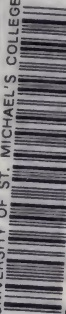
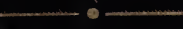


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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THE BEAUTY AND TRUTH
OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH



JONES



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THE BEAUTY AND TRUTH OF
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SERMONS

FROM THE GERMAN, ADAPTED AND EDITED

BY THE

REV. EDWARD JONES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE
MOST REV. JOHN IRELAND, D.D.

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JOSEPH GUMMERSBACH.

INTRODUCTION

ST. PAUL, February 10, 1911.

Reverend Dear Father:

I beg leave to offer you my very sincere felicitations on the forthcoming publication of your translation into English of the sermons of the Very Rev. Heinrich von Hurter. In bringing those sermons within the reach of the English-speaking world, you are doing a notable service to religion, for which Catholics generally, and, of course, in a particular manner the clergy, will be most grateful.

The sermons of Heinrich von Hurter are highly prized, wherever they have been hitherto known. They are accepted by competent critics as masterpieces of sacred oratory — correct in doctrine, apt in practical application, lucid in form and style. In them is to be found, in graceful and proper measure, that which makes the peculiar merit of the truly good sermon, the commingling of “the old” and of “the new” — “the old,” the Gospel of divine truth, which the divine Model of all preachers bade abide until the end of time, which must never suffer alteration or diminution; “the new,” the opportune explanation of the teaching of Jesus Christ, in view of present conditions of human thought and action.

The priest who carefully studies the sermons of Heinrich von Hurter, and makes such use of them in

the pulpit, so far as he may without losing sight of his own personality and of the peculiar needs of his flock, cannot fail of being both a profitable and an interesting teacher of his people.

The translation into English, the fruit of your own pen, has the merit of preserving the full grace and vividness of the original. It is an evidence of your thorough familiarity with the two languages — the one from which your treasures are drawn, and that in which you lend to them new draping. On this familiarity, I, also, offer you my congratulations.

I make the prayer that every priest in America be soon in possession of those sermons, whether in German or in English. Good preaching is one of the chief duties of the priest. By divine appointment the priest is the preacher. "Preach the gospel to every creature," was it said to the first College of priests, whom the Lord Himself had prepared for their vocation. "Preach the gospel to every creature." "Teach all nations — teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded unto you." There is the solemn injunction, continuous and scrupulous loyalty to which is the test of the true priesthood. Whatever aids the priest to fulfill the mandate of the Master, is a boon to all — to preacher and to hearer. You have brought to them this boon, by your translation of the sermons of Heinrich von Hurter. As one of Christ's priests and preachers, I thank you.

✠ JOHN IRELAND,
Archbishop of St. Paul.

To Rev. Edward Jones.

FOREWORD

The sermons contained in this volume, and in subsequent volumes to be published, have been selected and adapted from the German work, "Schoenheit und Wahrheit der Katholischen Kirche," published in five volumes by Very Rev. H. von Hurter. They were preached in Vienna in the early seventies and produced a profound and lasting impression in the Capital of Austria. The five volumes of sermons cover practically the whole field of dogmatic and sacramental theology. They have been extensively used by the Editor in his ministry of twenty years, and are now brought out in English dress upon the request of some valued clerical friends, with the hope that they may be as useful to his fellow priests as they have been to him.

The other volumes are in preparation, and will be published as rapidly as time and circumstances permit.

These sermons are intended principally for those whose vocation it is to preach the Word of God, but whose duties leave them little time for preparation. For such, it is felt, they will be a welcome aid. As a rule they are presented in an easy and popular form; and with all their brevity contain ample matter for one or even two ordinary sermons. The disposition is strictly logical, and brought out with all possible clear-

ness. The grouping of thoughts is such, that it will be an easy matter for the preacher, after careful perusal, to reproduce the substance of any sermon in the form most congenial to his taste and ability.

