplexity took possession of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, while courage and self-reliance were infused into the apostles, who praised and thanked the Lord-

And, to the astonishment of the people, who had come from divers parts of the world, they heard these unlettered men speaking in the tongue of each and every stranger. Peter then came forth and for the first time preached Christ openly, and led three thousand persons to baptism and faith in Christ crucified. Many other miracles were wrought that day through the Holy Ghost. Henceforth the Holy Spirit remained in the Church, teaching and enlightening her ministers, comforting, strengthening and sanctifying the faithful, and pouring out the fulness of His graces into all hearts.

This operation of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men we call the gifts of the Holy Ghost. While they are not in themselves virtues, strictly speaking, they are facilities by which men are enabled to acquire the virtues that are called the fruits of the Holy Ghost.

These gifts are seven in number. The prophet Isaias numbers them when foretelling the future Messias, the model of all perfection and our model. He says, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the Spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge, and of godliness, and He shall be filled with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isaias xi. 2, 3).

Let us consider these gifts:

1. The gift of wisdom is the faculty to know and to realize that there is but one thing necessary for us, and that is to learn the knowledge of God and to accomplish the salvation of our souls. We see this wisdom in St. Paul, who says, "I count all things to be but loss . . . that I may gain Christ" (Philippians iii. 8).

2. The gift of understanding is the faculty of understanding the different revealed truths. This again we find in St. Paul, who writes to the Athenians, "Passing by and seeing your idols, I found an altar

also on which was written: To the unknown God. What therefore you worship, without knowing it, that I preach to you" (Acts xvii. 23). Thus the Athenians knew that there is one God, but nothing more about Him, until St. Paul proclaimed to them the doctrine of God. This gift we must pray for always before hearing Christian instruction, before listening to the word of God and before reading good books.

3. The gift of counsel is the faculty to decide rightly and safely for the right in cases of doubt. Thus St. Paul advised the Romans to decide when they asked him whether they ought to eat all kinds of food, since the Christians among the Hebrews gave out that it is not allowed to partake of the articles of food forbidden in the Old Law. He told them that, while no kind of food was forbidden, it is evil for that man who eateth with offense, and added, "All things indeed are clean: . . . it is good not to eat flesh, and not to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother is offended, or scandalized, or made weak" (Romans xiv. 20-21).

4. The gift of fortitude is one that enables us to carry out what is right, notwithstanding all our weakness. St. Paul says, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Philippians iv. 13).

5. The gift of knowledge is the faculty of discerning the deceptions of Satan and of finding out the true road to happiness. This gift is alluded to by St. Paul when he warns the Corinthians to be on their guard against the dangerous maxims of the heretics. These evil principles it is not always so easy to discern, for, as he says, "Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians xi. 14).

6. The gift of piety is a ready disposition to find happiness in God, and not in the joys of the

world. All souls are concerned by what St. Paul says of the widows, "She that liveth in pleasures, is dead while she is living" (1 Timothy v. 6).

7. The gift of the fear of the Lord is the faculty of reflecting with salutary fear on the divine chastisements, that we may be deterred from sin. To this St. Paul alludes when he says, "With fear and trembling work out your salvation" (Philippians ii. 12).

The fruits of the Holy Ghost are those virtues which a man acquires when he corresponds with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These fruits St. Paul states to be twelve. When writing to the Galatians, v. 22, he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is charity (toward God and our neighbor); joy (in God); peace (with ourselves and our neighbor); patience (in trials); benignity (amiable deportment); goodness (of heart); longanimity (endurance); mildness (toleration of wrong); faith (in the service of God); modesty (in sentiment); continency (voluntary chastity for love of God); chastity (purity in thoughts, words and works)." The life of every saint manifests these fruits of the Holy Ghost, for as St. Francis of Sales says, "Such a life is nothing else than the gospel presented in action."

Once the Holy Spirit has come down on a soul it resembles a living tabernacle, a rare vessel of divine mercy, over which the chrism of divine grace is poured. In the eyes of God man is a precious vessel, as long as such vessel is clean. Sin defiles this vessel, and is like the rust which tarnishes the brightness, and with the brightness goes the divine complacency. The Holy Ghost continues to dwell in the soul of man as long as it keeps itself free from grievous sin. Mortal sin drives out the Holy Spirit and desecrates the temple of God. Then the soul no longer resembles the house of God,

but rather a robbers' den, for in it revel the evil passions, robbing it of divine grace and killing its spiritual life. Mortal sin is a spiritual Church robbery, a spiritual sanctuary desecration, to be visited with the chastisements of God. "If any man violate the temple of God," saith St. Paul, "him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are" (1 Corinthians iii. 17). As Baltassar, the desecrator of the sanctuary, was destroyed because he carried off and polluted the sacred gold and silver vessels of the Temple at Jerusalem (Daniel v.), so, too, shall the sinner fare who shall fail to restore its brightness to the vessel of divine mercy by purifying works of penance.

### III. PENTECOST OR WHITSUNDAY.

#### **History of the Festival.—Its Meaning.**

THE special religious observance of Pentecost by Christians is so ancient that its beginning can hardly be discovered. St. Augustine tells us that even in his time it was a festival universally observed throughout the world. The word "Pentecost" is Greek for the fiftieth day, and the festival was kept by the Israelites in commemoration of the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai. It was also a feast on which many Jews were in Jerusalem, for Pentecost was the third chief festival among them, as it is a principal feast with us.

On the first Christian Pentecost an event occurred which may be compared with the promulgation of the ten commandments on Mount Sinai. Amid circumstances very similar, the Lawgiver of the New Dispensation descended into the hearts of the faithful, for it was also the fiftieth day after the celebration of the first Christian Passover. The destroying angel had

again passed over those redeemed by the blood of Christ, and mankind had effected their passage through the Red Sea of the precious blood of Our Saviour. In order to fully understand this extraordinary event, we must consider briefly the circumstances amid which it occurred.

1. No new law was given ; the law given on Mount Sinai was thenceforth to be the expression of His will. But the understanding of the law was given, with strength to observe it. In the future the law is to be dispensed, not in a spirit of slavish fear, but in a spirit of charity and love.

2. We read in the first verse of Genesis, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty : and the Spirit of God moved over the waters." From this starting-point began the ordering of the universe in the six days of creation. So, too, did the Son redeem spiritual creation, the soul receiving the first-fruits of such redemption, which consisted of imparting grace, when the Holy Spirit swept over it. Hence personal redemption began with the first Pentecost.

3. As the Israelites of old, by the orders of Moses, prepared and sanctified themselves against the coming of the Lord, so, too, did the disciples prepare and sanctify themselves by prayer. For the Holy Ghost resembles the dove, the emblem of purity, under which form He appeared at the river Jordan. He resembles the dove of Noe, that returned to the ark because it could not find any place to set its foot, while the raven, the emblem of uncleanness, lit upon the bodies of the drowned people and ate itself to death on carrion. If the Holy Ghost would descend upon you, you must first prepare and sanctify yourself.

4. The Holy Ghost came down amid the rolling of

thunder. That is the great noise, "the Spirit breatheth where He will" (John iii. 8). Heathendom, unable to withstand Him, was shattered by His power. So does the Pentecost festival dawn on each individual soul when it feels within it an active power which breaks its obstinacy. A powerful change must first take place in man. As long as he does not experience this change within him he has not yet entered into the grace-streams of the Holy Ghost.

5. The wind signifies the breath. Adam's soul was breathed into him. So, too, was the spiritual breathing to be infused into the spiritual creation. As the wind penetrates all parts, so the new doctrines were to penetrate all lands. "For the Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world" (Wisdom i. 7). It was no longer one land that was chosen, but all lands.

6. Fire represents the operation of the Holy Ghost. It illumines, purifies and warms. It transforms whatever it lays hold upon. Thus does the divine Spirit illumine the soul, purify the heart, inflame charity, and change the disposition. A flame can be divided and yet each part remains fire. The heavenly Spirit can be poured out and distributed into all hearts, and each one may have a plenitude.

7. A tongue is also a symbol of the heavenly Spirit, "for He it is who teacheth all truth" (John xvi. 13). By Him the teachers in the Church are enlightened. By this is signified that the teachings of Jesus Christ are to be promulgated by the living word and not merely by what is written. Therefore even if the providence of God in His goodness had not left us a printed page the teachings of Christ would never be falsified or altered. The safe preservation of His teachings depends not on the Bible but on the Church.

8. The assembled apostles are the figure of the

Church, which gathers all nations about the Gospel. The assembled people at Jerusalem are likewise a figure of the Church, which embraces all nations. Thus, even on the first Pentecost, the Church showed her catholicity, that is to say, universality. Such is the meaning of the festival of Pentecost for the Church and for individual men.

### *NINTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

“The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.”

#### I. “THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.”—THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

##### **Establishment of the Church.—The Apostles and Bishops.—Primacy of St. Peter and his Successors, the Popes.**

TRUE to the commission entrusted to them by their blessed Master, the apostles went forth into all the world to proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel and to receive by baptism into the kingdom of Christ those who hearkened and believed. They found everywhere souls willing to believe, for He who had sent these messengers of peace stood near them, and the Spirit of God who had come down upon them at Pentecost dwelt in their hearts. St. Peter went to Antioch, where his converts received for the first time the title of Christians (Acts xi. 26). Leaving Antioch he preached the Gospel in Asia and parts of Greece; and then, led by the providence of God, he came to Rome, which was destined to become the chief seat of Christianity, as it had been the focus of heathenism. There, in the year 67 after Christ, during a persecution

of the Christians under the cruel Emperor Nero, he died a martyr's death on the cross.

It is related that when he heard that he was to die like his Master, he begged, out of humility, to be crucified with his head downward. Thus was verified in his case the prediction made by Jesus, "When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst : but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not" (John xxi. 18). St. Paul, who was miraculously converted, and was numbered among the apostles after Christ's ascension into heaven, made three great missionary voyages to Asia, Greece, and the Grecian archipelago, and then was made prisoner and brought to Rome, where, after a detention of two years in jail, he met a martyr's death in the same persecution as St. Peter. St. James the Less remained with the newly-converted Christians in Jerusalem and met a martyr's death at the hands of the Jews, who hurled him down from the pinnacle of the Temple. St. John lived to an advanced age and died peacefully as Bishop of Ephesus. The other apostles penetrated to the most distant countries, even as far as India. All laid down their lives in the defense of the faith except St. John, who, by the special favor of heaven, came from the executioner's hands unharmed.

Thus in many different and distant points of the earth sprang up at the same time distinct Christian congregations, over which the apostles presided. The most suitable among their converts they ordained to the priesthood to be their assistants in the functions of the holy ministry. If called away from their flocks by duties elsewhere, or if they wished to send chief pastors to distant congregations, they communicated

the fulness of their apostolic power to one and consecrated him bishop. Thus we read of St. Paul and St. Barnabas that, over all the congregations visited by them, they placed bishops. "And when they had ordained to them priests in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed" (Acts xiv. 22). These bishops, as the necessities arose and increased, appointed other bishops, as St. Paul charged Titus, whom he had converted, when he wrote, "I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee" (Titus i. 5).

These apostolically appointed bishops were the guardians of the apostolic traditions. The fact that in the most distant lands, and at the most widely separated points, Christian congregations had arisen so rapidly, all owing their origin to the apostles and their disciples, is one of the strongest proofs of the unailing nature of the doctrines of the Church. For as the most ancient churches appealed to what their founders, the apostles, had taught them, it would have been impossible to spread any error, as every opinion differing from the teachings of the apostles would have been detected as heresy and marked as such. Similarity of doctrine, therefore, was a great band that united them all together.

Among these distinct congregations there existed still another and a closer bond of union, which contributed to the maintenance of pure doctrine. The apostles all preached and taught and acted under the leadership of St. Peter, the Prince of the apostles. Thus through the same apostles were established and maintained a union and communion among the different congregations, all of which together formed one

great congregation which is the Catholic Church itself, that is to say, the one universal Church which is destined by God to unite all nations within its pale.

Thus, when we speak of the Church, we must be understood to mean one body of Christians in the world, not, indeed, as existing in separate branches in different nations, but as subject to their pastors and, above all, to their chief pastor, the Pope. All congregations thus form together but one body, each congregation being a member of that body, and all together represented through their pastors and, finally, through the chief pastor, the Pope.

This organization may well challenge our admiration. An association spread out over the whole earth, composed of peoples with the most opposite manners and customs, institutions, and forms of government, differing in language and race, is one and undivided on the point that is most important for man, namely, belief. The forms of their civil and political institutions may be different, but one thing is common to all—their form of religion. The Church has one system of customs and precepts, celebrates one set of festivals, and practises one form of worship. Her authorities govern according to the same laws, all direct their gaze toward the Supreme Pastor. When he speaks the whole earth listens to his voice. When he commands, all his subjects obey. Surely such an association, even if it were but a human organization, would command the praises of all as a model of consummate wisdom. But what distinguishes this institution above all others, and lifts it away above all human organizations is this: this institution carries the stamp and seal of divine origin. The Church has this unity from Christ, her Founder; the apostles were only the executors of His will.

Christ established the episcopal authority as well as the pontifical. Episcopal authority is the outcome of the authority of Christ, who said to His apostles, "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (John xx. 21). Thus the apostles were to do precisely what their blessed Master had done. To them was transmitted the commission which He had fulfilled. He had taught—consequently the bishops were to teach, and received the teaching office. On the evening before His death He offered Himself up in a bloodless form as a victim of sacrifice, and commanded His apostles to do the same in future in memory of Him—"Do this in commemoration of Me." He also charged them plainly to go forth and to baptize all nations (Matthew xxviii. 19). Then He gave them power to forgive sins and to retain them, saying, "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matthew xviii. 18). Consequently He delivered to them the office of dispensing the sacraments. He said to them furthermore, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew xxviii. 20), thus conferring upon them the authority to keep the faithful to the right, and to restrain them from the wrong, to admonish them and to warn them. Hence arises ecclesiastical government, in which all their commands are to be accepted as the commands of God. To despise them is to despise Christ, for "he that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke x. 16). From all this it clearly appears that the apostles were the representatives of Christ.

Now, the office of Christ could not be confined to His own immediate apostles. They were to die, but

the office was to remain. Hence there must be successors who would carry on the work of the apostles. The teaching office, the shepherd's office, and the priestly office were to be continued in the Church through all ages for the sanctification and salvation of the faithful. Are not the same spiritual wants ever present in the Church? Can instruction be suspended even for a generation? Do we not all stand in need of the sacraments for our salvation? Must not the weaknesses of the members be strengthened continually by laws and ordinances, by discipline and penalties? Yes, it follows necessarily that there must be always apostles, and these apostles are the bishops. The bishops are the successors of the apostles. By lawful appointment and consecration, one of another, they keep up an unbroken chain that reaches from the time of Christ to our own. There is not in the whole Catholic Church one bishop who is not a successor of one of the apostles. Otherwise the words of Christ in the twentieth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of St. Matthew would have neither sense nor meaning. The apostles might well be dismayed at the mere thought of the duties that were imposed upon them. But their divine Master encouraged them, saying, "You need not fear, I am with you all days." How long? Till the consummation of the world. As much as to say, "As long as these duties are to be fulfilled, until the goal is reached, I shall remain with you, who will continue your mission till the end of time, by transmitting your office and authority to your lawful successors." By virtue of these words of Christ the apostles and their successors are His representatives, with the same authority and power. Their authority is an outcome of the authority of the Son of God.

We may compare the living Church of Christ with a church edifice of stone. Like the latter it has a corner-stone, which is Christ. As the edifice rests on pillars, the Church of Christ is carried and held up by the bishops, who are its living pillars. That the comparison may not end here we can proceed and say that as the stone building has its keystone, so has the living Church of Christ its keystone, who is the Pope, the visible chief head of all.

To secure unity and harmony Christ gave to Peter a preference above the other apostles. He appointed him to be their common head. Peter was to be the *Vicarius Christi*, the vicar of Christ on earth, and His representative. As Christ was supreme Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd among His apostles, so does the rank of Peter and his successors rank first and highest in the teaching office, priestly office, and the office of the good shepherd. This supremacy of St. Peter is clearly established by the Scriptures.

Thus, according to the sacred writers, St. Peter was the first in the list of the apostles (Mark iii. 16), and, according to Matthew x. 2, was named the first. He was not the first that Our Saviour called, for Andrew was called before him (John i. 40), and hence he must have been first in rank. He was the first, too, to receive divine inspiration even in the lifetime of his blessed Master. Responding to the question of the Saviour he made a profession of faith, saying, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," and then he received the answer and promise, "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 upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matthew xvi. 16-19).

St. Peter is, then, as his name imports, the rock on which the Lord was to build His Church. Our Lord gave the power of the keys of heaven to the apostles (Matthew xviii. 18), but to St. Peter in a special manner. To him He also gave a more extended power. Peter had denied his Lord three times. Hence it was becoming that he should make a triple profession that he loved his Master more than did the other apostles, and then he received the triple commission, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep" (John xxi. 15-18). By the sheep we are to understand the bishops; the lambs are the laity. Thus St. Peter is the shepherd who feeds the whole flock. He is the key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven. Yes, and even more, Peter has the charge and authority to strengthen the others in the faith. To him Our Lord said, "Thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32). And in order that St. Peter might be fitted for this duty Our Lord assures him, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Thus our blessed Lord was pleased to pray in a special manner for the establishment of this teaching office in His Church in the person of this apostle.

St. Peter always showed himself to be the chief among the apostles. Rising up in the midst of the brethren, he proposed to them that they should elect another apostle in place of Judas (Acts i. 15). On the first Christian Pentecost he spoke in the name of the other apostles. To him it was specially revealed that the Gentiles were called to Christianity (Acts x.),

and again, when he spoke, the disputed question about baptizing converts who had been circumcised, was finally settled (Acts xi. 18). He moreover occupied the highest seat at the first Church council in Jerusalem (Acts xv. 7). Finally it was to St. Peter that St. Paul went after having passed in Arabia the three years subsequent to his conversion, in order to converse with Peter, to work and to teach in accord with him, and to have the lawfulness and validity of his ministry established and confirmed (Galatians i. 18). Thus the Scriptures speak in such clear terms of the sublime dignity of Peter that it would be the sheerest folly to deny his supremacy.

But as the apostolate was established to endure for all ages, so, too, was the Primacy. The unity of the Church had to be preserved, not so much on account of the apostles themselves, as of their successors. In order that any one of these falling into doubt or even error might have no excuse for remaining in either, a central point of truth was established to which he might apply for a decision. This court of appeals is the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, the father of Christendom, the Holy Father, the chief shepherd. As the apostles transmitted their power and authority to their successors, the bishops, so Peter handed down the Primacy to his special successor. He did not take the keys of heaven with him to the grave, but placed them in the hands of the second Pope, to be held by him for a while and then to be transmitted to his successor, and to be so handed down through unbroken succession until they would reach the hands of the present Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XIII., who will in his turn deliver them to his successor, and so on till the Day of Judgment. To-day, as in Judea by Peter near two thousand years ago, the Church is ruled by one visible head, who teaches and governs in union

with all properly consecrated bishops. For that, of course, is an essential condition in the apostolate, that the bishop be in union with the Pope and be duly consecrated by duly consecrated bishops.

Under the guidance of the bishops the priests discharge the duties of their calling. They are the followers of the disciples of Our Lord, and have been entrusted with the right and power to preach, to administer the sacraments, and to direct the laity. The priests with the bishops, and all in union with the Pope, constitute the Church teaching. The laity, who are without orders, are the Church hearing. All combined together compose the Catholic Church, whose unity and order and well-being are maintained by the ready obedience of the laity to their priests, of the priests to their bishops, and of the bishops to the Pope. The fundamental virtue, therefore, of the Catholic Christian is obedience to superiors. This obedience is not a state of oppression arbitrarily imposed by the Church, but a commandment of Christ uttered for the glory of God, and the salvation of those who are bound to obey. The Church desires to lead to their salvation the souls entrusted to her charge; this can be done only through obedience to God's commandments. The Church is the monitor and keeper. The Christian stands in need of divine grace, and the dispenser of such grace is the Church. For his spiritual life the Christian needs instruction and guidance. The Church is the guide of all peoples, and the common mother of all men. When St. Clement of Rome,—of whom St. Paul said that his name was in the book of life (Philippians),—who was the disciple and successor of St. Peter, says that the Church may be compared to an army in which the rank and file are subject to their captains, the captains to their generals,

and the generals to the commander-in-chief, we must remember that the faithful are battling for heaven. They are soldiers who enlisted of their own free will under the banner of Christ, which is the cross. They are resolved and ready to march forward to gain heaven, a contest in which they need leaders. Their very obedience leads them to victory, the fruit of obedience. By obedience alone do they conquer. When they shall have overcome their enemies, and triumphantly entered the kingdom of heaven, each combatant shall receive a crown for his reward.

On the heart of the Catholic Christian, from his youth upward, the following precepts are imprinted: "Always cherish in your heart a profound reverence for and submission to our Holy Father, the Pope, and for the bishops and priests in communion with him, for they stand in the place of God, are appointed to instruct you in the name of God, to impart to you the treasures of grace, and to lead you to eternal happiness." All this is no yoke. The Catholic clergy preach no other yoke but that which they themselves have assumed for the love of Christ and the saving of their souls. The priest who demands obedience from his flock renders obedience to the bishop easily and cheerfully. Besides, the bishop sees to it that the priests do not ask any obedience but that required by Jesus Christ. The bishop himself owes the strictest obedience to the Vicar of Christ.

The Pope is the guardian of the law, and for that very reason he is the most faithful follower of it. From his example bishops, priests and laity draw strength and courage for their obedience. But in the Church obedience is not arbitrary—it is an obedience resulting from charity. While no one is completely free, no one is unduly trammled. No one carries any other yoke

but that of which it is written, "My yoke is sweet and My burden light" (Matthew xi. 30).

This yoke is light, really and truly, for it secures to its bearer peace and contentment of mind. The Catholic believes firmly that his Church is infallible, and therefore places his entire and unqualified faith in her and finds thereby complete and perfect peace. The Protestants, on the other hand, having shaken off this yoke, recognize no infallible teaching office on earth and consequently believe, for they must believe it, that their Church can err. Hence in regard to the most vitally important question of life and eternity they can have no security or peace of mind. The yoke of faith and obedience is quite natural. He who carries it moves securely, never fails, never strays into labyrinths, the exits of which are impossible to find, and in which those necessarily lose themselves who are left to themselves. The child is early accustomed to faith in, and obedience toward, its parents and teachers. Faith and obedience are the foundation-stones on which rests the whole fabric of human society. To Catholics, therefore, nothing is more reasonable than that God has established a teaching office. Whoever asserts his belief on this point does so most naturally, and by complying with the laws of the Church he acts logically. Whoever admits the rights of authority in other circumstances of life and denies them to religion, acts unnaturally. As often as he confides in the doctrine of a preacher, he acts illogically, for he must convince himself of all by private examination, and believe only the Holy Ghost when speaking to him interiorly. Does not this lead into endless pitfalls and labyrinths? How happy the Catholic is with his obedience! He knows whom he obeys and he knows that this obedience will lead him to salvation.

**I. CHRIST HAS FOUNDED A CHURCH.**

**Passages from the Scriptures and from the Fathers.**

“THOU art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church” (Matthew xvi. 18).

“If he will not hear them, tell the Church; and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican” (Matthew xviii. 17).

“Other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John x. 16).

“God hath subjected all things under Christ’s feet: and hath made Him head over all the Church, which is His body, and the fulness of Him, who is filled all in all” (Ephesians i. 22–23).

“To God be glory in the Church” (Ephesians iii. 21).

“Christ is the head of the body, the Church” (Colossians i. 18; Ephesians v. 23).

“The Church shines from the rising to the setting of the sun” (Origen).

“The Church, beaming all through with the light of the Lord, sheds her rays over the whole earth” (St. Cyprian).

“It would be easier to extinguish the sun than to destroy the Church” (St. Chrysostom).

“The Church is the body of Christ, of which body you are a member” (St. Augustine).

**Reason Teaches that Christ must have  
Founded a Church.**

Christ the Lord, not wishing to remain forever on this earth, ascended into heaven. What then was to

become of His work of redemption? He came to save men during all time. Whoever would be saved must accept and believe the doctrines preached by Christ, make use of the methods of grace established by Him, and keep His commandments. It was thus that Christ ordained, and thus it will remain for all time. There is no other way by which man can obtain eternal salvation, for there is no other name given to us by which we can be saved, but the name of Jesus. But since Jesus returned to heaven He must have established certain institutions in order that His truth might be transmitted pure and unchanged, His means of grace be dispensed in full strength, and His laws be observed with unimpaired strictness.

If Christ desired the end, namely, the eternal happiness of men, He must have placed within the reach of all men the means enabling them to reach such happiness. This institution necessarily desired and established by Christ, and which places within our reach such means for eternal happiness, we call the Church. This Church never ceases to discharge the duty committed to it by its divine Founder. Hence it follows that as sure as Christ wished to redeem and to save all men, so surely must He have founded a Church in which and through which all men could find true happiness.

## 2. THE BISHOPS.

### **Passages from the Scriptures and from the Fathers.**

“ And going up into a mountain, He called unto Him whom He would Himself: and they came to Him. And He made that twelve should be with

Him: and that He might send them to preach" (Mark iii. 13, 14).

"Paul and Barnabas ordained to them priests in every church" (Acts xiv. 22).

"Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God" (Acts xx. 28).

"If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. It behooveth, therefore, a bishop to be blameless" (1 Timothy iii. 1).

"For this cause I left thee, Titus, in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldst ordain priests in every city" (Titus i. 5).

"Show all due reverence to your bishop, though it be not so much to him as to Jesus Christ, the Father, who is the bishop of all. It is becoming, then, to render obedience and honor without hypocrisy, for we would not only wrong the visible bishop, but also mock the invisible" (St. Ignatius of Antioch, in his letter to the Magnesians).

"Wherever the bishop shows himself, there let the people be, just as where Christ is, for there is the Catholic Church" (The same, in a letter to the Smyrnians).

"Among us the bishops occupy the place of the apostles" (St. Jerome).

"The bishops are all followers of the apostles" (St. Augustine).

"The places of the apostles are taken by the bishops" (St. Gregory the Great).

### **Priests and Bishops are Different in Rank.**

In his book of the Apocalypse St. John writes that he had seen the Son of man with seven stars in His hand and seven candlesticks about Him. This picture

is explained as follows : The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches of Asia and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches themselves (Apocalypse i. 12, 16 and 20). Then he imparts to each one of the churches what God said to him for them. These seven angels, as appears from the import of the given proofs, as well as from common tradition, were the seven bishops. Naturally one can not conceive of civic heads of churches, nor admit that in each church there was but one priest. St. Ignatius writes, in his epistle to the Smyrnians, " You shall all obey the bishop as if he were Jesus Christ your Father, and also the priests, as if apostles." He thus places the bishop before the priests, making him the head of the priests. In his letter to the Ephesians, while praising the priests for being so united with their bishop, he says, " Your praiseworthy clergy are as intimately united to your bishop as are the chords to the lyre." He distinguishes priest from bishop. In his epistle to the Trallians he draws a clear-cut line of their respective powers, saying, " What else is a bishop but the one who has rank and power above all the others? What is the priesthood but a sacred association, the advisers and assessors of the bishop? " The fact that in the Sacred Scriptures the apostles are in some places called priests, while in other places the subordinates or elders are called bishops, can be easily explained, for the bishops cared for the guidance of the congregation itself, while the priests were the local guardians and administrators.

The distinction could not be so sharply brought out because even the apostles themselves could and must have considered the bishops appointed by themselves as their subordinates. The fact that the first disciple of the apostles, even in his time, made such a decided

distinction between bishop and presbyter proves that difference in rank was not a late innovation, but a distinction established by God, for St. Ignatius must have possessed the apostolic tradition. From that time forward all the Church Fathers are found to hold as a principle that the bishops are the successors of the apostles, as we have shown above.

This is nowhere affirmed of the priests. The bishops are called successors of the apostles, fathers, princes of the people, chiefs of the people, high priests, Popes, Fathers of the Church, all of these titles having a reference to the special authority they possessed in the Church. The synod of Antioch, held in the year of Our Lord 341, says that it is an ancient rule, established by the Fathers, for the bishops to do only those things that concerned their dioceses. Now, a diocese is nowhere mentioned as being directed by a priest. It is remarkable that we have still catalogues of ancient ordinations of bishops who were chosen by the apostles, and from which may be clearly seen the importance that was attached to the proper consecration of bishops, as well as to their lawful succession. The Council of Trent threatens with exclusion from the Church any person who would affirm that the bishops have no higher power than the priests (Session xiii., Canon 7).

### **The Rights of Bishops.**

The bishop alone, and first of all, possesses in his diocese the right to teach. Priests exercising this function, if they preach from the pulpit, in the schools, or in any important position, must obtain their commission from the bishop and have received his approbation. Furthermore the bishop enjoys the right of

ministry throughout the length and breadth of his diocese, that is, the right to exercise all holy functions, while the priest has but the power to administer the Sacraments of Baptism, of the Altar, of Penance, of Extreme Unction and of Matrimony, to impart various blessings, to preach the word of God, and this only in such places as his bishop may have assigned to him, and within appointed limits. Finally, the bishop has the management of the church and, as chief judge, he has the right; (1) to decide current questions on faith; (2) to order the public worship; (3) to enforce Church discipline; (4) to grant certain privileges; (5) to grant certain dispensations; (6) to direct the proper disposing of church funds and revenues; (7) to erect ecclesiastical places, to regulate them or to abolish them; (8) to decide ecclesiastical disputes; (9) to dispense from the diocesan statutes; (10) to absolve from certain vows; (11) to grant certain indulgences.

### **Reverence due to Bishops.**

The honorable marks of distinction paid to bishops belong rather to the honorable position which they take at the head of the faithful and in the vicariate of Christ. As they are men called to bear the burden of church government they are entitled, before every one else, to the church prayers that occur in the Mass and litany of the saints. In their written communications they make use of the plural pronouns "we" and "us," for in a certain sense they are the embodiment of all the faithful. As a sign that they are, like Christ, the shepherds of the flock, they carry a pastoral staff called a *erosier*, a custom that was practised by the bishops in the earliest ages of the Church. The miter, too, or head-covering of the bishop, is of

very ancient origin, the present form being about one thousand years old. As a sign that they have contracted a spiritual marriage with the Church they wear a ring. The custom once general among Christians of carrying a cross about the neck, is especially proper to bishops, whose breast is adorned with a cross. Besides the miter and crosier they wear at solemn functions episcopal sandals or slippers, gloves, the tunic, dalmatic, and some other garments differing slightly from the vestments of the priest.

When they are simply present at public worship they occupy the episcopal throne. The archbishops wear, besides, the pallium, a distinguishing mark not worn by bishops, and which they receive directly from the Pope. It is a band composed of white wool with crosses inwrought in black. The material in this insignia is taken from a lamb sacrificed in a church at Rome on St. Agnes' day, the 21st of January of each year. The origin of the pallium may be traced to the Oriental Church. It represents a mantle with which the emperors sometimes decorated bishops as a mark of favor and distinction.

### 3. THE PRIMACY OF ST. PETER.

#### **The Power of the Keys.—The Gates of Hell.**

(MATTHEW XVI., XVIII., XIX.)

It is a peculiarity of Eastern language to use a part to signify the whole; for example, Orientals use the word "gates" to signify the capital city, and sometimes the whole country. Thus the angel in delivering to Abraham the message of the Lord, said, "Thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies" (Gen-

esis xxii. 17). The brothers of Rebecca wished the same to their sister, saying, "Thou art our sister; mayest thou increase to thousands of thousands, and may thy seed possess the gates of their enemies" (Genesis xxiv. 60). Again, the word "gates" signifies the highest authority, because in Eastern lands the business of the supreme court was often transacted beneath the great gate of the city. The expression, "the gates have so decided," was equivalent to "the highest authority has so decided."

Thus, then, "the gates of hell" mean that kingdom which all through the history of the Church will oppose the kingdom of God, till the very day on which the Lord will send aid to His Church and help her to win the victory. It is that kingdom whose numbers, although attacking God's work with violent force, will be repelled by the firmness of the rock on which that work rests. On the other hand, "the keys" signify that power given to St. Peter in the Church which is called the kingdom of heaven, because in her and through her the kingdom of heaven is obtained for men, and because, too, although it has lived on the earth, it will reach its complete perfection in heaven, after the earth shall be destroyed.

Among the Israelites the keys were an emblem of the highest authority in the land. The representative of the king carried the keys attached to a band thrown over his shoulders. This explains the words that the Lord, when about to depose the treasurer Sobna, spoke through the mouth of the prophet Isaias, "I will drive thee out from thy station, and depose thee from thy ministry. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call My servant Eliacim, the son of Helcias, and I will clothe him with thy robe, and will strengthen him with thy girdle, and will give thy

power into his hand ; and he shall be as a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Juda. And I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder ; and he shall open and none shall shut ; and he shall shut and none shall open " (Isaias xxii. 19-22).

In this description the threefold power of St. Peter is strikingly foreshadowed. Any person thus set over the house of the Lord by the Lord Himself, with no restrictions, must have the right and the competency to declare the will of the Lord, to rule and to command in His name, to receive into, and to exclude from, that house whomsoever he will. In plain words, he has and enjoys authoritatively the teaching office and the function of the Good Shepherd. He must have, moreover, the right to dispense the treasures of that house according to his own judgment, exercising judiciously, and as it may please the Lord, the office of high priest and the authority to grant indulgences.

### **Historical Proofs of the Primacy.**

The necessity for the ever-living and unbroken existence of the Primacy in the Church is consonant with common sense and reason. As no State, no society, no family, can exist without a head, neither can the Church, the grandest society in the world. Hence in the beginning Christ gave to the incipient Church a supreme headship, which was no more to cease than the Church itself, which has existed, grown, and increased its numbers.

Yet to the proofs of reason we shall add the following historical testimonies.

1. From the Fathers of the first three centuries :

We introduce first St. Ignatius, who died in the year

107. He speaks of the Roman Church as the one that leads in precedence, as the head of the covenant of love, by which covenant St. Ignatius understands the whole Catholic Church.

St. Irenæus, who died in the year 202, refutes the heretics of that period especially by pointing to the unbroken succession of the bishops in the Catholic Church. "But," he writes emphatically, "as it would be too long a task to recount the episcopal succession in all the different churches, let us select the Church which is the greatest, most ancient, and best-known, founded, too, by the two most distinguished apostles, Peter and Paul, the Church of Rome. Within her we find a faith, and we have traditions, dating back to her founders. All other churches, that is to say, all the faithful, must agree with this Church on account of her higher rank."

The Roman Church possesses and enjoys this foremost rank because of her bishops, who, being the official successors of the chief among the apostles, especially St. Peter, teach and decide throughout the whole Church. On this account, too, the episcopal throne at Rome has been called the Chair of St. Peter from the earliest times.

We have the further testimony of Tertullian, who died in the year 240, and who, even while a Montanist, writes thus concerning the Bishop of Rome, "I hear that a decision has been rendered, and a definite one. The chief priest, that is, the bishop of bishops, speaks, 'I remit the sins of the penitent.'"

St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in the middle of the third century, can not sufficiently exalt the rank and dignity of the Roman Church and the Chair of St. Peter. To him it is "the Mother Church, the foundation and well-spring of truth, the sun whose rays are

diffused in all directions." In his opinion, "he who adheres to the Bishop of Rome thereby adheres to the Catholic Church." Equally strong and clear is the saying of St. Augustine, who died in the year 430, "Rome hath spoken, the cause is decided:" *Roma locuta est, causa finita est.*

2. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome has always been practically admitted.

From the beginning Rome was the heart, the central point of all ecclesiastical life. Thither the apostolic Fathers and bishops resorted to submit church questions to the Bishop of Rome for his decision,—among others St. Polycarp and St. Irenæus and, later, St. Justin, Origen, and Tertullian. Even the early heretics and founders of sects used every effort to obtain for their new teachings the approbation of the Bishop of Rome. For this purpose they went personally to Rome and made their appeals there, so that even in his time St. Cyprian could declare that "the heretics have the presumption to cross the sea to the Chair of St. Peter, and to the chief Church, from which priestly unity took its rise." From the earliest ages the Popes, either in person or by their delegates, took the foremost seat in all the general Councils, a privilege that was never disputed. It was not till as late as the ninth century that the schismatic patriarchs of the East became enemies of the Pope and accused him of wrongfully usurping the supremacy.

3. The Popes have at all times actually exercised the office of Primate.

When in the very first century ecclesiastical disputes arose amid the Christian congregations of Corinth, recourse was not had to St. John the Apostle, who was still living as Bishop of Ephesus in the near vicinity, to have him solve the difficulties as judge or um-

pire, but to the far distant Bishop of Rome, St. Clement, who examined the cause and gave his decision.

Pope Victor, who ruled the Church between the years 192 and 202, commanded the churches of the East to conform with the Western churches in the manner of celebrating Easter, and threatened with excommunication those who at first were unwilling to obey. Not one bishop in the Eastern churches found fault with this threatening order, showing how generally admitted and received was the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. In a similar way did Pope Stephen act with the celebrated bishop, St. Cyprian, in what was called the heretical conflict. Pope Dionysius called to account his namesake, the Bishop of Alexandria. Bishops who were unlawfully deprived of their sees and in exile had recourse to Rome with their grievances, as, for instance, St. Athanasius, St. Chrysostom, Flavian, and others. Ancient Church history always speaks clearly of the Roman Bishop as the recognized head of the universal Church and as always acting and deciding as such.

4. The right of the Bishop of Rome to the Primacy results, too, from his being the successor of St. Peter.

St. Peter was the Prince of the apostles and, therefore, of the whole Church. Furthermore he was Bishop of Rome. The Roman Bishop, therefore, is his regular successor in office, and as such is necessarily the Primate of the whole Church.

### **The Titles of the Popes.**

The very titles that were given to the Bishop of Rome show that he was the recognized head of the Church. Thus, in the Council of Chalcedon, he is styled "the bishop of bishops." A Council of Carthage calls him

the chief steward in the house of God and overseer of His vineyard. St. Jerome calls him the "Confirmer of the faith." A Council of Rome describes him as "the safest refuge of all Catholic communities." The Council of Sardica, held in the year 347, calls him simply "the Judge" and refers all bishops to him.

### **The Rights of the Popes.**

The rights of the Popes are official rights and rights of honor. To the rights of office belong: (1) the right of supervision over the entire Church, hence the right to take cognizance of the condition of the Church all over the world and to send out his representatives everywhere to oversee the churches; (2) the right to admonish, to command, to threaten with ecclesiastical punishment and to inflict it on all persons who do not observe whatever is ordained by the Church, whether in matters of faith, morals, church discipline, or ceremonial; (3) the right to assemble Councils and to occupy the foremost place at them, and to order their closing,—without these conditions the decrees would not have general force or validity; (4) the right to have done, of his own fulness of power, whatever is neglected by those who ought to do it; (5) the right of deciding in church disputes, and from which decision no appeal can be made to church council; (6) the right of selecting bishops and of confirming those otherwise selected, or, if they be not chosen in accordance with the laws of the Church, to reject them, and to supply of his own plenitude of power whatever is wanting, to erect new bishoprics, to unite them, or to abolish them; (7) the right to enact laws, which are binding on all, in matters of church discipline and public worship; (8) the right to dispense from all church

laws, and from all vows, to remit all church penalties, and the unrestricted right to grant indulgences ; (9) the right to canonize saints, to beatify, and to declare venerable.

To the Pope's rights of honor belong : (1) the titles by which he is distinguished, namely, "Holy Father," "Your Holiness," by which Catholics do not mean that the Pope is holy of himself, but rather that he is the representative of the sacred covenant, or Church of God, in which each member is called to holiness of life ; (2) the tiara, which consists of three gold crowns one above the other, with a cross on top and two bands hanging down (Alexander III. was the first to add a crown to the miter, as a sign of the temporal power ; Boniface VIII. added a second crown and, according to some, Benedict III., according to others, Urban V., added the third) ; and (3) the kissing of the foot. The people of Eastern countries showed their reverence for their emperors and bishops by prostrating themselves before them. This custom remained as a sign of reverence for the Bishops of Rome and is practised yet on various occasions. But as the Pope is revered not as man, but as the representative of Christ, he has a gold cross embroidered on his slipper, which cross is kissed.

## II. THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

### **Christ Established but One Church, and it Must be One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.**

WHEN the Sacred Scriptures, or the holy Fathers, mention the institution founded by Christ for our salvation, they style it "the Church," never the churches. Not one true teacher has held that there are more

churches than one. Christ founded but one Church, as He also taught but one faith. St. Paul says emphatically, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians iv. 5). Now, when there is but one faith, how can there be many churches? Christ said, "Upon this rock I shall build My Church" (Matthew xvi. 18). He never said that He would establish several churches.