The sermon on the "Stability of the Papacy" was compiled and preached by the Editor on the occasion of his return from a visit to Rome shortly after the election of Piux X, and takes the place in this volume of a sermon by the Author on Piux IX, of happy memory.

The Editor wishes to thank Rev. Chas. L. Grunewald for his valued assistance in the preparation of this work, and also the Very Rev. Dr. H. Moynihan for having read his manuscript and made many valuable suggestions.

THE EDITOR.

Morris, Minn., Nov. 10, 1910.

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THE BEAUTY AND TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SERMON I

THE NECESSITY OF A REVEALED RELIGION

“Because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it unto them.”—ROM. I, 19.

Religion is the most glorious bond that unites us to God in time and eternity. It is the truest and happiest union of man with God. Not every relation with God constitutes religion. All creatures, animate and inanimate, have a necessary relation to Him; for since He has created them, He must constantly preserve them, and, separated from Him, they could not possibly exist—“For in Him, we live and move and have our being” (Acts xvii, 28). We have this in common with irrational creation, that without the preserving omnipotence and presence of God, we, too, could neither live, nor move, nor even exist. But this dependence is not called religion. Religion is rather a living, deliberate intercourse of man with God by means of knowledge and love, adoration and obedience. Man was not created for himself, much less for this earth, but for God. And this ultimate end

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he can attain only through religion, and, therefore, religion is an absolute necessity of his very being. But if religion is necessary for the attainment of this last end, God must necessarily have given man a knowledge thereof, just as He endowed man with being, life and motion; in other words, God was obliged to reveal Himself to man. And this God has done in a twofold manner,—a natural and a supernatural manner.

The first manifestation is called *natural revelation*, the second *supernatural*, or, more properly, *divine revelation*. The natural manifestation, or revelation, is the world itself. The world is a vast book, on which God has impressed His being, His eternity, His omnipotence, His wisdom, providence and bounty, the glory of His perfections in unmistakable characters. The various creatures are the letters, the words and the expressions, so to speak, of this immense volume. From these, man endowed with reason might learn to know of the existence of God, and His attributes, and, therefore, serve Him, adore Him and love Him.

But man was perverted and corrupted to the very core of his being by a well-nigh unconquerable inclination to sin and error, and, consequently, was unable to arrive at the knowledge of those absolute truths of religion which are discoverable to sound reason by the consideration of creation, by the testimony of the soul, and the voice of conscience. Thus from this threefold source man is able to learn that there is a Supreme Being, a God Who is the Author of all good, the Creator and Ruler of the universe,

Who will reward the good and punish the wicked. And from this he would learn that the soul of man is immortal and that he is in duty bound to honor God and love Him above all things. God was, therefore, obliged to take pity on man after his fall, and reveal to him these primary and necessary truths in an extraordinary manner.

This extraordinary manifestation is divine revelation. Here God no longer uses the medium of created beings, but speaks to us either directly or through men whom He has inspired. And thus He proceeds, until the great moment approaches when the Son of God Himself comes down from Heaven into our midst to teach us. He does not confine His teaching to those elementary truths, which sound reason, uncorrupted by sin, can discover, but He tells of those heavenly mysteries of our holy religion which our unaided reason is incapable of knowing. These truths throw a wonderful light on the grandeur of God, on our being and on our future life.

Therefore, my brethren, we shall speak to-day on the necessity of divine revelation. This series of instructions should make clear to us especially two things, viz.: the marvelous providence of God, which arranges all things STRONGLY yet gently for the welfare of man, and the sublime grandeur of Christianity. May God assist me with *His grace!*

Neither visible creation nor man's own heart could bring him to a clear and comprehensive understanding of God, for, as St. Paul expresses it (Rom. viii,

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22), creation languishes under sin, and the heart of man is perverted from his youth (Jer. xvii, 9) and is inclined to sin. The fountain of the knowledge of God became tainted in man, because he hearkened to the "father of lies," and preferred the creature to the Creator. This perversion of the heart of man, with all its evil inclinations, was inherited by his whole posterity. Humanity degenerated completely as time went on. The morals of the human race became constantly more and more corrupt, and the tendency was to deify nature.

The rapid rise and spread of idolatry furnish a pitiable proof of this. Even the nobler and more learned men, guided by reason and conscience, could attain to the knowledge of a Supreme Being only with unutterable difficulty. And even they were not long able to maintain themselves at such a dizzy height; they soon fell back again into the errors of their fellow-men, or became the authors of new and equally pernicious doctrines. Yea, the most cultured peoples of antiquity, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, measured the depths of their moral degradation and the extent of their aberrations from the knowledge of the one true God by the progress they made in the earthly arts and sciences. They multiplied the number of their gods, and in all moral and religious respects they occupied a lower plane than the veriest savages.

St. Paul, who was certainly a most trustworthy witness, and whose testimony is confirmed by hundreds of similar ones, depicts in lurid colors the pre-

vailing conditions of his time (Rom. i, 16-32). "The wrath of God," he exclaims, "is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that disdain the truth of God in injustice: because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God has manifested it unto them. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds and of four-footed beasts and of creeping things."

These things, however, did not happen immediately after the fall of our first parents; they came gradually. The human race develops good or evil traits just as the individual does. No man becomes suddenly a saint or a scoundrel. From small good actions, little by little, great virtues grow, and little faults beget great vices in time. But vice increases more rapidly, and becomes more destructive, because man is more prone to evil than to good. And this holds true for the whole human race.

At first, all men believed in the one true God. Adam and Eve instructed their children sufficiently, and these in turn taught theirs. They prayed to God as our first parents had prayed. They offered sacrifice in thanksgiving or impetration, as Cain and Abel had done. The father was the head of the family, and, as such, he was teacher and priest. In the name of the family, and with it, he offered sacrifice as an act of common worship. For this they had no designated places, but did as Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham and Jacob—they made their offerings in the open air. This may have been the reason why they began

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to adore the sun, first as a symbol of God, and then, later on, as God Himself, because it illumines the earth and dispenses life and growth and blessings everywhere. From the adoration of the sun they passed on to that of the stars, from the light of heaven to the light of earth—the fire. Hence, sun, and fire-worship, are the first forms of idolatry we meet with among men.

They designated the stars according to the seasons in which they appeared in the heavens, giving them names which were taken from the occupations proper to the time of the year—agriculture, the chase, fishing, etc. Thus we find the constellations called respectively the bull, the bear, the lion, the fish, the crab. But succeeding generations soon forgot the real meaning of these constellations, and mistook the earthly for the heavenly. The animals were first transported to the heavens, and from there brought back to earth to receive divine honors. For this reason the ancient Egyptians adored a white bull, for which they erected temples, decreed sacrifices, and established a priesthood. Other animals were equally sacred to them. This was the origin of animal worship.

When the Jewish people returned from the land of Egypt and arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai they made for themselves a golden calf and adored it. Imitating the example of their pagan neighbors, they subsequently made a brazen bull, hollow inside. Heated to a fierce glow, this statue of a horrible god became the receptacle of human sacrifices, especially

of children. Besides this gradual idolatry there arose another form of false worship. With the increase of sensuality men were no longer capable of conceiving God as a pure spirit. They ascribed to Him a body, eyes, hands and feet, and this idea was reproduced in human form in wood, and, later on, in stone and metal. These statues were originally meant to remind men of God, but this memory soon disappeared, and the image itself became their god. With the multiplication of images the gods multiplied. Such statues are called idols, their adorers idolaters, and their religion idolatry.

In later times statues were erected to departed heroes and kings, and these also enjoyed divine honors. And soon these men were deified and became gods. Not content with deification after death, powerful kings demanded that they be adored, sacrifices offered to them, and temples erected in their honor during their own lifetime. The three Hebrew youths were cast into the fiery furnace at Babylon because they would not adore the statue of King Nabuchodonosor. Similarly at first the Roman emperors received divine honors only after their death, but in the later years of the empire they were deified during their lifetime. Such was the gradual rise of idolatry, and thus "they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man and of birds, and of four-footed beasts and of creeping things" (Rom. i, 23). In fact idolatry increased to such an extent that well-nigh all creatures were deified. Even a pagan poet

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could exclaim: "Oh, holy peoples, whose gods grow in their very gardens."