When we look abroad through the land we find not only one church, but several other organized communities, all calling themselves churches, although they are widely diverse in their teachings concerning the important affair of salvation. Into these denominations the members are born for the most part, and can not answer for their several creeds.\* But it is impossible for one man to be saved by believing and observing one system of teaching, and the next man to be saved also by believing and observing the very contrary doctrines. Hence millions are lost because they are not in the true Church of God. Neither can these myriads, who are perishing outside the true Church, excuse themselves on the plea that the accident of birth made them unbelievers. They are lost, not because they are born in heretical churches, but because they persist in remaining away from truth, so easily accessible in the one true Church. They are bound to find the true Church, to enter into it, and to walk in the ways of salvation. If they say they have not found any other road, it is because they have not looked for it. The very indifference they indulge in as to the religion to which they belong is their condemnation.

For the Church of God is not invisible, nor one that

\* What follows must be understood of them that stay outside of the true Church in bad faith, i. e., knowingly and willingly abiding in error; not of them that are entirely in good faith.

can not easily be distinguished from the others, for she is a flock directed by a visible shepherd (1 Peter v. 1-4). She is a sheepfold into which all must be gathered (John x. 1, 16); she is a field in which grow the wheat and the tares (Matthew xiii. 24); she is a city on a mountain that can be seen from afar (Matthew v. 14).

Although human hands, misled by human folly, have built other houses beside the temple of God and called them churches, the Church of God has several distinguishing marks by which it can be discerned from all the others. One has but to put to himself the question, "What marks should the true Church of God possess?" This question he himself can answer as follows: The Church of God must be one and undivided. There can be no division, no strife, no contradiction in it, for there is no division or contradiction in God. How often Our Saviour exhorted His disciples to unity and charity! He wished to establish one Church, to form one sheepfold, for there is but one baptism, one faith, one Lord, one God and Father of all.

The Church of God must be holy. It was established to save our souls. But unholiness can not lead souls to happiness. It was established, further, by an all-holy God. An all-holy God can not institute anything unholy. It must also be holy in its doctrines, in its aims and objects; in its means, in its members, and in its Founder.

The true Church must be Catholic or universal. All men are called to heaven who do not shut themselves out from it. Hence the true Church must be a Church for all, that is to say, suited for all nations, conditions, races, and times.

The true Church must be apostolic, for the apostles are the messengers of Christ. Whoever does not share in the faith taught by the apostles does not par-

ticipate in the faith of Christ. The faith of the apostles is an entrusted legacy or inheritance (1 Timothy vi. 20) bequeathed by them to their lawful followers and successors. Whoever is not united with the successors of the apostles is not united with the apostles themselves, nor yet with Christ.

Now, which of the many churches has these distinguishing marks? None other but the Roman Catholic Church, that is to say, that Church which acknowledges the Pope at Rome for its chief pastor. Hence it is the only Church of Christ, the only true Church, to seek which is the most imperative and the holiest duty of man, and which man can not miss finding if he seek in good faith.

### **The Church of God must be One.—Passages from the Scriptures.**

“The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them: that they may be one, as we also are one” (John xvii. 22).

“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 another” (Romans xii. 4-5).

“I beseech you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ: that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you” (1 Corinthians i. 10).

“In one spirit were we all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians xii. 13).

“One body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all” (Ephesians iv. 4-6).

**The Church of Christ must be Holy.—Pas-  
sages from the Scriptures.**

“Holiness cometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days” (Psalm xcii. 5).

“The kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans xiv. 17).

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians v. 25-27).

“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works” (Titus ii. 14).

“Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify Myself: that they also may be sanctified in truth” (John xvii. 17-19).

“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth” (Ephesians iv. 23-24).

“According to Him, that hath called you, who is holy: be you also in all manner of conversation holy” (1 Peter i. 15).

**The Church of Christ must be Catholic.—  
Passages from the Scriptures.**

“I have given Thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation even to the farthest part of the earth” (Isaias xlix. 6).

“The earth shall be filled, that men may know the glory of the Lord, as waters covering the sea” (Habacuc ii. 14).

“From the rising of the sun even 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 offering” (Malachias i. 11).

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations” (Matthew xxiv. 14).

“You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me, . . . even to the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts i. 8).

**The Church of Christ must be Apostolic.—  
Passages from the Scriptures.**

You are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building being framed together, groweth up into an holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together into an habitation of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians ii. 20–22).

“The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them, the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Apocalypse xxi. 14).

**III. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS  
THESE MARKS, HENCE IT IS THE  
TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST.**

**The Roman Catholic Church is One.**

THE Catholic Church lays before her members a system of doctrine which is nothing more than the

development of the Apostles' Creed. These teachings of faith each one must admit in order to be a Catholic. Whoever does not acknowledge these doctrines does not belong to the Church. Thus Rome cut off from her communion the Greek Church, although it differs from the true Church in two points only, and receives the seven sacraments. Such can not be the policy of non-Catholic sects, for in them every member is free to draw his belief from the Bible, no matter what absurdities he may think he finds there. Protestant confessions are one on one point only, namely, opposition to the Catholic Church, yet differing from each other like day and night on the most essential dogmas. But it is not only the written forms of belief among Protestants that differ from each other. The individual members of one and the same church are far from being one in their belief, though they still claim to belong to their respective creeds. One clergyman mounts the pulpit and teaches that Christ is God; another follows him to teach the contrary. One teaches the resurrection of Christ from the dead, another teaches that He arose, but in the sense that He had never died. One teaches that man is but a clod of earth on whom God operates as He wills, another teaches that man alone is the source of all his strength and action. If asked who they are, these men will reply that they are authorized ministers in one and the same church. They are continued in office though they contradict each other. In their very meeting-houses this want of unity is shown in their symbols. In one a cross may be seen, some flowers, a kind of altar, candles, priestly dress. Within hearing distance stands another temple where the members sit between naked walls and, with hats on, listen to the teachings of a man dressed as if for a dinner-party.

In one church one clergyman is appointed to study and to preach the supposed word of God; in another every one believes himself called to preach, and acts accordingly; even the women preach, of whom St. Paul says, "Let women keep silence in the churches" (1 Corinthians xiv. 34). The doctrine on which the whole Christian liturgy, or order of public worship, is founded, namely, the doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper, shows this want of union most plainly. While in Wittenberg, the cradle of the sham reformation, the Lord's supper is dispensed every Friday and the belief professed that in the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are present, as wine is present in a bottle, in other parts of Germany those who believe and those who do not believe approach the same table. In France and Switzerland it is held to be a memorial supper with ordinary bread. In England and America there are to be found congregations who observe the Lord's Supper as a mere friendly social reunion. But, on the contrary, if the Catholic Christian be in farther India, in the forests of America, in China, or any other part of the globe, and enter a Catholic chapel, he hears the same word of God. The same holy sacrifice is offered; there are the same church ceremonies, even the same liturgical language. Then the Catholic feels that he belongs to a Church that is one. Making the sign of the cross he is recognized by all as a Catholic, and is welcomed as a brother. If the Father of Christendom has spoken and made known his will, all submit and acknowledge in the Bishop of Rome their chief pastor. Such is the unity of the Catholic Church, which has the same faith, the same sacraments, the same sacrifice and the same common headship.

**The Roman Catholic Church is Holy.**

The Founder of the Catholic Church is the One of whom the devil himself gave trembling testimony when he said, "I know Thee who Thou art, the holy One of God" (Luke iv. 34). As the Founder is holy, so is His doctrine holy, and those who follow it become holy.

No man has ever yet ventured to assert that, if one does and follows what the Catholic Church requires and what her ministers teach, he will not become a model of perfection, or will fail to save his soul. The Church teaches and inculcates only faith, hope, charity, purity in heart and action, peace, mildness, meekness, love of enemies, mercy, humility, self-denial, mortification, obedience,—all bright virtues that lighten the burden of life, beautify the earth, and win heaven; the absence of which, on the contrary, would make earth a vale of woe—a very hell.

Thus the doctrine of the Catholic Church is the safest guide to virtue, to perfection, and to heaven. With Protestant doctrine the reverse is true. By the first originators of the sham reformation it was held and taught that God is the only cause of sin, that man is merely His tool, that a man may sin as much as he please, if he only believe firmly that one portion of mankind is irrevocably destined for heaven, the other hopelessly condemned to perdition, let them live as they may. The indissolubility of marriage was brushed aside, the excellence of virginity disputed, the fasts abolished, and so on. Are such teachings calculated to make men virtuous? Were they carried out in practise would they not lead to vice? Providentially, God, in His mercy to men, has not allowed these heretics to bring their disastrous theories into full play in

society. On the other hand, how devoutly to be desired it is that Catholics would lead lives in accordance with their doctrines! How perfectly, then, would be accomplished all duties to God, to themselves and to their fellow-men!

But it is not only the doctrines of the Church that are holy: her means are holy. She not only commands us to strive for perfection, but she places at our hand the means whereby we may secure it.

The Church possesses means to salvation, that is to say, means so effective and powerful that if men make use of them they can succeed in securing salvation, which is sanctification. These means of sanctification and salvation are not merely one or two;—the Church has them for all cases, for all spiritual needs, and she dispenses them bountifully, and neglects no one man. She distributes her graces without distinction of condition, of age or race. She takes the child in her arms at its birth and carries it to its grave. If the body is sick she assists it, if the soul is sick she comes to its relief. She strengthens the soul not only once or twice, and when it encounters the temptations of youth, but at all times, till the day of dissolution. She imparts to it the blessing for its vocation in life, and graces to fulfil its duties. After death she does not abandon it, but renders the soul aid and comfort by her means of grace. These means of salvation in the Church are the seven sacraments, by virtue of which men are sanctified, and by which, too, if they happen to fall from grace, they are brought back to reconciliation.

Hence it is that in the Catholic Church, and in her alone, many saints have been produced. It is not to be denied that among non-Catholic Christians, by virtue of a special and preventive grace of God, good cit-

izens are to be found, men of integrity and honesty. But God has impressed the seal of His holiness only on the Catholic Church. The best non-Catholics are simply good members of society, possessed of truthfulness, honesty and benevolence. But they are wanting in all those characteristics of extraordinary endowments of grace, of supernatural virtue. In the Catholic Church the words of David are always true, "God is wonderful in His saints" (Psalms lxxvii. 36). In the Catholic Church we meet not only good children but also God-fearing young men and young women, faithful fathers and devout mothers, and gray-haired sires who have left behind them a long and stainless life—in the Catholic Church we find real miracles of divine grace.

### **The Roman Catholic Church is Universal.**

The Roman Church, namely, that one which is in communion with the Holy See, is the only Catholic or universal Church. The true Church must be universal, since Christ the Lord commanded that the Gospel be preached to all nations (Matthew xxiv. 14). That her children might be enabled to receive and to retain all that He confided to His Church He also promised to be with her for all time. These conditions are fulfilled in the Catholic Church alone. For, as we shall see farther on, she traces her origin to Christ, while all other denominations have originated with men at well-known later periods. Hence she stands alone in Catholicity, as far as time is concerned, and has never been known under any other name. St. Ignatius, in his early day, said of the Catholic Church, "Where Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." In all the Church councils, in the writings of the Fathers, wherever there is question of the Catholic Church, that

Church is always meant which has the Bishop of Rome for its chief pastor. The doctrines of this Church have been diffused everywhere throughout the globe, for, although other denominations have their missionaries scattered abroad, the Catholic Church has more believers than all the other sects taken together. Thus, in her regard, is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaias, "Behold I have given thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation even to the farthest part of the earth" (Isaias xlix. 6). It is true God has suffered whole nations as well as individuals to fall away from the Church in order to show to the world that faith is a free gift of heaven, and that men can lose its light when they have permitted it for a long time to shine in vain for them. But whenever the Church suffers a loss in one direction God grants her as compensation grand acquisitions in other quarters.

So it has been from the beginning. When Mahomet arose, and with fire and sword compelled multitudes to embrace his belief, tearing away large branches from the tree of Christ, the Church was consoled and compensated by the conversion of the Danes, Hollanders and some of the provinces of Germany. When the Greeks fell away, the Russians, Swedes, Poles and Hungarians embraced the faith of Christ. While Huss, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli were leading thousands of people astray, millions of souls were won to the Church in Asia, Africa, and America. St. Francis Xavier, with his companions of the Society of Jesus, baptized in India and Japan as many souls as the heresiarchs in Europe decoyed from the true Church. To-day the Catholic missions are flourishing and progressing, while the Protestant missions have degenerated into trading-stations. Con-

versions to the Catholic Church in Protestant lands, such as England and America, are frequent and important, giving great uneasiness to the enemies of the truth. The Church, although assailed on all sides, is winning glorious victories over her opponents, while these are degenerating into total unbelief. The day is drawing nearer and nearer when there shall be but one fold and one shepherd (John x. 16).

### **The Roman Catholic Church is Apostolic.**

As it was the apostles who heard personally the doctrines of their blessed Master, as it was to them that the commission was given to teach all nations, so it is only that Church which comes down from the apostles and teaches their doctrines that can be the true Church. But such is the Roman Catholic Church, for it is well proven that the successors of St. Peter at Rome have followed one another without break or interruption. Besides, she teaches their doctrine to-day, unchanged and unchangeable.

The Catholic Church teaches no one article of faith the beginning of which the enemies of the Church can not find in the earliest teachings of Christianity. For all her dogmas we find proofs in the writings of the apostles and of their disciples. No one can tell her founder's name, if it is not Christ. No one can name the day of her birth, if it is not the first Pentecost. Other systems of doctrine have sprung up from time to time, at dates which we know, originated by human authors whom we know and can name. In the Catholic Church we must go back to the apostles of Christ. We know that St. Irenæus wrote, "We must regard the bishops, for they are the successors of the apostles," and that St. Ignatius of Antioch

likewise wrote, "All who are of God and Jesus Christ adhere to the bishop." Again he says, "Without the bishop let no one undertake anything that pertains to the Church. Only such Eucharist will be considered valid as is under the hand of the bishop or of one who duly represents him. Without the bishop it is not allowed to baptize, nor to celebrate the Lord's Supper, but whatever he commends is pleasing to God, and is therefore safe and valid, whatever is done." Thus the bishops are of apostolic succession, what they teach is apostolic teaching—the contrary is not. Now, all sects began by breaking the line of apostolic succession. Some of them have indeed retained, in name only, the office of bishop, but though they keep the shadow, there is no substance, for there is no valid consecration. No church but the Catholic Church can call itself apostolic.

#### IV. NO SYSTEM OF RELIGION POSSESSES THESE DISTINGUISHING MARKS BUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

##### **No Other has Unity.**

ALL the various sects that arose in the course of centuries, in rejecting the Catholic Church rejected also the chief pastor, the Pope, and thereby lost the keystone and center of unity. How can their doctrine be one and undivided when there no longer exists an authority in doctrine? Christ founded oneness of doctrine and life essentially on Peter, therefore on the Primacy. Even the authorized body of teachers in the Church, namely, the bishops, must, according to the will of the Lord, exercise their functions only in sub-

jection to, and by the guidance of, St. Peter and his successors—who are the Popes. The Papacy, therefore, is really the keystone in the arch of the teaching Church, holding up all others and keeping them in symmetry and firmness. Whoever rejects the supremacy destroys the whole symmetry, destroys the unity, and throws the whole ecclesiastical structure out of shape. What would become of the State, or of the family, if there were no supreme and final deciding authority? How can the unity of a religion be upheld from which the unity of teaching has disappeared?

Equally disastrous for unity is the principle of private interpretation of the Scriptures, as adopted by the sects that severed themselves from the Catholic Church. It is clear as noonday sun that the unity of faith must perish as soon as that is admitted. Every child in non-Catholic communions can choose and follow the religion which he fancies he finds in the Bible. So many heads, so many opinions. Their history shows the sad consequences. Hardly was the principle of private judgment set up, when the new religion had to be divided into three conflicting and opposing sects, Lutherans, Zwinglians, and Calvinists. Even these were again subdivided among themselves, so that today the different conflicting religious sects are beyond computation. Calvin wrote to Melanchthon, "We must take care that future centuries shall not know our divisions, for it is ridiculous beyond all measure that from the beginning of the reformation, when we broke with the whole world, we have never agreed together."

Similar complaints came from all the so-called reformers. In such a medley where is the Holy Ghost, where the truth? Still more deplorable was the case when men assailed the Bible and denied its truthful-

ness: then was the last hope of a united faith put out forever and Protestants steered wildly and recklessly, without either rudder or compass, over a waste of unbelief.

### **No Religion but the Catholic is Holy.**

Not one of the new religious sects can point to its founder and call him holy. How can a man who does not possess holiness impart the character of holiness to his own creation, to a religion of his own heart and brain? If we look carefully at the doctrines and lives of the founders of the new religions we shall discover in both nothing but what is merely human, and very often savoring of human passions. Luther wrote, "Those pious persons who do good in order to secure the kingdom of heaven will never succeed. They belong rather to the impious, and we must be more careful to refrain from good works than from sin." Further, he also denied the sacramental dignity of the Sacrament of Matrimony and other sacraments. Calvin taught that one portion of mankind was irrevocably condemned to hell, and another predestined for heaven. How could we hope to find holiness in such a religion, when the founders of the religion teach such unholy doctrine? We shall not here tell how these reformers described one another's qualities; they did it so effectually as to preclude all hope of finding holiness.

Hence it follows that the holiness of their adherents can in no way be the fruit of their uncatholic doctrines. By the fruits we can judge the tree. Where is the sect that ever possessed the gift of miracles, or that ever produced a saint? There may be among them upright and even virtuous men, but there has never been a saint among them, nor will there ever be one.

A religion that does not itself possess holiness will never be able to make one of its members holy. The religions outside of the Catholic Church do not bear the character of holiness, for they not only had not saints for their founders, but they have rejected the doctrines and means of grace established by Christ that men might be made holy therewith ; for example, the sacrifice of the Mass, confirmation, confession, and others.

### **No Church but the Catholic is Universal.**

No Church but the Catholic Church is universal, whether in regard to time, place, or doctrine. Certainly not according to time, for it can be easily shown in what year, on what day, each sect came into existence. Previous to that date they were not known in the world, and hence they are unable to say that they can prove their existence through the preceding centuries. As prior to the fourth century there were no Arians, so, previous to the fifteenth century, there were no Hussites, and, before the time of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, there were no Lutherans, Zwinglians, or Calvinists. But Christ established His Church for all times. Men were to be saved in all ages by it, consequently any church that is deprived of universality in time, that is to say, which did not live and act visibly in all ages, can not be the true Church of Christ.

The Catholic Church is universal as to place, because during her existence, in obedience to the commission delivered to her by Christ, she has spread herself everywhere and will continue to do so, until there shall be but one fold and one shepherd. But wherever she diffuses herself she is ever the one and the same Catholic Church. The faithful of Australia, as well

as the native Indians of America, recognize the Pope as her head, just as the people of Europe do. The Catholic of Africa recognizes his brother in Christ by the sign of the cross, whether he travel to China or to an island in the Atlantic Ocean. In the Catholic Church there are in all lands but one faith, one baptism, one doctrine, one Christ, one God and Father of all.

It is not so with other denominations, though they try to spread their systems. They send out their married missionaries, found their establishments, with senseless zeal scatter their tracts and Bibles. But as is the case with their unity, their local adhesiveness or catholicity is nowhere to be found. The more they are diffused, the more they split up into sects, not one of which succeeds in winning a permanent foothold. Indeed there is no large city which one single sect can claim as belonging exclusively to itself, and where Lutherans, both orthodox and modern, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Methodists, Quakers, Mormons, Baptists, Pietists, Herrnhuters, Swedenborgians, and others are not to be found in greater or less numbers. How, in all this chaos can any one of these religions affirm itself to be universal as to place, and to be appointed to teach and to save all men ?

With just as little right can the sects ascribe to themselves catholicity of doctrine, such as the Catholic Church claims and possesses, while she can prove that she has preserved to this day all the doctrines preached by Christ and His apostles. The apostles knew seven sacraments ; these the Catholic Church has preserved in their entirety and number till the present time. The apostles knew the doctrines of the Church, of her Primacy, episcopacy, priesthood, and all others, and these may be found unchanged in the Church at the present time. Hence the Catholic

Church with truth and right can say of herself that she is universal in doctrine, that is to say, she has preserved through all ages the doctrines, means of grace, and traditions of the apostles, faithfully, fully, and unchanged down to our time.

How can any religious denomination ascribe to itself such a characteristic, or say that it is Catholic in doctrine, when it has rejected more or less of what can be shown to be the teaching of Christ and His apostles? They reject the necessity of good works so plainly and emphatically taught by St. James, St. Paul, and others. They reject the doctrine of free will in man, the Sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. They reject the supremacy of the Pope, even the episcopacy and priesthood, and yet presume to say that they are universal in doctrine and possess all the apostolic traditions. How is that possible? Only that is the truly Catholic or universal Church which can prove that she has kept all the doctrines of the apostles faithfully. The only Church that can do this is the Roman Catholic Church.

### **No Church but the Catholic Church is Apostolic.**

Outside of the Catholic Church no other can be apostolic, that is to say, established by the apostles and coming down from them in perpetual succession. Non-Catholic denominations came into succession centuries too late to be called apostolic. How, for instance, can it be proved that the doctrines of the sham reformers have unbroken connection with the apostles, or were preached by them, since they were first broached in the sixteenth century?

Where was the doctrine previous to that date, and who knew of it? It is the same with all other new religions. We know the times when they took their rise and departed far from the apostolic teachings of the Catholic Church. We know their founders, who certainly had very little in common with Christ's apostles. We know the causes that gave rise to these new systems of teaching. We know the countries where they first appeared. And, while knowing all this about them, there is one thing we do not know, and no one knows, namely, the union of all these various systems with the one system preached by Christ and His apostles. In fact and truth there is none, and hence not one of these churches can style itself apostolic.

One reason why the sects are not apostolic in their teachings is because they no longer retain the whole doctrine taught by the apostles. They have rejected the Pope as successor of St. Peter, and the bishops as successors of the apostles. They have denied the authority of the Church, and free will in man, and many other essential dogmas. How could the propagators of these negations possess at the same time the entirety of apostolic doctrine? Again, why do they contradict each other so violently and on such essential questions? Why are they so changeable, denying to-day what they believed yesterday?

Still less are the sects apostolic in the matter of their leaders. Christ our Lord founded the apostolate to last through all ages. The apostles were to consecrate and to set in their places as their successors their immediate disciples. These were in turn to appoint their lawful successors, that thus, by an uninterrupted succession, Our Lord might be perpetuated in His work of sanctifying and saving mankind. Now,

he only is a regularly appointed shepherd in the Church who can demonstrate his union with the episcopate and through it with St. Peter. Only such a one is an apostolic pastor. How can one standing outside the ranks of this united episcopacy prove his apostolic mission and authority? If he has not been regularly consecrated by a successor of St. Peter, or of the other apostles, then, in order to be a true shepherd, he must have been called directly by Christ Himself. But where are the ministers of the modern sects who can prove their immediate calling and appointment by Christ? They can adduce neither the one nor the other to prove that they stand in the ranks of the regular apostolic episcopate, and hence they are not apostolic shepherds.

As it has been proved, therefore, that the Catholic Church, and she alone, possesses the essential marks of the true Church of Christ, it follows necessarily that the Catholic Church can be the only true Church of Christ. She alone is the true Church in her doctrine, in her means of grace, and in her heads. In as far as the other churches agree with the Catholic Church there they possess some truth which they have carried away with them from the mother Church. In no other respect have they truth, or the right means of salvation.

The conscious certainty that we are children of the only true Church should fill us with holy joy. It should strengthen us in our determination to remain faithful and constant to that Church and her lawful authorities. Although this Church by word and writing be abused and misrepresented in her life, her precepts, and her ministers, we can console ourselves with the recollection that Christ foretold such persecutions and at the same time warned us against these false

prophets. "If therefore," said He, "they shall say to you: Behold He is in the desert, go ye not out: Behold He is in the closets, believe it not" (Matthew xxiv. 26).

Does it not seem that our divine Saviour wished to forewarn His followers against those sects that separate themselves from the universal Church and perform their so-called worship in detached private assemblages or "closets"? Fly from these false teachers of modern unbelief, when with honied words they invite you to their New Jerusalem, to their new kingdom of God on Mount Sion. You would suffer shipwreck in your peace of mind, a peace that is to be found only in truth and in those saving means established by Christ for securing eternal happiness, Like Christ, the Church is for you the way, the truth, and the life.

### **The Truth of the Catholic Church Proved from her own History.**

The Church has been in existence for almost twenty centuries. Not a century has elapsed that did not hear the cry, "The Catholic Church is old and superannuated, her time is past!" Unbelievers, heretics, and founders of sects, in all ages, have imagined that the great day had come on which the Catholic Church was to be flattened to the ground. Each one of them fancied that he was chosen and destined to sing the dirge of the Papacy, of the Catholic priesthood, of the Mass, of the whole system of Catholic doctrine. Not one of them has done it so far.

Thus in the very first century of Christianity a governor under the Roman Emperor Trajan wrote, "By means of this persecution, now ordered, this sect will

be stamped out in short time, and we will hear no more talk of this crucified God." Trajan has been dead a long time and the crucified God still rules the world.

Three hundred years later another emperor, Julian the Apostate, boasted that he was making the coffin of the Galilean, meaning that he would destroy His Church and doctrines. Julian died soon after; the Galilean and His Church still live.

In the sixteenth century Luther spoke of the Pope as of an old worn-out article: "Pope, pope," he exclaimed, "in my lifetime I have been a plague to thee, after my death I will be thy destruction." Luther is dead, and while his sect is torn into endless divisions, the Papacy survives, more flourishing, more full of life, more honored, and better obeyed than ever before.

Voltaire, who made himself a personal enemy of Christ, used to add to his signature, at the end of a letter or other writing the blasphemous words, "who makes himself merry over Christ," and used as his motto, "Let us crush the infamous being," meaning Jesus Christ and His doctrines. In a similar strain he wrote to a friend, "I am tired of hearing that twelve men sufficed to establish the Catholic Church; I shall prove that one is sufficient to destroy it;" and to another wrote, "In twenty years the Galilean will be destroyed." Just twenty years later, to the very day of the month, Voltaire lay on his death-bed, with the fear of eternal damnation in his heart, asking for the comforts of religion which his friends would not let him have (Segur).

In the year 1798 Pope Pius VI. was taken prisoner by the French republican army and carried to the south of France, where he died on the 29th of August, 1799. Deeply profound as was the sympathy shown

to the venerable Pontiff by the inhabitants of Valence, they did not dare to offer suitable and solemn burial to his body, and it was only at the command of Napoleon, given on the 30th of the following December, that the remains of the chief pastor of Christendom were finally laid away to rest, fully four months after his death.

On the 6th of July, 1809, by order of the same Emperor Napoleon, Pius VII. was taken prisoner in his own palace at Rome and hurried off to different points in France, until at last he was immured in the Castle of Fontainebleau and held a prisoner, because he refused to sanction a decree of the Emperor whereby the States of the Church were to be incorporated into the French empire. He was subjected to deep disgrace and hardship in his imprisonment, and to all human appearances the patrimony of St. Peter was forever lost to the Church. But, on the 24th of May, 1814, Austrian, English, and Russian troops conducted the Holy Father back to Rome in triumph, while Napoleon was in exile at Elba.

On the 24th of November, 1848, Pope Pius IX. was compelled to flee from a people whom he overwhelmed with favors. On the 12th of April, 1850, French soldiers conducted him back to Rome. During the exile of the Pontiff the enemies fancied that the Church had received its final death-blow, for revolution was master in all countries. We know how grievously they were disappointed. Of all the institutions assailed the Church emerged safest and strongest from the confusion of the times. Who is not familiar with the unceasing troubles that have come upon the Church in all lands, especially upon the Supreme Pontiff, during the last fifty years? The whole history of the Church can hardly show a period in which such ince-

sant and mighty efforts have been made, and with such apparently effective results, to destroy the Church and its institutions, as during the last three decades. Hatred, falsehood, violence, unbelief, and the trickery of diplomacy have all been employed to overthrow her who to-day stands unconquered and uninjured.

The whole life of the Church has been transformed into one uninterrupted Holy Week. Yet shall we doubt the hand of God? On the contrary. It is just in afflictions like these that the Catholic Church proves herself to be the Church of Christ. It is her fate to be the persecuted one, and herein lies plainly before us the proof that she is a divine Church, protected by the hand of God. Everything that the world can command is employed to ruin the Church, but amid the roaring of the wild winds and of the heaving billows the promise is heard, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her." The ancient God still lives, and He is our refuge and consolation.

### **The Object of the Church.—Its Internal Characteristics.**

Christ established His Church in order to lead men to happiness. To redeem mankind He came, taught, suffered, and died. To bestow on men the fruit of His atonement He established His Church. In that Church the work of salvation is continued.

Every one of us, though redeemed by the blood of Christ and regenerated by baptism, must lead upon earth a long pilgrimage, during which we are to do the will of God in all things. We must, therefore, first of all be instructed, for we need guidance and strength on this journey of life. We can not live without doc-

trines, without means of grace, without appointed commandments. All this supposes dispensers of graces, teachers, and shepherds to act the part of Christ. But the Word of God, the imparting of the means of grace, the office of shepherd can not be entrusted to every one, but only to such as are specially chosen and appointed and clothed with the required power and authority. We must be sure and really convinced that he who is to lead and to guide us must, on his part, have a regular vocation and commission. Therefore, Christ established not a mere invisible Church, but one really visible and tangible, to which, in the first place, He entrusted His doctrines, His means of grace, and His authority; and to which, in the second place, He granted the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that such Church might preserve the divine teachings unimpaired, dispense the means of grace properly, and exercise authority to the salvation of men.

Thus no one can be in error. Each one of us knows to whom we have to apply in order to receive what is conducive and necessary to our happiness. We run no danger of drinking from broken cisterns, dug by the hands of men, instead of from the fountain of living waters. The Church becomes a city on a mountain, to which all peoples should endeavor to approach, as Isaias says, "Come and 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 shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaias ii. 3).

Not to individual men, then, is the teaching office committed, but to the Church teaching. He only is a teacher in the Church who receives his appointment from the Church, and he retains his right only as long

as he fulfils the commission of the Church, and teaches what she teaches. If God had entrusted the teaching office to individual persons, it would be only on condition that they all would teach the same doctrines, for God's truth is but one truth. But the differences of doctrine into which all those fell who separated themselves from the Church, furnish the best proof that the infallible teaching office dwells not in men, but in the Church. Infallible, certainly, must be the teaching office established by God, for He could not permit His people to be led into soul-destroying errors; He could not allow the truth, which He brought with Him, for which He sacrificed Himself on the cross, and which is necessary to salvation, to be perverted and destroyed.

Now, the holders of this infallible teaching office are the Roman Pontiff and the bishops in communion with him, and the Pope may exercise this office alone as well as together with the bishops. They decide what the Catholic Christian is to believe, and what he has to do in order to be saved. When we follow these we may be at rest concerning the salvation of our souls, for so Christ has assured us in the following threefold promise. From Him we have, first, the promise of the divine presence; secondly, the promise of the Holy Ghost; and, thirdly, the promise of the invincibility of the Church.

1. Just previous to His ascension Our Lord said to His disciples, "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matthew xxviii. 20). Now, this promise could not be restricted to the apostles only, for no one of them lived much beyond the natural period of time allotted to man here below. The words of promise were intended for their successors and for the Christian Church which these were to guide, and which was to last till the end of time, and

which consists of the several churches or congregations founded directly by the apostles themselves or indirectly by their disciples.

2. Our Saviour promised further, "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth" (John xiv. 16, 17). This Spirit of truth was to guard them against error. But as this promise, too, as well as the first, was to be realized and prolonged beyond the term of one mortal life, and to be extended into eternity, it was spoken not only for the apostles, but also for their successors in the sacred office.

3. Lastly, Our Saviour said of the Church that He was about to found, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew xvi. 18). Hence she is unconquerable, for the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, is with her; she is superior to error, falsehood, force, and treachery.

Hence St. Paul styles the Church "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy iii. 15). To say that the Church errs is equivalent to saying "Either Christ has not been able to protect His Church or He did not choose to do so." If He was unable to protect her, where is the power of His divinity? If He did not choose to do so, what truth was there in His solemn promise? With the belief in an infallible teaching office stands or falls all belief in Christ, the Son of God.

Whenever, therefore, disputes arise concerning matters of faith and morals, whenever anything is presented to us, in writing or in speech, which seems to diverge from the ordinary straight line of truth, we should turn to the chief pastors of the Church, to those who have the care of souls, and submit it to their judgment as to whether it is true Catholic faith or not. For

Christ Himself called "some apostles, and some prophets, . . . and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: . . . that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians iv. 11-14). Thus, to secure a firm faith, we are sent to the pastors and the doctors. We are commended to them, that we may not be misled by false teachers who preach what, indeed, flatters our ears, pleases our senses, and destroys our souls. Such false teachers arose even in the time of the apostles, and such there have been from Simon Magus down to the most recent apostles of unbelief and godlessness who overturn Mount Sinai and substitute disobedience and disorder for obedience and peace.

As we have already heard, our salvation depends on the true faith, and it depends also on divine grace, which we stand in need of, and also on our compliance with the divine will. Now, all this is to be found only in the Church founded by Christ, and hence, in order to be saved, we are in duty bound ever to be obedient children of the holy Catholic Church—that is, we must believe her teachings, make use of her means of grace, and observe her commandments.

There is one sure test of the Catholic Christian, and that test is obedience to the Church. Without this there can be no Catholicity in him. Although in these days we hear many a one say, "I am a Catholic and a Christian, although I do not believe all that I hear preached and do not do all that I am commanded to do," we can tell him to his face that for these very reasons he is no Catholic, for he is wanting in the

necessary submission and obedience. With such people we should have no further intercourse than that which Christian charity necessarily imposes on us. We should show them that they are not deserving of our friendship or our confidence, and that we have dealings with them only so far as necessity demands. We should not fail to practise toward them all the duties of Christian charity, yet we must keep them far from us, for, according to the words of Our Lord, "if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Matthew xviii. 17).

Hence, when we say, "I believe in one holy Catholic Church," we mean to say, "We confess that Christ has established a Church, which we must believe and obey unconditionally if we wish to obtain eternal salvation, and that such Church is no other than the Roman Catholic." Or we profess in other words, "The Catholic Church is the only saving Church. She is the ark sent by God, in which every one must find himself if he would escape destruction." Outside of her there is no salvation. We enunciate nothing more than what the great and learned St. Athanasius asserts in strong and positive words at the close of his Creed, "There is no doubt that he who does not preserve this belief entire and unimpaired will be eternally lost."

Apparently this is a hard saying for Catholics to utter, but it is only apparently so, for every sect, when taken at its word, says the same of itself, that it alone has the truth and the true way to heaven. That is the main issue of their conflicts and different professions and confessions, to know which has the right one and the true system of belief. Each one is convinced that it is the only true way to salvation. And, in fact, since true faith is a virtue, as shown above, it is certain

that it only can lead to happiness and salvation. The adherents of other denominations hold and teach that he who dies in a state of hatred, anger, dishonesty, unrighteousness, or unchastity is eternally lost, which is the same as saying that the virtues of charity, meekness, modesty, justice, and chastity are saving virtues, and that the opposite vices lead to everlasting perdition. Hence it must be admitted that the true faith alone can save us, and not unbelief, error, or superstition.

With regard to Protestants, who in their beginning went too far on this point, holding, as they did, that faith alone could save us, let the works be what they may, we have only to prove that our faith is the true faith. This we do by showing that our faith is the same as that held by the apostles and their first disciples, that our bishops come down in unbroken succession from the apostles, and that the fruits of our faith are the same as those of the apostles and as foretold by Christ.

Later on there were Protestants who, in order to extricate themselves from this false position, invented a theory which held that there are in Christianity primary and secondary truths, that the latter are indifferent, while, to secure salvation, it is necessary to have faith in the former. But who among men would presume to decide what is of importance and what is of little import when God speaks? Who would presume to say that this commandment is to be observed, the other one not; that Baptism is not necessary, Holy Orders are superfluous, the Eucharist may be rejected, and Penance disregarded? Would such teaching be becoming to any reasonable man? Moreover, it is easy to perceive that even these few points mentioned differ in degree and importance one from the other.

How absurd and false this theory is, is best proven by the fact that these very Protestants have never yet been able to settle among themselves which truths are primary and important, and which are secondary and indifferent.

In our days there are those who have no faith at all. For it may be said that they doubt, for the most part, whether their belief leads to salvation or not, teaching rather that good works alone will save us, and if we do those we may believe what we choose. This opinion, as shown in another place, is altogether false. It must be met boldly by the Catholic believer, who has but to reply as follows, "Granted that the principle were true, which it is not, yet the Catholic Church must be the saving Church, for she possesses all these good and God-pleasing works. She is in possession of them, because her faith impels and inflames to all good."

Man is endowed with tendencies to certain virtues, but that these tendencies may be brought into action and effect, a motive-power is needed, as in the case of a machine water-power is needed, or the force and power of wind or steam, in order that the wheels may move and the work be accomplished. Now, the motive-power which puts a man's leanings into motion is faith. Hence it is taught, "The just man liveth by faith," that is, faith is the motive-power to a Christian life for a just man. Very aptly St. Paul says: "Faith worketh by charity," and not charity by faith, for charity is, as it were, the medium through which faith works. Although the faith of the Catholic Church incites us to the practise of virtue, this mere incitement is not sufficient; some efficacious means are required in order to attain to such virtue. These means the Catholic Church affords us in the holy sacraments and other means of grace. Hence it is that our holy

Church has at all times supplied so many and such great models of every virtue in all lands and climes, and amid persons of every rank and condition in life, while all the other churches, which are false, are unable to point to one saint among themselves.

Still more, the apostles and the early Fathers of the Church teach expressly that such works only are pleasing to God, and deserving of merit in His eyes, as have been done in a spirit of true faith and bear the impress of Jesus Christ Himself. "As a piece of gold," says St. Chrysostom, "will not pass current as money unless it is stamped with the image of the emperor, so are good works without merit before God if the image of the Crucified is not stamped upon them." But it is only the Catholic Church that possesses this true faith. Hence she alone is the saving Church, even from the point of view of good works.

This doctrine, that the Catholic Church is the only saving one, is neither unjust nor cruel. She did not invent this doctrine. It arises necessarily from the nature of things, for virtue and not vice leads men to salvation. It was plainly taught by Christ and His apostles that "he who believeth not is already judged." Nor is this doctrine cruel. We say that the Catholic Church is the only saving institution established by Christ, and that if we wish to be saved we must be in communion with her. This connection may be visible or invisible. St. Augustine, and indeed the whole Catholic Church, distinguishes between the body of the Church and its soul. To the body belong all those who, being baptized, openly profess adherence to her, be they just or wicked. To the soul of the Church belong, before all others, those rightly believing Christians who are in a state of grace, and, secondly, also those persons who believe falsely or not at all, but are

in error through no fault of their own. Nor need they be persons of perfect life, as is sometimes erroneously stated, but all those who have a just and sincere wish to know God and to serve Him—all those, therefore, says St. Chrysostom, who are on the way, *in via*, to God and consequently stand in some union with Him. Is this a hard saying? Would Protestants have us to believe and to teach that those persons will see God who do not wish to know Him, who do not wish to serve Him, and do not desire to obtain heaven?

The Church does not decide what individuals among dissenting sects belong to the soul of the Church, or who do not. For, before being competent to pronounce such a judgment, she must know what favorable circumstances surround the person, helping him to discover the truth, and what use he makes of these opportunities, and also the hindrances that may stand in his way and the efforts he makes to remove them. All these things are known to God alone. But it is certain that the number of those who are in error by their own fault, and who for that reason are lost, is greater than many suppose. For when we remember how many there are in the world who are indifferent as to what religion they live in; when we remember how little concerned they are about finding out the truth; when we remember that the Catholic Church has existed for nineteen hundred years, and that her doctrines are preached from all her pulpits; that her Catechisms and doctrinal works lie open before all; when we remember the fact that the disunion prevailing among all the sects detached from the Church should lead the non-Catholic to reflect; when we remember that the finger of God, in guiding the destinies of the Catholic Church, must be plainly visible to all, how can we venture to believe that very many of our separated

brethren are not culpably and wilfully ignorant of the truth ?

In his work on the unity of the Church, St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, writes, "Whosoever separates himself from the Church shuts himself out from the promises of the Church, and he will not obtain the rewards of Christ who leaves the Church of Christ. He becomes a stranger, an unholy person, an enemy. He can not have God for his Father who has not the Church for his Mother. As no one not enclosed within the ark of Noe could escape destruction, so can no one who is outside of the Church escape perdition." What was true in those early days is still true in our own, for, although heaven and earth should pass away, the promises made by God to His Church shall not pass away.

The same saint goes still farther, "The Lord gives warning: 'He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth.'" Whoever rends the peace and unity of Christ acts against Christ. Whoever gathereth anywhere outside of the Church scattereth the Church of Christ. The Lord says, "I and the Father are one."