My dearly Beloved! To what a depth public morals had fallen and the simplest truths had been degraded! The most cultured nations of antiquity—Greece and Rome—idolized their very passions and vices. Their chief god, Jupiter, was a parricide and an adulterer; the goddess Juno was a paragon of jealousy and malice; thieves, robbers, and embezzlers found a patron in Mercury; drunkards in Bacchus; the impure in Venus. To what a depth of degradation must man not have fallen when he was ready to adore his own vices, or at least to implore the help of gods who were the friends and protectors of vice! What a pernicious influence must not idolatry have exercised over the noblest sentiments, public morals, family ties, the treatment of children, of slaves, of subjects, of enemies! You need not take my word for it, my friends, but believe what St. Paul tells you when, after having pictured how man had exchanged the glory of an incorruptible God for the image of man and animals, he adds: "Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart." He then enumerates all these desires as a warning example for all those who "when they knew God, had not glorified Him as God or given thanks."

And if scoffers at religion and other enemies of Christianity do not believe the holy Apostle, let them listen to the lamentations of millions of children and adults who, under excruciating tortures, were offered in sacrifice to pagan idols. Let them listen to the cry

of oppressed humanity of a Redeemer. And if we now no longer find ourselves in such desperate straits, such moral degeneracy and ignorance, we owe it, not to the laws of governments, nor to philosophers, nor to so-called enlightened minds—but to God alone, to His Christ and to Christianity. To them we owe praise and gratitude. And if we abandon God, and give up the Christian religion to the contumely of its enemies, the old woes will not fail to overtake us under a new form.

What then was the condition of the knowledge of the simplest and the most important truths in those days? We have already adverted to the knowledge of God and the moral law as they existed in those days. The greatest uncertainty and the densest ignorance prevailed concerning the immortality of the soul, the future life, the creation of the world, and other important truths. Thanks to Christianity, these questions are now all familiar and intelligible to the smallest child.

Even the greatest of heathen scholars were in doubt about these matters, or fell into the most absurd contradictions, until, finally, the most eminent of all—Plato—admitted that unless some one should remove the dense veil, we could not even know how to conduct ourselves towards God and our fellow men. The same ignorance prevails nowadays among pagan nations, although, on account of our commercial intercourse with them, Christianity has made its influence felt among them.

History and the experience of the human race

plainly teach us that man's unaided reason could not arrive at a complete and correct knowledge of these truths, although they belong to the domain of natural religion. Such truths are: the unity of God, the obligation to adore and love Him, the reward of the good and the punishment of the wicked, the ten commandments, and the immortality of the soul. God was therefore obliged to reveal these truths in a supernatural manner, either directly by Himself, or through holy men whom He sent. Now if the revelation of these truths of natural religion is so necessary, must it not be much more so in the case of the supernatural truths contained in the Christian religion? Man, by his own reason and by himself, could never have come to the knowledge of such truths as the Blessed Trinity, the Resurrection of the body, the Communion of Saints, the Last Judgment, the happiness of Heaven, and other truths of revealed religion which are all properly called mysteries. Christ the Redeemer, Who came to enlighten men with heavenly truths, first revealed them expressly to us.

Yes, in fact, my friends, the glorious Christian religion which Jesus Christ brought from heaven to earth, is like the dove that hovered over the ark after the deluge with the olive branch of peace. And thus the Christian religion hovers over the world with the olive branch of peace between God and man. Blessed is he who in the flood of sin and untruth which devastates the human race, and submerges it deeper than ever did the waters of the deluge—blessed is he who reaches out for the olive branch in order to find

peace and comfort, grace and truth, aye, and God and His love. This messenger of peace, the tender consoler of the human heart opens up a beatifying intercourse with God, teaching men marvelous, heavenly truths and uniting them in the bonds of faith, of Christian charity, and Christian justice.

It is the Christian religion, the sublimest and grandest work of divine revelation, that has brought grace and peace, reconciliation and celestial happiness to millions of souls enslaved in all the horrors of paganism. Jesus Christ suffered and bled on the cross in order to establish Christianity on earth. The Apostles did not spare their lives in order to spread Christianity over the whole world, and make all men share in its blessings.

For Christ's sake and for the sake of His religion the martyrs gladly suffered the greatest tortures, and even maidens and tender children sacrificed their lives. Strengthened by the Christian faith countless sufferers have steadfastly borne their burdens, and found peace in the midst of their trials. Who can enumerate the millions of the poor, the sick and the dying who, in the lapse of centuries, have borne themselves heroically, and persevered with perfect resignation to God's holy will, because their religion strengthened them? Yes, the Christian religion is the most precious monument of God's unbounded love, the sublime gift of heaven to earth, in order to free it from the curse of sin and the torment of doubt.

Happy are we all, if religion like a heavenly dove announces to us peace with God and peace with our-

selves! Happy are we if this most precious testimonial of God's love find a place in our hearts, if we treasure it and preserve it so that by means of it we may rise again towards God in faith, hope and charity, and finally in eternal bliss! Amen.

SERMON II

THE PREPARATION FOR AND UNIVERSAL EXPECTATION OF A REDEEMER

“My eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples.”—ST. LUKE XI, 30-31.

God alone can satisfy the cravings of the human heart for true religion. He alone can give it those divine truths that truly enlighten the mind of man. In the midst of the horrors of paganism there always remained a yearning for a Redeemer. Men craved for one who with redemption would bring grace, peace, and comfort, and surcease of sorrow. This feeling grew in intensity as the time approached for its fulfillment. The venerable old man, Simeon, who had been waiting for the expectation of Israel, when he beheld the Divine Babe and His mother with tears of gratitude took the Child into his arms, and broke forth with these words: “My eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people” (St. Luke xi, 30-31).

God prepared the way for the promised Redeemer, “before the face of all peoples.” Hence the Redeemer was universally expected, not only by the Jews, but also by the Gentiles. We are forced to admire and adore the ways of Divine Providence as manifested in the preparation of the peoples for the coming of the

Saviour. God revealed Himself to the Jews and to the Gentiles. As time went on He prepared them for the Redeemer by His promises, and by the Prophets whom He sent to teach them.

The prophetic voices ceased to make themselves heard after the death of Malachias, the last of the Prophets, four hundred and fifty years before Christ. The Messiah has been sufficiently described and the picture of Him is completed. From now on respectful silence and anxious expectation will reign over the world. Our mind and hearts are overwhelmed with amazement when we behold the methods God employed to open the way for the Expected of Nations, the Saviour of the world, and to prepare the people for His reception.

How sublime is religion as God shows it to us in His sublime operations! Religion is an abiding miracle that fills all time from the beginning of the world. It manifests itself in two great epochs: in the promise of the Redeemer, and in the fulfillment of that promise. In fact, Jesus Christ is the object of the whole of God's providence, the beginning and the end of all things, the expectation and the hope of the human race in the past, the present and the future.

Therefore we shall consider to-day the preparation for and the expectation of the nations of a Redeemer. O Jesus assist me with Thy grace!

In the midst of the worst forms of idolatry and the densest ignorance of all religious truths, the nations preserved one truth that was handed down to them

from the portals of the lost Paradise, namely the promise of a Redeemer and the expectation of His coming. The dying patriarch Jacob was able to bestow on his son Juda the prophetic blessing that from his seed would spring "the Expected of the nations" (Gen. xlix, 10), and Jacob lived almost two thousand years before Christ.