## V. THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

### Grounds for Infallibility.

CHRIST established His Church on earth to be the teacher of all truth. A knowledge of this divinely revealed truth, and a firm belief in it, is one of the first methods for all people to obtain eternal happiness. Hence Christ took care that this truth should be proclaimed pure and unadulterated at all times to all men. It is not error, but truth, that leads to happiness.

Since the teaching function of the Church was to repose in men who are all liable to err, and the more so in proportion as the truths transcend the sensible faculties of perception and understanding, the question arises, How did Christ provide for the safe maintenance of divine truth in the Church? This charge He could not entrust to men as mere men, and hence this extraordinary effect must be brought about by extraordinary means. This means, whereby the infallible teaching function is preserved in the Church, is the supernatural grace and assistance of the Holy Ghost. It is only with this, and by virtue of this divine aid, that the teachers in the Church are infallible on matters of divine truth, and never of themselves.

That Christ promised and granted and sent the Holy Ghost to His Church, that is, to its teachers, is easily proved from the Holy Scriptures. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world," is the promise of Christ in Matthew xxviii. 20; and again, "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive, because it seeth Him not nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you and shall be in you" (John xiv. 16-17). "But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth" (John xvi. 13).

What Christ promised to His apostles He fulfilled on Whitsunday by really sending the Holy Spirit. Hence from that date the Church in her teaching office could be truly called "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy iii. 15), while at the Council of the Apostles St. Peter could proclaim the decrees of the assembly in the words, "It hath pleased the Holy Ghost and us" to ordain so and so.

At all times a decision of the teaching authority in the Church, concerning matters of faith and divinely revealed morals, was considered as infallible, or, as St. Ignatius tersely and appropriately describes it, "a God-spoken word."

### **Object of Infallibility.**

The infallibility of the Church extends only to divinely revealed doctrines of faith and morals. The Church was established in order to make men eternally happy, hence her teaching function can extend but to those truths a belief in which is necessary to obtain salvation. These doctrines are termed essential to salvation because on their acceptance depends man's eternal salvation. To them are applicable the words of Christ, "He who believeth not is already judged." Consequently it is twofold. The teaching power in the Church can decide what is the subject of divine teachings, and then what doctrines, propositions, etc., are opposed to them and, consequently, to be considered errors. Therefore, no matter what nature seems to teach, or other false teachers proclaim, the Church does not trouble herself about the matter as long as they do not invade her teaching province. The astronomer may teach that the earth revolves about the sun, or the sun about the earth; the Church is indifferent, for man's eternal salvation does not depend on belief in either one or the other of the theories. But if the astronomer presume in any way to deny that God is the Creator of the universe, then, indeed, the teaching authority of the Church must, and always does, protest against the false teaching and condemn it.

In this sense, and only in this, has the Catholic Church exercised her infallible teaching authority. She has never put forth her infallibility as a per-

sonal prerogative, in a personal matter, or on any other subjects than the divinely revealed truths of salvation. Even her disciplinary statutes are not rated among those teachings which the Church proclaims with the prerogative of her infallibility.

### **Where is Infallibility ?**

Only such persons can possess and exercise the prerogative of infallibility as have been appointed by Jesus Christ, and to whom He has promised and granted the necessary aiding graces. In the first rank of such are the apostles. To them only, that is, to the apostolate, did He entrust the function of teachers ; to them only did He give the Holy Ghost. By the apostles is understood the whole apostolate, hence also the successors of the apostles, that is to say, the bishops. For, as the Church was to endure for all time, it was requisite that her infallible teaching office should not cease with the apostles' death. Hence Christ promised to the apostles that the Holy Ghost should abide with the apostolate, not only till the time of their death, but till the end of the world ; hence the united and continued successors of the apostles through all ages were necessarily meant.

The Catholic Church exercises this teaching authority in her general councils, in her decrees of bishops even when these are not assembled together in one place, but are merely asked their opinions, and finally in the decisions of the Popes.

### **The General Councils.**

A general council takes place when the Pope has summoned all the bishops of the Catholic Church to a meeting at which he presides in person or through his

delegated representative, and when he confirms the decrees.

The decrees of such a council, in as far as they affect the teachings of divine revelation, have a claim to infallibility, because in such a council the teaching authorities are assembled, namely, the bishops.

This character of the above described council decrees has been acknowledged in all ages. By them, all strife and contention on points of faith and morals are avoided, and the faithful laity are assured of what is truth and what is error. If a general council could err the whole teaching body of the Church would err, the laity would be led astray, the promises made by Christ to His Church would be falsified, and the true road to salvation would be lost to the adherents of the Church.

Beside general councils there are provincial councils and diocesan synods. The first take place when an archbishop assembles about him the suffragan bishops of the dioceses within the province. Their decrees have force only within that province, and must receive the approbation of the Pope, who can also declare these decrees binding on the whole Church. The diocesan synod is the meeting of the clergy of one diocese under the presidency of their bishop. Such a synod is competent to treat of points of discipline, never of doctrine, because not the priests, but only the bishops, are the teachers appointed by Christ in His Church.

### **Doctrinal Decisions of Bishops out of Council.**

The Church can also exercise her teaching authority in another way. The united bishops of the Church, in union with the Pope, although not assembled together,

can decide upon a point of doctrine when, after being consulted by the Pope, each one gives his own individual opinion. It is clear that in such a case the teaching authority of the Church is legitimately and competently exercised, for the physical meeting of the bishops is not necessary in order to establish a doctrine of the Church—only their concurrence with the Pope, whether expressed orally or in writing. During the course of centuries many errors were in this way condemned by the Church, and especially were the decisions of provincial synods made binding on the whole Church. In our time the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin was pronounced a dogma of faith by this method.

### **Papal Infallibility.**

When we say that the Pope is infallible, we mean that all the decisions rendered by the Pontiff, when speaking *ex cathedra*, as Pope, are to be accepted as true by all Catholics, because such decisions have been reached through the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Hence the Vatican Council prescribed the teaching of faith in the following form of words: "Since we have always adhered firmly to the traditions dating from the beginning of Christian belief, we teach with the consent of this Holy Council, for the glory of God, Our Saviour, for the elevation of the Catholic religion, and the sanctification of Christian people, and we declare it to be an article of faith, revealed by God, that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks officially and *ex cathedra*, that is, when he speaks in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his sublime apostolic authority, and decides a doctrine (which affects faith and morals) to be held by

the Church, by virtue of the power and assistance promised to Peter, possesses that infallibility which the divine Redeemer imparted to His Church when deciding a question of faith and morals; and that such decision is unalterable, not because of the consent of the Church, but of itself. If any one, which God forbid, shall presume to contradict this definition, let him be anathema."

Here it is of importance to understand the term "ex cathedra" if we would have a safe and correct notion of the infallibility of the Pope.

The Pope speaks *ex cathedra* (1) when he utters a decision in a question of divinely revealed doctrine, whether in faith or morals. The Church predicates the infallibility of the Pope within this scope of doctrine because it was for such only that the Holy Ghost was given to the apostles, and it is only such doctrines that constitute the means of obtaining eternal salvation. The universal teaching Church does not extend its infallibility to any wider sphere, neither does the Pope. Papal infallibility can not and should not be extended to the region of other sciences, such as natural sciences, political questions, and others. Even the Pope can err in his opinions and decisions on the inward dispositions of persons, for such is not a question of divine revelation and the Pope is not omniscient.

It seems hardly necessary to observe that the infallibility of the Pope should not be confounded with his impeccability. If the Pope commit a sin, for he is human and always remains such, it does not affect the justness of those teachings which he pronounces as head of the teaching Church guided by the Holy Ghost. All this happens continually in every-day life. Even the most wicked man is capable of uttering the truth, and whether the pure water from the fountain-

head come to us through a conduit of silver or gold or iron, it is always the same water. The Holy Ghost has been bestowed on the persons composing the teaching office of Christ, only that they may not go astray in matters of divine saving doctrines and may not proclaim error; and not that each person, even the Pope himself, may be preserved from faults and sins.

To the genuineness of *ex cathedra* decisions it is requisite also (2) that the Pope speak without any restraint upon his freedom, in a solemn way to the whole Church, and with the expressed purpose of binding the whole Catholic Church to a belief in his opinion.

Hence not all that the Pope speaks or writes belongs to the sphere of infallibility, not even those decrees, such as briefs and bulls, which he often addresses, even on dogmatic questions, to individual bishops, without, however, the intention of compelling all the faithful to accept them. But it is otherwise when the Pope publicly and for the whole Church solemnly condemns this or that error and threatens all those who adhere to it with excommunication from the Catholic Church.

And (3) it is almost self-evident, and yet how frequently overlooked, that the decisions of the Popes can not be in contradiction with the Holy Scriptures or with Tradition.

Since (4) the *ex cathedra* decisions of the Pope are given with the guidance and assistance of the Holy Ghost, they are, in and for themselves, like the decrees of a general council, irrevocable, and do not need to be accepted and ratified by a subsequent adherence of the bishops in order to be declared universally binding. Hence could St. Augustine truthfully say *Roma locuta*

*est, causa finita est.* Rome, that is to say, the Pope, has spoken, therefore the case is decided.

Thus the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* when, as supreme teacher, and as such under the direction of the Holy Ghost, with perfect freedom from duress and in a solemn manner, he utters a decision regarding a question of divine revelation as contained in Scripture and revelation. Such decision addressed to the universal Church becomes obligatory everywhere.

It is only when all these conditions are fulfilled that the Pope has spoken as infallible teacher. If one only of these conditions be wanting the character of infallibility lapses.

### **Infallibility and the Sacred Scriptures.**

Like every other article of faith, that of infallibility must have its foundation in Holy Scriptures and Tradition.

In Holy Scriptures there are three passages especially that can receive their full explanation and application only through the light of infallibility.

1. Once when Jesus asked His apostles who men said He was, St. Peter made answer and said, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew xvi. 16). In response to this profession of faith by Peter, Christ 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, [that is, rock] 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 upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matthew xvi. 17-19).

In the first place St. Peter, who had at the time of his calling been named "rock" by Christ, is here designated as the person who, by virtue of Christ's commission and power, was to serve as the foundation of His Church. The words, "Thou art Peter," or rock, "and on this rock I will build My Church," can not be understood in any other sense ; nor has any other meaning been successfully assigned to them till the present day. But for what purpose is the Church established on this rock ? Christ tells us plainly that the Church shall resist the gates of hell successfully : they shall not prevail against her. But if the entire force of the gates of hell shall not overpower the Church, it is self-evident that the foundation of the Church can not be overturned. It is precisely from this foundation that the Church receives its firmness and stability, as every house is dependent for its very existence mainly on the durability of its ground foundations.

But, now, how has the conflict of hell, that is, of evil, been waged against the Church ? History teaches us that this combat has been waged chiefly against divine truth, which dwells in the Church. And this is quite natural. For it is the vital characteristic of the Church that she proclaims the truth to the world. Could she be conquered by error she would cease to be the Church of Christ. But as the Church, invincible in truth, derives her stability from the foundation that Christ gave to her in the person of St. Peter, it follows as a consequence that this foundation, that is to say, St. Peter, would never be overthrown by error after he had been appointed the foundation of the teaching Church and thus her chief head and supreme teacher. The Church and her chief teacher are both infallible, because through the design and the grace of

God she has never been seduced into error and has never been conquered by it.

In a similar manner Christ delivered to St. Peter specially and personally the sublime power of binding and loosing in His Church. This is a right of acting authoritatively in the Church of Christ as signified by the power of the keys. This right to act authoritatively in the Church, since it extends to the whole Church, must also include the right and authority to teach. Here, too, were the teachers of the Church of Christ to be at all times bound to defined articles of belief, to a defined body of truths, that thus, while knowing the truth, they would discover any error and condemn it. But as only the pure and undiminished truth can lead men to heaven, Christ could not and did not permit that the chief guardian and expounder of truth should fall into error, and thus, as chief teacher of the Church, force her adherents to the acceptance of such error. Thus St. Peter would have lost the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever he would bind on earth could not any longer be bound in heaven.

2. In the most intimate connection with the foregoing passage just explained, aye, even as its full completion, another deduction should be drawn from St. Luke's gospel (xxii. 31-32). According to the account of this Evangelist, Jesus, after His Last Supper, said to St. Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren."

By this sifting, to which Satan desired to subject St. Peter, nothing else can be meant than that Satan wished to mislead the apostles into a wavering of their faith in Christ. It is only thus that the succeeding

words of Christ can have any meaning, when He says that He prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail.

Christ then prayed for St. Peter that his faith might not fail. Herein lies the explanation why St. Peter can be the immovable rock of the teaching Church. In his own human character he could not be such. He is such simply because Christ prayed for the firmness and durability of his faith, because Christ sustains him. And what is the effect of Christ's prayer for St. Peter? No other than this, namely, that Peter may strengthen his brethren in the faith. But how could strength and safety in faith proceed from St. Peter if, chief teacher as he was, he could fall into error? This confirming of St. Peter in the faith took place when, after being first called by Christ to be the head of the Church, he received the Holy Ghost on Whitsunday. Up to that time we see in St. Peter a simple man capable of erring, though he never fell from the faith. From the day of Pentecost we behold him a chosen vessel of election, an agent of Christ.

3. At the time of his profession of faith in the divinity of Christ St. Peter was made the foundation of the Church. Again, when he asserted his love for Christ, which is the completion and perfection of faith, he was made the full shepherd and guardian of the Church. In the two preceding, as well as in the two following, passages are clearly perceived the teaching office, the priestly office and the pastoral office, which Christ entrusted to St. Peter as to His visible representative in the Church.

"Feed My lambs, feed My sheep," said Christ to the Prince of the apostles (John xxi. 15-17). In this commission, delivered as it is to St. Peter, is entrusted to him the office of chief pastor over the entire Church, clergy and laity. Peter was to lead all the adherents

of the Church, to feed them and to guide them according to the intention, and by the power, of Christ, whose representative he was always to be. But Christ is the way, the truth and the life. On this same way was Peter to conduct those entrusted to his keeping, and to feed and to nourish them with that same truth, and to lead them to that same life, which is in Christ only. But if the guidance of the faithful to life is to be sure and certain, it must always be a guidance founded in truth. Error can never lead any one to Christ. Hence it follows that St. Peter could never err in matters of the saving truths. Hence he was necessarily infallible, and should be so if the Christ-work of atonement was not to be useless and eternally lost.

Having shown that the infallibility of the supreme head of the Church is asserted and taught in the Scriptures, it may now be shown briefly how this prerogative must necessarily be perpetuated in the successors of St. Peter, the Popes.

For what purpose did Christ bestow upon Peter the favor of infallibility in his sublime office of Church teacher? For no other purpose than that the truth brought by Christ to the world as a means of salvation should be taught pure and unchanged by the chief teacher of the Church. Since Christ wishes that all men in all ages shall be saved, the ways and means for such salvation should exist through all ages. In the Church pure truth must last and exist as long as that teaching institution which He gave to His Church shall exist, as long as the Church shall endure, which is till the end of time. It was for such length of time that Christ promised His miraculous grace-assistance to the teaching office in the Church. Hence not St. Peter alone, but all his lawful successors have a par-

ticipation in the miraculous help of infallibility promised by Christ. The right of complete succession carries this with it. For he is not worthy of the name of successor, in the true sense of the word, if he be not admitted to the full office, and all the rights, privileges and prerogatives, of his predecessors. Thus it is evident of itself that all ecclesiastical teachings and practises, even the mode of action of the Popes, have been ever based on the consciousness of papal infallibility.

### **Infallibility and Tradition.**

We must be extremely careful above all things to guard against the error of presuming that when a general council proclaims an article of faith, it has invented or discovered such article. The teaching office in the Church can not invent a doctrine; it merely declares solemnly and formally what has been the belief at all times of the Church concerning the question in hand. The Council of Nice, in the year 325, no more invented the doctrine of the divinity of Christ than did the Council of Constantinople, in the year 381, invent or discover the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Nor was the doctrine of infallibility a mere invention of the Vatican Council. This and all other dogmas of faith always existed in Catholic conviction and belief.

With regard to papal infallibility this may be proved by the following testimony from the Fathers and from the councils, while we show how this doctrine was held and taught in the Church and acted on by the Popes.

1. Let us first hear St. Irenæus, who died in the year 202, and who had for his teacher St. Polycarp, a disciple of St. John the Evangelist. In his book against

heresies St. Irenæus writes: "All churches, that is to say, the faithful in all places, must agree with the Roman Church on account of her mighty rank. In her the faithful of all places have ever found and kept apostolic Tradition." This testimony, so ancient and venerable, affords us a powerful proof of the teaching authority and prestige of the Church of Rome. That here, by the word "church," not all the believing faithful, but only the bishops of Rome are meant, is easily understood, for in no time were the laity, as such, the keepers of Tradition, that is, of the doctrines of the Church.

Immediately before the above passage he gives the reason why all the faithful should agree with Rome. He says, to refute the heretics and their errors, that he might refer to and quote the teachings of the bishops of all the churches, but, as it would be too tedious to enumerate all these bishops, he confined himself to that apostolic Tradition which had been preserved by the greatest, oldest and best known Church, which had been founded by the two glorious apostles, Peter and Paul. Thus he restricted himself to that belief and faith only which the Church proclaims through her bishops. By this only those who think wrong are made ashamed. But in these words are implied the opinion that the teaching office in the Church is infallible.

The teaching authority of the Church in Rome can be none other than the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. With him, therefore, must all the other churches concur in their teachings, in order to be sure that they possess the truth.

2. St. Ambrose, who died in the year 397, writes, "The foundation of the Church must endure solidly against all heresies;" and again, "Where Peter is, that

is, the Pope, there is the Church ; and where the Church is there is no death, but everlasting life." Now, the foundation of the Church, which is the Papacy, can endure solidly under the attacks of heresy only as long as it retains the truth ; and the everlasting life for all of us rests solely in the truth revealed by Christ. St. Jerome, who died in the year 420, teaches the same thing. St. Augustine, who died in the year 430, says, " Never will any one acknowledge your faith to be Catholic if you do not admit that one must hold fast to the Roman faith. What further inquiry can you desire than that already made by the apostolic chair ? The errors condemned by that authority need no further investigation by the bishops." Rome has spoken, the case is settled. Passing over many other authorities let us glance at the sayings of St. Fulgentius, who lived in the sixth century. He says : " Whatever the head of the world, the Roman Church, holds and teaches, is believed without a question by the whole Christian world unto justice, and acknowledged without hesitation unto salvation." It would be an easy matter to go on quoting countless testimonies of later centuries, especially such as those of St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas of Aquinas, St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Francis of Sales, St. Alphonsus Liguori and others. But after the above evidences this would be unnecessary to show that the infallibility of the Pope was not only known and understood by the Fathers of the Church, but also expressly and emphatically taught by them.

3. An irresistible proof that all the councils acknowledged the infallibility of the Pope is found in the positive fact that they always submitted their transactions to the Pope for confirmation, and never considered their doings valid or binding on the Church until the Pope

ratified them. How could such proceeding be explained intelligently if the fathers of the councils did not admit the infallibility of the supreme teacher ?

It must be borne in mind that at the more ancient Church councils, the doctrine of papal infallibility was not discussed or defined because it was never questioned. Those councils were held for the purpose of declaring what was genuine Catholic doctrine, at times and on occasions when certain points of faith were questioned and even denied. Among the many heresies that sprang up, no one of them ever denied specifically the doctrine of papal infallibility, and hence no council was ever called upon to treat the question. Yet these ancient councils do not leave us devoid of proofs of the doctrine. A few of the most striking may be here adduced.

When Pope St. Leo I. sent his dogmatical writings to the fourth general council of Chalcedon, held in 551, on account of the errors concerning Christ, the fathers of that council declared, "Peter hath spoken through Leo ; it is therefore not allowed to make any change." Here the impossibility of an appeal from a papal sentence is fully acknowledged by a council. The decrees of this same council were proclaimed by the legates of the Pope in the following words, "Therefore His Holiness, the Archbishop of great and ancient Rome, has, through us and through the present sacred assembly, under the assistance of the holiest and most praiseworthy apostle, Peter, who is the rock and foundation of the Catholic Church and the corner-stone of the true faith, deposed Dioscurus as well from his episcopal dignity as from his entire priestly functions." Now, how could the Pope as successor of St. Peter be called the foundation of the true faith if, at the same time, the infallibility of the chief teacher in the Church,

the Pope, was not held to be an integral part of Catholic conviction and belief?

Equally striking are the letters of Pope Agatho which, on the occasion of the council at Constantinople, in 680, he addressed to the Emperor Constantine IV. and through him to the members of the council. In one of these Agatho writes, "That only is the true rule of faith which has been constantly held by the apostolic Church which never has departed from the paths of apostolic Tradition, never has been changed by heretical innovations, but perseveres in the true faith till the end of time. For Jesus Christ said to Peter, 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou be converted that thou confirm thy brethren.' Now, all this has been verified and realized fully in my predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, as every one knows." To this papal letter the fathers of the council replied, "Severe maladies need powerful remedies, hence Christ the Lord has given your Holiness as a skilful physician to drive out the poison of the heretical plague by the teachings of the true faith, and to restore health to the members of the Church. For this reason we leave to you the final sentence in this matter of the Monothelite heresy, as to the highest authority in the universal Church which rests upon the immovable rock of true faith."

The council of Constantinople, in the year 869, passed a resolution in which it is asserted, "The Catholic religion and its sacred doctrines have always been believed by the Apostolic See and preserved from all blemish."

The two councils of Florence and that of Lyons say, "To the Pope belongs the fulness of authority, so that he is the teacher of all Christians and the one by whom are decided all questions of faith."

In the beginning of the sixth century an assembly of Oriental bishops wrote to Pope Symmachus, "Thou art taught daily by St. Peter to feed the sheep of Christ who are everywhere on earth committed to thy care."

In more recent times nearly every provincial council becomes a witness to papal infallibility.

4. Amid these evidences, which could easily be multiplied by the hundred, is the proof that the dogma of infallibility, as promulgated by the Vatican Council, is no new doctrine or one discovered for the first time by that council. It lay buried in the conviction of the whole ancient Church. The Vatican Council merely gave outward and clearly defined expression of an old belief; it could not be more than declaratory, it was such only. Half the world had been busy with this question. Books for and against had been multiplied without number, the whole public press had discussed it in every conceivable manner. It had become a subject of universal comment and of world-wide contention and, therefore, the council could no longer defer the responsibility of a decision. When doubt and uncertainty had crept into the hearts of so many, the teaching authority in the Church was constrained to speak.

## VI. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE ONLY SANCTIFYING AND SAVING CHURCH.

It must not be lost sight of that the Church does not say that only those who are baptized Catholics and brought up as such can be saved. She teaches that among all the so-called churches only the Catholic Church can secure our happiness. This doctrine does not judge or condemn any person for the reason that he does not belong to the outward communion of

the Catholic Church, but merely asserts that she alone possesses the means established by Christ which have the power of making us happy. Whoever belongs to the visible communion of the Catholic Church will be saved if he believes, desires, receives and retains the doctrines, means of grace, and commandments of the Church, as the Church wills and prescribes he should do. Even a man who does not belong to the external or visible body of the Church may be saved, but it will not be by the means supplied him in his own sect, which is false, but rather through a very special grace of God, with which such a person can cooperate if he have a truly good will and sincere desire of doing right.

The Catholic Church teaches that a man can be saved through herself and no other.

1. Because it is only within her communion that the means of salvation established by Christ can be found in all their purity and entirety.

Man can be saved only in Christ, that is to say, only in the way marked out by Him. No other name is given to us whereby we must be saved than the name of Jesus (Acts iv. 12). It can not, therefore, be a matter of free choice for any man to mark out for himself the way to salvation. Freedom in religion has been limited by the law of Christ. The means available and necessary to salvation are the doctrines, graces and commandments of Christ. These He has deposited in His own Church founded by Himself. What this true Church is, has been already demonstrated. It is the Catholic Church. Hence she alone possesses the right means of salvation, and for that reason is the only Church that has within herself the power to save souls.

2. Christ commands us to belong to this Church, to

believe her teachings, to make use of her means of grace, and to observe her precepts. "He who will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican," says the Lord in Matthew xviii. 17. In another passage, too, He gives the same command, saying, "He that heareth you, heareth Me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me" (Luke x. 16). On the necessity of accepting His teaching Christ says emphatically, "He that believeth not, shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16).

Hence if the Church could teach that man can secure his salvation in any church as safely as in her communion, she would contradict the word of God, declare herself to be other than the true Church of God, and would decide conclusively that it is a matter of indifference whether a man believe truth or error.

3. In regard to those persons who do not belong to the Church, such as unbaptized pagans and Jews, as well as heretics, and those schismatics who, though denying no tenet of the Church, are separated from her, and also excommunicated persons, the Church does not by any means teach that they are personally lost. She does teach that such persons as are outside of her pale, without any fault of their own, and who to the best of their ability keep God's commandments and sincerely desire the true faith, may succeed in saving their souls. But as to what persons are separated from the Church without any fault of theirs, she does not decide. That question belongs to God, because He only penetrates the hearts and brains of men. Hence the Church curses no person; she merely condemns error and abhors vice.

It is true that the question about a man's certainty or uncertainty of working out his salvation, in or out

of the Church, is far different. The Catholic Church is a secure conveyance for us to gain our salvation ; outside of her communion, though salvation is possible under certain circumstances and fixed conditions, it is not promised.

This thought should impel us (1) to inward gratitude toward God, who, without any merit of ours, has called us to be members of His Church ; (2) to unchangeable fidelity toward that saving institution, the Catholic Church ; to a desire of knowing and believing her doctrines, of assiduously using her means of grace, and of keeping faithfully her commandments in every circumstance of our life ; to an endeavor to manifest our faith through our mode of life, for indifferent and nominal Catholics are but as lukewarm water, insipid and unwholesome ; and (3) to Christian charity, and to prayer for those who have not the happiness to be members of our Church. The Church herself prays for them and urges us to do the same. Therefore let us never forget this our Catholic duty. Our fellow-beings have an immortal soul, created for heaven ; let us commend them to the mercy of God.

## VII. THE GROWTH AND UPHOLDING OF THE CHURCH.

The preaching of the apostles was attended with precious and blessed consequences, evidently the work of God rather than of men. These results consisted simply in the fact of their having converted the world, and substituting, in the place of the grossest superstitions and godlessness sanctioned by false religion, a respect for the true God, and having developed virtues of which no man prior to that time had any idea. All this was not the work of human abilities, but God's

work. Christianity waged war against the corrupt passions of men who, bad by nature, had adopted actually and on principle all vices. The doctrine of a crucified God, which was to appear, and really did appear, as folly wherever it was proclaimed, spread itself so rapidly over the whole globe that only one hundred and sixty years after the death of Christ Tertullian, the Christian writer, could thus address the pagans: "We are but of yesterday, yet we have filled all your places, cities, islands, castles, warehouses, palaces, legislative assemblies, and courts of justice; we have left you only your temples. For what war were we strong enough and sufficiently armed, for what active forces were we equal, were it not an established principle of our religion rather to be killed than to kill? Indeed, we needed no arms, no insurrection; by the mere threat of division we could have made war on you. Were we, with our great numbers, to be removed from your midst to a distant country, you would certainly have to tremble for the great change it would make in business and other important affairs. Then you would be unable to find willing subjects, and more enemies than citizens would be left to you." This rapid and widespread diffusion of the Christian system went on while all men, Jews as well as pagans, kings and emperors, did everything in their power to thwart it, and to stamp it out. We read even in the Acts of the Apostles that, because they preached, they were thrown enchained into prison, whence they were miraculously delivered (Acts v.); that St. Stephen was stoned to death (Acts vii.); that "Saul made havoc of the Church" in Jerusalem and elsewhere (Acts viii.); that King Herod put James the brother of John to death by the sword and sought to deal in a similar manner with St. Peter (Acts xii.).

The whole history of St. Paul after his miraculous conversion is one series of sufferings for the name of Christ, as he himself tells us in 2 Corinthians xi. 23-28. All these martyred apostles, and with them their disciples and followers, constituted a vast number of witnesses to the faith, and their blood on earth and their prayers in heaven contributed to the growth and prosperity of the Church. All manner of warfare was waged against the Christians, ridicule no less than open violence. Men made merry over the followers of a man who, although unable to save Himself from crucifixion, was honored as a God. The Christians were sneered at and called Nazarenes, and the Emperor Julian, the Apostate, would not suffer them to be known by any other name than Galileans. They were styled godless because they believed in only one God; they were accused of witchcraft because the genuineness of their miracles could not be questioned; they were charged with the crime of child-murder because a necessary privacy surrounded their divine service of the Lord's Supper. But both ridicule and violence failed in their effect. The Church, though most cruelly persecuted during three hundred years, continued to flourish, and the blood of her martyrs, which flowed in an unbroken stream, became the seed of new champions of the faith.

It often happened that the very executioners, astounded and edified at the constancy of the Christian victims, threw away their instruments of death and declared themselves believers in Christ. At last, in the year 312, Constantine the Great gave peace and outward rest to the long-persecuted Christians. God chose him to be their special protector. One day, when the emperor was about to engage in very uncertain battle, the Lord showed him in the sky a figure of

a bright cross surrounded with an inscription saying, "In this," sign, "thou shalt conquer." Constantine complied with the divine injunction, ordered the sign of the cross to be placed on all the banners of the army, and going forth conquered the enemy. From that time the Christians were enabled to profess their faith openly, to build their own churches, and to accept public offices of honor and trust. Constantine, having sought admission by baptism into the Church, surrounded himself with bishops for his counselors, made Christianity the religion of the State, and enacted laws whereby Christianity and Christian principles were introduced into the economy of the State and family life. The Church had gone through its baptism of fire.

But persecution was to be the lot of the Church in all ages and in all lands. At all times she had to encounter potent and persistent enemies, for wherever she planted her standard of the cross hell raised a storm of opposition. The blood of her children flowed in Africa and Asia as well as in Europe; in England, Germany and France as well as in Italy; in China and the Indies as well as in Holland and the Low Countries. The world was loth to be on terms of friendship with the principles of Christianity, it was loth to receive the gospel, and yielded only to the heroic efforts of a divine faith.

But the Saviour had foretold a victory in these words: Be not afraid, little flock; "have confidence; I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). The Church was not overcome, nor could she be, for Christ had so promised when He said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But yet the worst enemies of the Church were not always the avowed persecutors. There were others, too—the heretics—who sep-

arated themselves from the Catholic Church and formed their own congregations or sects, which the Church cut off from herself then because they would not agree with her doctrine—for a mortified limb should be cut from the body lest the other members be affected with the poisonous decay.

Such sects sprang into existence during the first ages of Christianity. The Saviour had foretold them, and the apostles had warned their hearers against them. Christ's words were, "Many false prophets shall rise, and shall seduce many" (Matthew xxiv. 11). This prediction found its fulfilment even in the apostles' time. The Scriptures tell us of one Simon Magus, who offered gold to the apostles on condition that they would impart to him the power of bringing down the Holy Ghost on such persons as he might impose hands. Such false prophets abused the Word of God, perverted His simplest doctrines by attributing to them meanings that they did not contain, and so misled the people that many wavered in their faith or lost it altogether. It is against such evils that St. Paul warns Timothy when he says, "There shall be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Timothy iv. 3). "For the word of God . . . is more piercing than any two-edged sword: reaching unto . . . the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews iv. 12). Now, as by the Word of God many who did not wish to live properly were disquieted, they had recourse to doctrines that flattered their passions and tended to drive from their minds all thoughts of God's everlasting judgments. Hence St. Peter writes, "Knowing this first that in the last days there shall come deceitful scoffers, walk-

ing after their own lusts, saying: Where is His promise or His coming? for since the time that the fathers slept, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter iii. 3-4), a truth that St. Jude the Apostle confirms in similar words, saying, "My dearly beloved, be mindful of the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who told you, that in the last time, there should come mockers, walking according to their own desires in ungodliness" (Jude 17-18).

Although the number of these sects was unusually large, this largeness of number led to their own condemnation, for it proves that those who separate themselves from the Church can not harmonize together, and thus their errors are ventilated and made known. For, as they disagree among themselves on the principal doctrines, and such as most forcibly concern the salvation of their own souls, it becomes clear that they do not know what truth is, and hence can not presume to charge the Catholic Church with error.

Here let no one dare to find fault because God permits His Church to lose members, and sometimes whole nations. For faith is a voluntary acceptance by the understanding, as St. Paul writes—"bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians x. 5). Without this free will, faith, which in and of itself is a grace of God, would not be meritorious. As with regard to the ten commandments man is free to give his obedience or not, so is it also with regard to faith.

Then, again, God permits secession in order that the Church may be purified from corrupt and decaying members. By the fact of these being cut off from the Church, if they go voluntarily, they declare themselves openly to be the enemies of the Church, and thus the

poison of their heresy is less harmful. The Church being no longer accountable for them as her members, and they themselves openly proclaiming their false doctrines, she is in a better position to combat their false teachings and wrong-doings. While thus combating error she finds herself necessitated to develop Catholic conviction the more clearly, and to adduce much reasoning to fortify faith. Thus she is indebted to these very attacks of her enemies for opportunities of proclaiming and making known her principles, of keeping her weapons of defense from rusting, and of sharpening her mental forces. In a word, the existence of divers religious sects contributes to strengthen her doctrines anew and to diffuse them more widely among men.

Thus, for instance, it was owing to the opposition of those heretics who arose in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Thessalonica and Philippi that St. Paul was induced to write to those congregations his various epistles, in which we find valuable material for the defense of our faith.

Probably we would not have had a single written line from any of the apostles or their immediate successors, such as Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, Polycarp, Ignatius, and others, had there been no opposition to the teaching of Christ. The important contest of the Church with Arianism supplied such men as Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and others with opportunities of combating all through the years of their life for the purity of Catholic belief, thus strengthening in their faith even such as remained true. It is thus that the Church has been compelled to seek out remedies and apply them to the healing of the wounds she sustained at the hands of her enemies.

This combating contributes to the grandeur of the Church, for the spirit of confidence and the hope of victory thus evoked in her members, stimulate them to renewed efforts for carrying the light of the gospel to those heathens who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. And the Lord, who wishes to call all men to Himself, is with such messengers of light. The loss of the unworthy members who leave the Church is richly compensated for by the conversion of pagan peoples, who will make better use of the grace of God. Thus, for example, St. Patrick converted Ireland; St. Columbkil, Scotland; St. Augustine, England; Sts. Columbanus, Fridolin, Gall, Emmeran, Kilian, Boniface, Willibrord, and others, Germany; and these conversions were taking place just at a time when in the old Eastern countries the Church had to maintain the fiercest conflicts with Arianism, Eutychianism, and Nestorianism. In every century the Church was thus consoled. Indeed the blessing of God was never so apparent within her as during her time of persecution. Even during the present, when her every doctrine is assailed, converts are flocking to her bosom.

Nor was it only individual champions that sprang to her defense, to the defense of her doctrine and discipline. The combined prelates of the whole Church assembled solemnly in Church councils, for the purpose of refuting heresies and enunciating the true teachings of the Church. It is easy to understand that these gatherings could not take place during the time of persecution. It is true that some few bishops met together for mutual counsel from time to time, as, for example, in the year 170, when some assemblages were called to condemn the errors of the Montanists. General councils were convened when persecution ceased, and peace was granted to the Church. Hardly had

she entered upon the enjoyment of her public rights and privileges when the bishops of the united Church assembled at Nice, in the year 325, and in the most solemn manner condemned Arius and his adherents.

And afterward, whenever a heresy presented itself, or any circumstance arose affecting the whole Church, the bishops assembled in a general or ecumenical council and took counsel one from another, after the example of the apostles in the first council at Jerusalem. We count twenty such councils, the last of which was the Vatican Council, so called from its having been held in the Vatican church, better known as St. Peter's, in Rome. This council, which was solemnly opened on the 8th of December, 1869, had to be hastily adjourned in the following October after having passed and published some decrees, the most notable of which was the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope.

The last council held before the Vatican was the council of Trent, opened in the year 1545 and closed in the year 1563.

In the year 1517 the so-called reformation was begun in Germany by Martin Luther. During many years Rome endeavored in vain by means of kind and forbearing action to allay the strife and contention that ensued, but was finally compelled to pronounce sentence of excommunication upon Martin Luther, who thereupon appealed to the authority of a general council, which, however, he refused to attend when it assembled. As there were many highly important questions to be discussed and settled, Clement, when assuming the Chair of Peter in 1523, announced in his inauguration discourse that he would assemble the much-needed council. Just then, however, the German Emperor Charles V. was about to make war on Francis I., King of France, and the Turks were invad-

ing Austria, so that it was impossible for the bishops to travel to any place assigned for a council. When things became more peaceful it was impossible to get the Protestants to agree upon a place of assembly. At last Pope Paul III. ordered the meeting to be held at Mantua in May, 1537. The Protestants refused to go to Italy. Finally, after several unsuccessful attempts at meeting, the council was called for the 1st of November, 1542, at Trent in the Tyrol. Yet it was only after the lapse of three years that the fathers could finally meet on the 1st day of December, 1545, owing to the continued hostilities between the governments.

In the summer of 1546 renewed wars interrupted the meetings of the bishops. They had hardly met together on the 13th of January, 1547, when a pestilence broke out in Trent, causing many of the fathers to withdraw to Bologna, so that from the 11th of March of that year till the 1st of May of 1551 no further questions could be considered. On the 28th of April, 1552, war again necessitated an adjournment, and it was not till ten years later, on the 18th of January, 1562, that the sessions could be resumed. From the last date the council continued its deliberations nearly two years, and finally closed its sessions on the 4th of December, 1563, after having held twenty-five sessions and settled upon a vast number of questions regarding faith, morals, and discipline.

The acts were signed by three patriarchs, twenty-five archbishops, one hundred and sixty-eight bishops, seven abbots, seven generals of Orders, and thirty-nine deputies of bishops.

On the 6th of November, 1564, the decrees were confirmed by Pope Pius IV. and on the 13th of the same month the same Pontiff published the profession of faith based on the decrees of the council.

From the history of this general council of Trent, as indeed of all the councils, we learn how devotedly attached were the prelates of the Church to the purity of faith and the reformation and maintenance of discipline, and how incessantly and indefatigably they labored and strove amid the most discouraging obstacles and difficulties.

Of course, if there is within the Church any divine assistance, it must be found wherever the authorities of the Church are assembled. Hence it is an article of faith that such duly authorized Church councils are enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and that their decrees are infallible. It would be contrary to sound reason to assume that the Holy Ghost is present in the different detached congregations of the Church and not in the assemblies of her teachers.

In the Confession of Faith as formulated by the council of Trent, each Catholic may find a standard for his right belief, and he knows what stand to take if division or schism arise. By it he is taught to guard against all idle questions and such as flatter merely the pride of intellect, and to content himself with embracing humbly and confidingly the teachings of the Church, and also to avoid everything that might cause him to waver in his belief. Hence it is his conscientious duty to avoid reading all such literature as is opposed to the Church, and to flee the company of such persons as talk in terms derogatory of the true faith. He is thus bound, not only out of the respect which he owes to the Church of God, but also out of a regard for his own salvation, for faith is a plant that can thrive only in the light of divine grace, and not in the feeble ray of a human glow-worm.

Thankfulness and congratulation must fill the heart of the Catholic Christian when, in looking upon the

contention and division of his separated brethren, he remembers that he is spared their torturing doubts and anxieties in matters of belief and, furthermore, that he owes this happy immunity to the gratuitous gift of God. One of the first fruits of such thankfulness should be to show forth in his own life the beautiful workings of such pure faith and perfect morals.

Thus does actual life identify itself with true faith, and good will with divine grace, for, as St. Clement of Alexandria says, "As we were originally destined for good, we must now direct all our efforts to that end. We are required to have sound and healthful dispositions of mind for good, correct doctrine and a spirit of obedience."

#### VIII. "THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS."—THE CHURCH MILITANT, THE CHURCH SUFFERING, THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT.

THE Church of God forms a great, expansive kingdom which, while having its beginning on earth, reaches into the other life and finds its perfection, completion, and solution in heaven. It embraces all who have ever been admitted to it. Thus he who has been once received remains a member of the Church forever. Not merely those living on the earth are members of the Church of God. Both the saints in heaven and the souls in purgatory are united in a spiritual manner with the believing Christians yet dwelling in this world.

Therefore between the living and the departed, whether the latter are glorious in heaven or still detained in purgatory, there exists a community of spirit. The soul, even when detached from the body,

can not forget what it knew in life. On the contrary, with deliverance from bodily incumbrance, many hindrances to knowledge are dispelled, and knowledge itself becomes clearer and stronger. After his death man is separated only in body from those with whom he was associated when on earth. The spirit retains remembrance of them, and with this remembrance charity also, which is the more elevated and intense since the spirit is now in a better condition to distinguish true divine worth from what is not genuine.

Thus all dwell in union with each other, and this union consists in all being members of one body, the mystical body of the Church whose head is Christ.

In order to describe this union the Holy Scriptures employ very aptly the simile of a human body, which, although one in person, consists of different members. "For as in one body, we have many members, but all the members have not the same office," says St. Paul, "so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans xii. 4-5).

The similarity between the Church and a human body consists in the fact that the Church has several members like the human body. As all the members of the frame compose but one body, so the members of the Church form but one Church. As the members of the body do not all discharge the same functions, so the different members of the Church do not all stand in an equality of calling, position, and dignity. But as each member suffers pain when any other member of the body is hurt and, on the other hand, is sound and well when the others are sound and well, so do the members of the Church suffer when one member suffers, because they are all closely bound together by a holy and indivisible charity. For as no

one member of the human body serves itself, so no member of the Church serves itself, but all serve God and contribute to His glory.

This is truly a communion of saints, that is, a communion of such as are called by God to saintliness, who are sanctified by baptism, who respond voluntarily to their calling, who strive for perfect holiness, and of whom many attain to perfect holiness. These compose the great Church of Christ, which is again subdivided into three, namely, the Church struggling on earth, the Church suffering in purgatory, and the Church glorious in heaven.

What these have in common are prayers and good works, so that each one of them can say with the Psalmist, "I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee" (Psalms cxviii. 63), that is to say, I have a share in the merits of all God-fearing souls.

Thus the Church militant has a share in the merits and enjoys the intercession of the saints in heaven who come to our aid.

The saints in heaven have reached their destiny. After long and weary struggles they have entered on the glory and happiness of the vision of God, entered into the unspeakable delights of heaven. In the fulness of their sublime charity they know no other wish save to see us become sharers of their joys. As, during their sojourn in life, they labored only for the glory of God, so now do they burn with desire to have us upon earth advance and increase that same honor and glory.

Far better than we do they know the dangers that threaten us and the obstacles that impede us who are left behind; hence they pray that we may obtain grace to fully discharge those duties the observance of which will make us worthy of heaven, as it has already done

in their own regard. Why would not God hear their prayer? We know that prayer is useful and efficacious, for Our Lord teaches, "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matthew vii. 7). Now, if any and every prayer is powerful, the prayer of those pure saints in heaven, who ask for nothing but what is beneficial to our bodies and souls, must be preeminently efficacious. If the prayers of God's chosen saints are unavailing and without effect, then the prayers of poor, weak, sin-laden mortals on earth must be futile and vain, and man is thus robbed of his only source of hope and consolation.

Even among the ancient Jews the conviction prevailed that, for the sake of pious departed saints, God granted graces which the weakness and unworthiness of the petitioner would not have obtained. To Isaac God Himself said, "I am with thee: I will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for My servant Abraham's sake" (Genesis xxvi. 24). Hence, also, Solomon prayed, "For Thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of Thy anointed" (Psalms cxxxi. 10). Surely what God did for the sake of the saints of the Old Law, who had not yet reached His presence, He will not deny to the saints of His beloved Son.

Like us, the poor suffering souls in purgatory are benefited by the merits and prayers of the saints in heaven. We also can come to their relief by prayer, alms-giving and other good works, but chiefly by the holy sacrifice of the Mass, whether we have it offered up for them, or hear such Masses, or receive holy communion for them. Prayer must be of assistance to them, and the more so as they can not help themselves. It must be that God looks down with compassion and mercy on such a spectacle, the most touching of all spectacles—one portion of His crea-

tures praying for those who have no other means of reaching His blessed presence save through the sympathizing efforts of their fellow-beings.

Often, indeed, have the unbelievers called this sweet communion of saints a foolish doctrine and one that is opposed to reason.

A single example, which we will here relate, may serve to instruct us differently.

Let us take our stand beside the death-bed of a mother who knows that, though in the prime of life, she must quit this earth and leave her poor orphan child behind her, helpless and friendless in the world. In this dire moment of heartfelt grief what is there to comfort the poor mother? Certainly only the firm belief on her part that, although she is to leave her child in the body, she is not to be separated from her in soul, and that when it shall please God to admit her to heaven she will then be in a still better condition to pray for her child than even when on earth.

This sacred and consoling promise the mother can make to her child when giving her her final blessing. All through life, even till her dying day, the orphan child can look upon her dead mother as a cherished guarding and protecting spirit. And will not God hear the prayers of such a sainted mother in heaven for her child on earth? And if the mother, instead of being at once admitted to the glory of heaven, is undergoing the necessary cleansing of purgatory, will God deprive that mother of her child in the very time when her innocent prayers can help the departed soul, and when such prayers are most needed?

Men talk much about the goodness and love of God. Why, then, do they charge so kind and merciful a Being with tearing asunder the very ties made by Himself?

They talk of the wisdom of God. Why, then, do they charge Him with condemning the human soul to forgetfulness and oblivion, at the very time when such praying for and communing with each other is useful if not necessary to reaching the end for which the soul was created? Is, then, the human soul, created by God and redeemed by the blood of Christ, but a schoolboy's slate, from which the problem of life is to be wiped out as soon as the human part of the sum is solved?

In this simple case we have a clear picture of the relations existing as well between those living on earth and the saints in heaven, as between the living and the souls in purgatory. What we have said of the relations between mother and child may be truly said of the relations of Christians with one another. "My mother and My brethren, are they who hear the word of God, and do it," says Our Saviour in Luke viii. 21.

Moreover, the good works which we perform for the dead benefit them in a twofold manner. For purgatory is a place of penance, out of which no one can come until the last farthing be paid (Matthew v. 26). Our good works augment the force of our prayers, because they draw down blessings on the petitioners themselves. The adorable sacrifice of the Mass is an atoning sacrifice for sins, a sacrifice that extirpates venial sins, and as such may be applied in supplication toward the souls in purgatory, as in the Old Law such offerings were made for the departed. Thus, for example, Judas Machabæus "making a gathering, sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead." And the Sacred Scriptures add, "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may

be loosed from their sins" (2 Machabees xii. 43, 46.)

The Church militant also has its community of good things: for all members who are in a state of grace, that is to say, who are without mortal sin and are in the friendship of God, have a share in all the Masses, prayers, and good works that are performed in the Catholic Church, but more especially in the Church's spiritual treasures. For all members derive their life and vigor from the forces of the body to which they belong. Hence St. Paul writes, "God hath tempered the body together, giving to that which wanted, the more abundant honor, that there might be no schism in the body, but the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it: or, if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member" (1 Corinthians xii. 24-27).

Thus the treasure of the Church is but one; all members share the merits of each other.

Here may arise the question, what share in these treasures have such as are not in a state of grace, namely, sinners? Sinners are also members of the body of Christ, but lifeless members. Hence they have no share in the spiritual growth or strength of the Church. Yet, as long as sentence has not been pronounced upon them, they are not cut off from the body, and, by the virtue of God's grace, they may be awakened again to spiritual life. Hence they share so far in the treasures of God as the living members, through their prayers, tears and good works, may implore for them the grace of reawakening, the grace of conversion.

Again, the doctrine of the communion of saints

encourages the Christian in a special manner to the practise of fervent prayer. The Christian believes and feels that he does not stand alone. All Christendom prays with him, the saints in heaven pray with him. Therefore he prays not for himself alone, but for all who are in the Church, that they may be preserved in it; and for all those who are not in the Church, that they may secure admission.

This communion of prayer is expressed in the prayer which Our Lord Himself taught us. We pray, "Our Father, Thy kingdom come, give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our trespasses, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." For wherever the kingdom of God suffers any want or injury the Christian himself suffers; hence we ought to pray every day for the Church militant, in order that she may pass successfully through her struggles and obtain a victory.

But it is also our sacred duty to pray for the dead. Who are the dead? They are our parents, brothers and sisters, relations and friends, with all of whom during life we were united by the tenderest and holiest relations. Ah! what would we not have given to have saved them from death and to have kept them in our midst. Why, then, are we so dilatory in our efforts to rescue them from the sufferings of purgatory? Is this our gratitude for their goodness to us, for their kind charity which has bequeathed to us legacies of wisdom, counsel, example, if not temporal goods? Ah, how parents will sigh with regret at having been sparing in the performance of their own good works, which would have benefited their souls, and all for the purpose of having more to leave behind for their children, who now neglect them ungratefully! Alas, how piteously the poor souls look toward us, and cry to us in the

words of the suffering Job, "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me" (Job xix. 21). And when we shall have succeeded in alleviating the pains of the poor souls, they, being liberated, will remember their liberator gratefully; the charity which we practise toward them will be amply repaid by that charity which they, when in heaven, will exercise toward us.

And, at least, the Catholic Christian should recommend himself every morning and evening to the protection of the saints in heaven. The saints are our friends. In all perils to our salvation they protect us by their powerful intercession. They implore for us spiritual and temporal prosperity. Above all we should invoke our holy patron saint, who is specially related to us by a spiritual alliance. He will assist us to follow in his footsteps, in order that we may hereafter have a place near the throne now occupied by him.

### **All Saints' Day.—All Souls' Day.—Origin and Object of these Festivals.**

From a discourse pronounced on the festival of All Saints by St. Chrysostom we learn that the Christians, even in the fourth century, commemorated each year on the Sunday after Whitsunday, the lives of all the martyrs and other saints. When Phocas, the Greek emperor, bestowed upon Pope Boniface IV. the Pantheon, a heathen temple which had been devoted to all the gods, that same Pope dedicated it to the one true God under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and all the saints in heaven, and at the same time established a feast in their honor. About the year 850 this festival became general, and was made a chief festival in the Church. On this day all Christians render honor to all the saints combined, and are thereby en-

couraged and impelled by calling upon their names, to become participators in the blessing of their intercession.

This festival is also a powerful inducement to the imitation of their virtues, for on that day of joy and congratulation these happy souls seem to cry out to us from heaven, "What we have succeeded in doing you also are able to do. We were once like you, flesh and blood as you are; we had all your temptations—we have conquered, so can you. Strive bravely, therefore, that this festival may one day be your festival in heaven."

The festival of All Souls' day is the continuation and completion of All Saints' day. The joyful vespers of All Saints are followed closely by the mournful vespers of All Souls in the evening of the first of November. It is proper that not only the living on earth, but also the departed souls, should have a share in the prayers of all the saints in heaven. Hence the living faithful on earth do unite with the saints in their suffrages for the poor, suffering souls in purgatory, in the belief and hope that their pains will be thereby lessened and shortened.

These two festivals unite the whole Church—the Church militant, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant, setting forth beautifully the admirable union that reaches from heaven to earth, from earth to purgatory, to be one day perfected in heaven. The monks of the monastery at Cluny were the first to observe All Souls' day. In some places it is customary on this anniversary to keep extra lights burning in the churches, and even on the graves of the dead. These lights are a figure of the everlasting light of heaven, which we seek by our prayers to obtain for the souls of the faithful departed.

**TENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.**

“The forgiveness of sins.”

**In the Catholic Church there is Forgiveness of Sins and Remission of Punishment.**

THE Church of Christ, having been established for the salvation of men, must contain within herself all the means necessary to enable her to secure the end for which she was established. She must necessarily be able to place men in a position and condition to enter heaven. But as we know from the most emphatic assertion of the Redeemer, that nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven, it must follow that the Church of God be not only an institution of conversion, but also a place of cleansing, in which men can find the means and appliances for freeing themselves from sin. Hence we believe in such forgiveness of sins, that is to say, we believe that men can obtain forgiveness of sins and remission of penalties in the Catholic Church by virtue of the merits of Christ.

Sins are forgiven by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ. For every sin, by which is offended the majesty of God, satisfaction must be made. Divine justice requires this. Now, Our Saviour, by His bloody death on the cross, has made this satisfaction for all men, so that the forgiveness of sins is owing to His merits and not to ours, for we would not be able to make sufficient satisfaction or atonement. Hence St. Paul writes in his epistle to the Ephesians, “He hath predestinated us . . . through Jesus Christ unto Himself: . . . and hath graced us in His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians i. 5-7).

Together with the sin the penalty also is remitted, especially the eternal punishment which the sinner has justly merited, for wherever there is no offense or displeasure to God there can be no penalty or guilt. Thus the remission of the penalty or guilt rests on the same grounds as those on which the remission of sins depends, namely, on the merits of Jesus Christ, who Himself bore the penalty for us, as *Isaias* had long before foretold, "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed" (*Isaias* liii. 5).

Now, there have been some heretics who taught that only venial sins, and not mortal sins, could be forgiven after the reception of baptism. But in this matter the Lord made no exception when He gave to His apostles the full power to forgive sins. His own way of dealing with sinners shows this. *Magdalen* was a great sinner; those are great sinners at whose conversion the angels in heaven rejoice, for they are set up against the just who remain just, and even if they commit venial sins do not become unjust, for it is written, "A just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again" (*Proverbs* xxiv. 16). Hence remission of sins must extend to the grave ones as well as to the venial ones, and hence in the Catholic Church all sins are remitted, without exception.

### **Conditions of Obtaining Pardon for Sin and Remission of Guilt.**

We can not receive the pardon of our sins and the remission of their well-deserved punishment without doing something on our part. God is indeed merciful and ever ready, in His holy Church, to remit all our

many sins. But He requires from us, first, that we do true penance; secondly, that we receive the sacraments established by Christ for the remission of sins.

The repentance here intended is a penitential life, which is founded on deep, sincere, inward compunction and sorrow. Without such actual contrition expressed in, and proved by, works of penance, there can be no forgiveness of sins. For where there is no contrition there can be no disgust for sin, hence no justness or righteousness. Only that contrition is true that manifests itself in deeds. Hence it is altogether absurd to strike our breasts and to cry out, "O Lord, my sins distress and grieve me." Nor will copious tears suffice if they do not come from the heart, if they do not move us to good deeds. Penitential works consist in self-imposed punishments, freely and cheerfully undergone in order to turn away God's punishments, and to show that we feel guilty and ashamed of our evil doings. We should also show a redoubled zeal in our efforts to repair our sins of neglect, and an ardent practical desire to contribute to the glory of God in proportion to the degree in which we have despised and offended His sovereign majesty. Thus, true and sincere penance should not consist in words, but must bear fruit in life.

Furthermore it is necessary for the penitent to employ the means of grace appointed by God for that purpose. For it has pleased the Lord to associate the forgiveness of sins with certain visible signs, as we shall see more at length when we treat of the sacraments. The sacraments by which sins are forgiven are Baptism and Penance.

In Baptism are forgiven original sin, and also actual sin. In Penance only those sins are forgiven which men have become guilty of since the time of their bap-

tism. It is true that venial sins are forgiven through a heartfelt contrition, yet it is safe to confess them, in order, by submitting them to the judgment of our father confessor, to obviate self-deception regarding their importance. In both these sacraments the eternal punishment due to the sin is remitted, together with its guilt, while the penitent may obtain remission of the temporal penalties either in baptism or through indulgences granted by the Church.

If asked who has the right to remit sins through the administration of this sacrament, it is self-evident that so sublime a function can not be deputed to every one without discrimination. A class of persons are appointed to dispense these favors, not promiscuously and arbitrarily, but in accordance with law and the true spirit of the Church, who, while she wishes all to be saved, is at the same time the guardian of the treasures of divine grace.

Hence it is only bishops and priests who may administer the Sacrament of Penance, and the latter only as far as empowered by the bishops. Baptism, too, may be given only by bishops and priests, except in cases of necessity, and then any lay person may administer it, for admission to heaven is dependent on that sacrament.

Thus the bishops and priests are the physicians of our souls, who heal the wounds thereof. It is indeed a source of great comfort that our blessed Lord not only promised us the forgiveness of our sins, but that He also assures us emphatically, through the mouth of His representatives, of the actual forgiveness of them.

Now, on the one hand, as it is a strict duty for all parents (and one to which they are bound under pain of mortal sin), not to permit their children to be deprived of the graces imparted in the Sacrament of Bap-

tism, so is it also a duty incumbent on every one who is conscious of having committed a grievous sin, to purify himself in the Sacrament of Penance, in order that he may not be displeasing in the sight of God, and be in danger of losing his immortal soul.

When a man kneels before his God with all the contrition of a Magdalen, and in holy repentance hopes in the mercy of God with all the faith and confidence of the blind man in the gospel, the priest becomes, so to speak, his redeemer, and the words are once again verified and realized which Jesus spoke to the afflicted patient, "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Matthew ix. 2).

### **Jesus, the Refuge of Sinners.**

*(Words of St. Juliana of Norwich.)*

The name of the almost superhumanly enlightened virgin, Juliana of Norwich, is but little known. Herself, as well as all the wonderful gifts she received from heaven, would be entirely hidden from our knowledge had not one Serenus Cressy, a Benedictine monk, published in the year 1670 the revelations of divine love with which this holy soul was favored.

Juliana was born in the year 1342 and lived a hermit's life in Norwich. In her thirtieth year she was deathly sick, and then it was that she was enlightened by revelations of divine love, as well as quickened and comforted. After her recovery she wrote this history and its instructive lessons in a little book. How long she lived afterward, what became of her, and where she died, history fails to tell us.

Let us be satisfied with hearing and reading her tender and instructive words from her little book on "The Love of Jesus, the Refuge of Sinners." Among

other things, Juliana writes : " Our heavenly Father has a special complacency in all that Jesus did for our redemption and hence He gave us to Him as a reward. This gift with its reward rejoiced Jesus so much that His Father could not have offered Him anything more acceptable. We are, therefore, not only His property since He redeemed us, but we are His happiness, His reward, His glory, His crown. The Father presented us to Him. Oh, how beautiful, how wonderful, how thrilling it is to think and to know that we are His crown ! This is such a joy for Jesus that He considers all His sufferings and trials, even His very cruel and ignominious death, as nothing. Moreover, Jesus is also our tender mother, who, unlike all earthly mothers, has not borne us for pains and death, but for joy, happiness, and everlasting life. The sweet and loving name of mother can be applied to no one more fittingly than to Him who is the true parent of life and of all things. The sweet mother of love knows and understands the wants of the child. She guides it tenderly and carefully, and when it is older and larger she changes her treatment of it, though not her affection for it, when she permits it to be chastened in order to destroy sin and to impart virtue and grace. If we fall through human frailty Jesus lifts us up again by His gentle mercy and loving kindness.

" Once we are fully strengthened through His operation we choose voluntarily by His grace to be always His friends and servants. Yet He sometimes allows us to fall more deeply than we had ever fallen before—at least it seems so to us. Then we think that all is lost forever. But such is not the case. A mother may indeed permit that her child now and then encounter suffering if she perceives that it is useful to him. But her love can not allow her child to be in danger of sin.

“Yet all this must an earthly mother bear. But Jesus, our heavenly parent, can never permit His children to be lost, for He is almighty, all-wise, and eternal love. There is no one like unto Him. May He be praised and glorified !

“If our wickedness and peril are shown to us, then we feel mortified and ashamed, and know not how to help ourselves. Then, however, our kind mother does not wish us to flee from her; that would afflict her grievously. She wishes that we should rather act as children who, the greater their trouble and the worse their care, fly to their mother the more quickly; who, if they can do nothing else, cry with all their might for their mother. So, too, does Jesus wish that we, like a troubled child with its mother, should call on Him, saying, ‘Dear mother, kind mother, loving mother, I have sullied myself, I have made myself unlike you, and now I can not help myself. Only you and your grace can save me.’ If we do not feel the help of Jesus at once we may surely believe that, like a wise mother, He permits us to suffer and to weep a little longer because He sees that our troubles will benefit us. In short, He wishes that we, like good children, should ever preserve, in happiness and adversity, a loving confidence in His maternal love.

“The flood of His mercy, His precious blood mingled with water, can wash us and make us beautifully clean. His wounds are opened to heal us with joy. His beloved hands are ever outspread toward us and ready to bless us. Yes, in every respect He proves Himself to be like a matron who has nothing more to do than to serve her offspring.

It is His glory to make us happy.  
It is His office to make us happy.

“And He wishes us to know this, that thus we may love Him more intensely and confide in Him undoubtedly.

“Our poor soul will find no rest until it repose in Him, for He is the fulness of grace and happiness, loving and gentle, full of blessing. He is the true light and life.”

### **Penance not to be Delayed.**

St. Augustine says: “If a person become sick, has recourse to penance, and asks for absolution and then dies, I say we can not refuse him the absolution he demands, yet we can not assert that he has fared well. Whether he departed this life in safety or in insecurity I know not. Penance indeed we can give, but not certainty. I do not say that such a person is damned, nor can I say that his case is altogether a happy one. If you would escape all doubt, make your own case sure and certain, and leave uncertainty alone. Do penance while you are in health and when time is at your disposal. If you will do this, then I can assure you that you are safe; for at the hour of death you dislike sin chiefly because you are not able to sin any longer. If you are willing to do penance when you are no longer able to sin, then your sins have left you rather than you them.”

### *ELEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

“The resurrection of the body.”

#### **All Men will Rise Again.**

BUT a short period of time is allotted for man to live on this earth. The hour comes speedily when his course is ended, and he is obliged to leave here and to

appear before the judgment-seat of God, there to render an account of his stewardship and to hear his sentence. Man must die. Such is the curse that broods over us all, for in Adam all have sinned. "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all" (Romans v. 12).

When the solemn hour of departure arrives, the bonds that bound body and soul together through life are rent asunder; then will "the dust return into its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes xii. 7). The body decomposes, the soul appears before its Judge. Man has hardly closed his eyes in death when his soul is either happy or unhappy.

But man is not to be a pure spirit like the angels; he is man, and as man is destined, with body and soul, to be either happy or damned. Hence at the end of all time, at the general resurrection, the soul will be reunited with the body, and then, for the first time, will he be, in his entirety, perfectly happy or completely unhappy. When Our Saviour says, "The hour cometh wherein 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 to the resurrection of life: but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v. 28, 29), He speaks only of the resurrection of the bodies, for the souls are not buried in the ground. This is plainly the resurrection of the flesh, a resurrection that is neither unnatural nor impossible. It is natural and reasonable that our bodies should be punished or rewarded, for the body is the agent of the soul for evil or for good. St. Paul says emphatically, "We must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be

good or evil" (2 Corinthians v. 10). As man has done right or wrong in the flesh he shall receive retribution in the same.

The resurrection of the body must take place, in order that Christ the Lord may make manifest His kingdom and dominion over all powers. He has taken away sin and crushed the head of the serpent; He has triumphed over the devil and conquered the forces of hell. In like manner must He conquer death, and as conqueror of death and of the grave, show on the last day that death is swallowed up in victory. "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Corinthians xv. 55, 56).

These resurrected bodies will not be new bodies. No, they will be the same bodies in which we lived, worked, sinned, or strove against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and came off victorious. True, these bodies of ours fall to pieces and may be scattered in dust all over the earth, but they will not be annihilated entirely, for the Lord who created them will gather their parts together, and restore them again to individual existence and animation. Would this be a greater miracle for the almighty God—namely, to restore life—than to create it, as He did when He vivified and animated the "slime of the earth" at creation? Does He not, at every hour, at every instant, renew the great miracle of giving existence to countless bodies for which He creates as many immortal souls? The almighty God who takes away life can restore it again. He created man, and if He withdraw His divine breath man dies. Why, then, could He not restore that breath and that life? The last miracle is no greater than the first; with God all things are possible and nothing is impossible.

**Only the Good shall Rise Glorious.**

So our bodies shall rise again, the bodies of the good as well as of the wicked. But there shall be as vast a difference in the condition of these bodies as in the condition of the souls. As every soul, at the very moment of its appearance before God in Particular Judgment after death, is at once justified and vindicated or condemned, so the body of that soul, at the moment of its resurrection from the grave for General Judgment, shall assume the signs and marks of its eternal destiny. The bodies of the godless will be indeed in a deplorable condition, while the bodies of the just will arise immortal and incorruptible, all beaming with supernatural beauty, capable of enjoying eternal happiness. The bodies of the wicked will arise immortal and indestructible indeed, but they will be branded with the stigma of sin and the sign of eternal perdition.

They will be dreadful to the sight, their external appearance forming a complete picture of the unhappy, lost, and damned soul. They will be handed over to the devil and to the pains of hell, while the glorified bodies of the saints will enter into the eternal glory of the Lord. In a word, the wicked, as far as their bodies are concerned, will resemble the devil. As to the bodies of the elect: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . will reform the body of our lowliness made like to the body of His glory, according to the operation whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians iii. 21). Such is the grand reward awaiting the children of God.

The human body, therefore, is a veritable sanctuary. Like the soul it is destined to share in God's happiness. It has been sanctified in holy baptism, anointed with the consecrated oil, and even with the sacred chrism,

and made the dwelling-place of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Hence the Church treats our bodies with the greatest respect, wishing, with the Apostle, that we should honor God in these bodies. Hence it is a grievous sin to prostitute our members to the wickedness which shall certainly be made manifest at the resurrection. For the members that have sinned shall be deformed, having been the instruments of the devil.

The Church, too, shows respect to our bodies even after death. She sprinkles them with holy water in order to purify them from all stain of human infirmity. She consecrates the ground in which they are to rest, she blesses the grave-mound that covers them. Such is her tender solicitude for our bodies. Do not, then, become the destroyer of your body's future happiness: the destiny of your soul is identical with that body of yours. Sanctify it, that both it and your soul may be prepared one day to enter into the ranks of God's saints in heaven.

### **Difference between the Good and the Wicked at the Resurrection.**

“The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds” (Wisdom iii. 7).

“And many of these that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake: some unto life everlasting and others unto reproach, to see it always. But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice as stars to all eternity” (Daniel xii. 2, 3).

“We shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed” (1 Corinthians xv. 51).

### **The Glory of the Body after Death.**

In several instances the glorified and impassible bodies of God's faithful servants were made manifest soon after death. This was the case with St. Lidwina and St. Francis Assisi.

St. Lidwina was born in Schiedam, in Holland, on Palm Sunday, the 18th of March, 1380, at the very time that the Passion was being sung at High Mass in the church. This coincidence seemed significant of the afflictions she was to suffer throughout life. Her sufferings began in her infancy. She was trained up in a life of piety by her parents, to whose wishes she conformed constantly in all things. On account of her sweet disposition and extraordinary beauty her hand was sought in marriage when she was quite young. Rejecting all such offers she begged God to deprive her of her personal attractions. Her prayer was heard, for at the age of eighteen she slipped on the ice, and falling on a heap of frozen snow, broke one of her ribs, an accident that brought on a bodily infirmity which lasted all her life. For thirty-eight years the saint bore her excruciating pains with admirable patience, and even cheerfulness. In the beginning of her sickness an ulcer made its appearance that defied all the efforts of the physicians to heal it, and weakened her to such a degree that her death seemed imminent. She rallied somewhat, yet was powerless to move without help, and it was only by the most careful efforts that her friends could carry her to the church to receive holy communion. Three years later she became so debilitated that she could not leave her bed, and for the twenty-three years following she never put her feet on the ground. In the early part of her illness she was able to partake of a little bread and buttermilk, but for nineteen years

afterward she took no food. For seventeen years she lay on her back with just strength enough to move her head and rest it for a few moments on her arm. She continued to lose much blood, while worms generated in her wounds. Nineteen years before her death she was attacked with dropsy, and during all that length of weary years she knew neither food, drink, nor sleep. Hemorrhages, headaches, toothaches and other distressing ailments became familiar to her. Poverty was added to her other misfortunes. She had to forego her poor straw mattress and lie on bare boards even in the coldest weather. At last, on the 14th of April, 1433, she yielded her patient soul into the hands of her Creator and, as she desired, utterly alone and neglected.

After her death, unbounded was the astonishment of the neighbors who approached her coffin. All traces of her disorders had disappeared; her countenance was fair and fresh as a lily; her whole body appeared young and strong, and emitted a peculiar brightness that fairly dazzled the spectators.

When St. Francis of Assisi had died all his bodily defects disappeared. The wrinkles of age were smoothed out and in appearance he looked young and healthy. In fact it was hard to believe that he was really dead.

## *TWELFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.*

“And life everlasting. Amen.”

### **There is a Never-ending Life.**

THE soul of a man does not die with his body. It is immortal, and only enters on its true life after death. That the human soul is immortal is proved in many places of divine revelation, and it is evident, too, from

the very nature of the soul itself. In the twenty-third verse of the second chapter of Wisdom we read, "God created man incorruptible, and to the image of His own likeness He made him." How emphatically and solemnly, too, does Christ warn His disciples and all Christians not to fear those who can kill the body, but not the soul, and that they ought to fear him who can plunge body and soul into everlasting torments.

Our soul is a spirit, and has nothing in common with material things of earth. Hence it can never be subject to corruption, as is the case with the body. The soul can not die.

### **Heaven.—Hell.**

There is, then, as the twelfth article of the Creed teaches, a never-ending life for all time. But this mysterious life without any end will be very different for different men after they leave this earth, according as they have spent their time here well or ill.

The eternal life of the just will be one of endless, unspeakable happiness. Of this truth we are assured by St. Paul the Apostle, who was carried in spirit into heaven, when he writes, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians ii. 9). The smallest measure of heavenly happiness is inconceivably greater than all earthly joys. In heaven there is neither sickness nor pain, nor hunger, nor thirst, nor envy, nor unrest, neither want nor superfluity. There all things combine to perfect the joys and delights of mankind.

And yet there are different degrees in the happiness of heaven. Great as is the smallest measure of hea-

ven's happiness, there are regular gradations of glory, and although it is hard for us to understand this thoroughly, we believe it firmly, for not only does St. Paul say that "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Corinthians iii. 8) but it accords also with the strict justice of God, who, while not allowing the slightest good work to go unrewarded, bestows a brighter crown upon a holy martyr or zealous apostle than He gives to the ordinary Christian, though the latter lives and dies in the state of grace.

Much depends on the Christian himself whether his reward shall be great or small. His every good work increases his merit and augments his future happiness. Every temptation that he overcomes forms a new and brilliant pearl in his future crown of glory.

As the just shall live forever in unspeakable, undying happiness, so, too, shall the wicked live forever a life of indescribable misery in hell in the company of the devil, his angels, and the souls of the wretched. This is indeed a dreadful and alarming truth, but it is a truth nevertheless, for hell itself is a truth which we are unable to deny, and which we must acknowledge. There is no doctrine in Holy Scriptures more plainly taught, more sharply defined, or more frequently alluded to. Our divine Saviour Himself says plainly that on the Last Day He will say to the wicked, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matthew xxv. 41). This fire is so torturing that, in order to escape it, we should be willing and able to suffer the most wretched misery on earth.

We can hardly conceive anything more pitiable and helpless than loss of the power of motion, which makes us dependent on the mercy and charity of others. Yet Christ says to those who are wandering over wrong ways: "If thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off: it is

better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire " (Mark ix. 44).

Again, Christ says that " the fire is everlasting, and the worm dieth not." Of what avail is all the wisdom of men, arrayed against the wisdom and power of God? How can the culprit make terms with his judge? The infallible Church of God, therefore, has always maintained this doctrine as an awful yet salutary voice of warning. There is not in the whole Church one holy Father who does not agree with all the others on this point of doctrine. Thus St. Athanasius, at the close of his celebrated Creed, says plainly and simply, " Of him, who does not preserve this Catholic belief entire and unimpaired, we may say that he is undoubtedly lost eternally."

Moreover the doctrine of hell is not much at variance with human reason, as some pretend to teach. We have only to remember who those are that go to hell. They are the perpetrators of mortal sin, those who willingly and industriously act in opposition to God and so die His enemies. They can never again return, for the time of their activity has passed forever. For all eternity they remain in their state of sin, in their enmity to God, in their stubbornness, in their impenitence. The punishment lasts because the sin continues, and because the justice of God endures forever. All this is reasonable and natural enough. As the sin is never-ending, the punishment is everlasting.

### **The Four Last Things.**

Only the threat of eternal punishment can deter men from the commission of sin. Such is universal ex-

perience. God can not threaten more, and yet how many men live a life of thoughtless sinfulness! God's threats are always verified, and yet few there are that concern themselves about them. How, then, would it be if there were no eternal punishment in store for sin? The penalty of bodily suffering and death man does not fear when, in gratifying his inordinate passions, he transgresses nature's laws, the violation of which is often followed by premature death. It is only the remembrance of a frightful eternity that can make any positive impression on the sinful heart of man. Hence all those persons who have attained a high degree of sanctity and perfection have practised uninterrupted meditation on the four last things to be remembered. These are Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell. Meditation on these subjects deterred them from yielding to sin, stayed their evil inclinations, enabled them to resist temptation and spurred them on to the practise of good works.

It was from a remembrance of these things that great sinners gathered strength to return to God and to do salutary penance. From the same source thousands upon thousands of innocent persons acquired force and constancy to live as if they were penitents, that they might not be forced to become such. By the austerity of their lives these last-named preserved unsullied their baptismal innocence, for they knew that one time is not the same as no time, as the wicked fools say, but that whoever loses his innocence only one time has lost it for all time; that momentary gratification brings perpetual suffering; that all pains and trials are merely transient, yet tending to secure everlasting happiness. Thus, by virtue of their serious meditation, although dwelling on earth, they were in both heaven and hell, observing faithfully the solemn injunction of Ecclesias-

ticus, "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Ecclesiasticus vii. 40).

### **Death.—Passages from the Holy Scriptures.**

(For instructions on the Last Judgment, Heaven and Hell, see the seventh article of the Creed, p. 196.)

"I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where a house is appointed for every one that liveth" (Job xxx. 23).

"What man is he that shall live, and not see death?" (Psalms lxxxviii. 49).

"All things go to one place: of earth they were made, and into earth they returned together" (Ecclesiastes iii. 20).

"The days of man are short" (Job xiv. 5).

"All flesh shall fade as grass, and as the leaf that springeth out on a green tree" (Ecclesiasticus xiv. 18).

"There is but one step between me and death" (1 Kings xx. 3).

"Boast not for to-morrow, for thou knowest not what the day to come may bring forth" (Proverbs xxvii. 1).

"Man knoweth not his own end; but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time, when it shall suddenly come upon them" (Ecclesiastes ix. 12).

"For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord shall so come, as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and security: then shall sudden destruction come upon them" (1 Thessalonians v. 2-3).

"Behold, the Judge standeth before the door" (James v. 9).

"If then thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come to thee" (Apocalypse iii. 3).

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Psalms cxv. 15).

“The just man hath hope in his death” (Proverbs xiv. 32).

“With him that feareth the Lord it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death, he shall be blessed” (Ecclesiasticus i. 13).

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord” (Apocalypse xiv. 13).

“The just shall live for evermore : and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord ; for with His right hand He will cover them, and with His holy arm He will defend them” (Wisdom v. 16-17).

“When the wicked man is dead, there shall be no hope any more” (Proverbs xi. 7).

“And they [the wicked] shall fall after this without honor, and be a reproach among the dead forever” (Wisdom iv. 19).

“The death of the wicked is very evil” (Psalms xxxiii. 22).

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews x. 31).

### **Christian Burial.**

God pronounced sentence on the human body when He said to fallen man, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken” (Genesis iii. 19). Hence among the followers of the one true God, at once arose the custom, not indeed to burn their dead as the pagans did, but to bury them in the earth. From the

history of Tobias alone we discover what great importance was attached to the proper interment of the dead, and how highly estimated was such respectful conduct.

In the Catholic Church respect for the body of man is second only to respect for his soul. Hence in Catholic burial solemnities attention is given to the human remains, while prayers are more especially offered for the soul or spiritual part of the departed member of the mystical body. The remains of a recently deceased Christian are first washed and decently clad in clean garments to express the respect we entertain for the body as having been the temple of God. In very early times the custom prevailed of laying the bodies of bishops and other prominent persons, who had during their lifetime shown sympathy for the public, in great state before the people to afford them an opportunity of gazing once more on the beloved features of their leaders and benefactors. Thus was the body of the Emperor Constantine the Great, who died in the year 337, laid in state before his subjects, with many tapers burning about his bier. Soon it became a rule never to bury till three days after death. The places of burial were previously blessed, in order to receive becomingly the bodies of "the saints," as the Christians are styled in Scripture. The relatives and friends accompanied the body, which was generally carried on the shoulders, with prayer, and singing of psalms. Generally the deceased parties were carried by persons of their own profession or condition in life. Thus bishops were borne by bishops, priests by priests, young men by young men, maidens by maidens, and so on. Burning wax tapers were carried in the hands of the attendants, out of regard for an old tradition which said that such was done at the interment of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Arrived at the grave, the attendants

were reminded by the priest of the solemn words pronounced by God against Adam and also of the more cheering words of Our Saviour, in which a happy resurrection is foretold for all those who believe. For this reason, in ancient times, more songs of joy were sung than lamentations. Indeed many of the early Fathers of the Church found fault with the lamentations uttered over the dead, who are but asleep in the Lord and in possession of a happy end. Hence the cross, the symbol of salvation and reconciliation, was always planted at the head of the grave.

Immediately after death began the prayers for the dead. The priests offered up Masses as soon as possible. The laity kept vigils near the remains, a custom that gave rise to our present custom of wakes. On the day of the interment the holy sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated with all solemnity. The same ceremony was repeated on the third day, on the seventh, and again on the thirtieth, as well as on the anniversary of the death. The third day was chosen in remembrance of Our Saviour's resurrection; the seventh in commemoration of the Sabbath day's rest, into which it is hoped the soul of the deceased may be admitted; the thirtieth is in imitation of the custom of the ancient Israelites who mourned for thirty days over the death of Moses. The yearly anniversary is natural and explains itself.

The laity on such occasions brought offerings for the support of the clergy and for the relief of the poor, that by doing good works they might secure the mercy of God for the deceased. This admirable practise, which exists still in some pious parishes, is founded on the words of Tobias, as follows, "Lay out thy bread, and thy wine upon the burial of a just man," as well as on a vicarious action of satisfaction of

those who have passed into the communion of saints.

In the Middle Ages it was the custom to place the bodies in the church, even on anniversary days, and to perform the obsequies in their presence. The danger of spreading infectious diseases put an end to this practise, and in its place a catafalque was erected, with a representation of a coffin on which were placed the insignia and other marks of the condition and dignity of the deceased. If the body was that of a layman, and was buried in the church, his face looked toward the altar; but if he were a priest his face looked toward the people, as a pastor addressing his flock, and as when he used to wish them "The Lord be with you" (*Dominus vobiscum*).

Now we take our leave of the consideration of the Apostles' Creed. Like a traveler who, visiting, in the pleasant days of springtime, beautiful landscapes which, with their verdant woods and fair fields, with their limpid lakes and sparkling streams, rejoice his heart, retains forevermore in his heart a vivid picture of their joy and beauty, so, too, should we retain indelibly impressed on our memories the many sublime truths taught us in the Apostles' Creed. They should accompany us through life, as help when we grow weak, as comfort in the day of affliction, as a constant memorial of Him who created us, who redeemed us and sanctified us, in order that we may constantly believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him.

And what is there better for us to carry in our hearts than these very teachings of the Apostles' Creed? They embrace heaven and earth, teach us to know God and all that He has done for our temporal and spiritual welfare. Be praised and honored, then, glorious Creed of our Catholic faith. Thou art a

fountain of wisdom, a source of virtue for each one of us. Sun of truth, thou it is that nineteen centuries ago appeared on the horizon of a world sunk in the gloomy darkness of iniquity, and dispelled those countless numbers of absurd pagan deities before which philosophers, kings, and peoples bowed down in adoration. Thou hast rescued man from the superstition that disgraced him, thou hast freed him from it forever. By the happy splendor of thy truth thou hast given to man those correct notions concerning God, man, the world and its origin, their duties, their destiny, and the sublime relations in which we stand toward our Supreme Father and all creatures. Exalted epitome of the doctrines of Him who came from heaven, we are indebted to thee for our education, which constitutes our honor. From thy healthful maxims and right belief proceed the morals of nations, their laws, their institutions. By substituting Catholic principles in the place of the Jewish and heathen thou hast revolutionized the world and given to Christian nations the brilliant traits by which they are distinguished. Thou hast improved the world's ideas of slavery, woman, the child, the prisoner, the poor, the power of kings and the duty of subjects. Thy twelve articles are, as it were, twelve fair columns, brilliant as gold and firmer than the diamond, that sustain among the nations the social fabric. If one is shaken the whole building falls to ruin.

For thousands of years old pagan philosophy, with all the acuteness of human wisdom, had endeavored to find out what God is. But all these researches, all these disquisitions, never led a man to say, never enabled him to profess: "I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." The old worldly-wise teachers would have rejoiced indeed could they have succeeded in obtaining from the lips

of the Christ-child this sublime yet simple truth. All the wisdom of the learned is put to shame before the light of the divine revelation.

Let us, then, thank God for His great love and mercy, in which He has made known to us Himself and the eternal truths of salvation. But let our gratitude show itself especially in frequent and pious recital of the Apostles' Creed, as well as in a faithful and consistent life in accordance with the teachings of our holy faith. "I believe:" let that be a sacred and solemn pledge that we wish to lay before God. "I believe:" let that be our profession in life and in death. Amen. Be it so.

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