And how sublime are the words of patient Job, who lived before the time of Jacob—he was a contemporary of Abraham. Among the Arab tribes and in the midst of his bitterest trials he consoled himself thus: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and on 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 and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom" (Job xix, 25-27). This magnificent testimony would do honor to a Christian, hence all the more to a man who lived two thousand years before the Redeemer. It furnishes us with an eloquent proof that long before the Jewish people came into existence, long before the types and the prophecies designated the Messiah more clearly, the expectation of Him made itself strongly felt.

In like manner did Balaam, who was commissioned by the pagan king of the Moabites to curse the Jewish people in the desert, and who, instead, spread his hands in blessing over them, exclaiming enthusiastically—"I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not near" (Numb. xxiv, 17). These are only single voices taken from ancient times, but

they will grow in volume until they penetrate to the uttermost ends of the earth. God chose the Jewish people to make this possible, and not merely to announce and designate the Redeemer more clearly by means of figures and prophecies. The Jews were destined to make other nations share in their expectation, and thus render it more general. This appears to have been the only reason for their existence. Every thing connected with the chosen people of God seems to typify, to indicate, and to remind us of the "Expectation of the nations," the star arising out of Jacob, the prophet whom God will send, the Just One whom the heavens will send down as dew, the clouds will rain and the earth will germinate, the Prince of Peace, the Angel of the Covenant and the Man of Sorrows, "through whose wounds we shall be healed," the restorer of the human race.

Through Him, and through Him alone, the form of worship, the ceremonial, the sacrifices, the political institutions and the history of the Jewish people take on life and significance. Without Him the Jews and their history would be a puzzle, a tissue of impossibilities and incongruities. But by the providence of God it has marvelously fulfilled its destiny. It has constantly but one teaching, one policy, one idea,—to announce and to await the Messiah, to treasure in Him the germ of the blessing,—the blessing that will spread over all peoples and will embrace the whole earth. Even Jerusalem, the queen of cities, is dear to it only because from her the Desired of the nations will extend His kingdom over the earth. Thither it

turns its sorrowful look during the Babylonian captivity, thither it directs its wailings which Jeremiah so touchingly expresses in his Lamentations.

Whether this people be led away into captivity, or its homes be devastated, or the walls of its cities be destroyed, or its temple be burnt to the ground—nothing can tear from its heart the hope of Him Who is to come. Its patience and perseverance in the expectation of the Redeemer, even in the midst of its most grievous visitations, is something sublime. This sublimity grows when we consider that this patience endured not merely for a few years but for twenty centuries. Verily here is the hand of God, here we cannot fail to recognize the wisdom of His operations.

But indeed, so it had to be, and not otherwise. In such wise the expectation spread to the neighboring peoples and from them, in the course of time, it extended to all the nations of the then known world, so that when our Saviour came it had grown to be universal.

We find this amply confirmed with regard to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles both in the Sacred Scriptures and in the testimony of pagan authors.

John the Baptist powerfully exhorted the people to do penance and to prepare the way of the Lord (St. John i, 23). Multitudes came to him, and, as St. Luke expresses it (iii, 15), "all were thinking in their hearts of John that perhaps he might be the Christ."

But why did they take him for the Christ? Be-

cause at this time the expectation of a Redeemer was general among the Jewish people. Therefore the Jews of Jerusalem sent down, as St. John further tells us (i, 19-21), priests and Levites charged to ask him "Who art thou?" and he confessed and did not deny, and he confessed—"I am not the Christ." And when our Saviour Himself appeared, John sent two of his disciples to Him, saying—"Art thou he that is to come, or look we for another?" (St. Math. xi, 2-3). The people were more definite in their expressions, when our Lord had fed them with five loaves of bread—"This is, of a truth, the prophet that is to come into the world" (St. John vi, 14); or, as the Samaritan woman said when she conversed with our Saviour, "I know that the Messias cometh (who is called Christ), therefore when he is come, he will tell us all things" (St. John iv, 25).

What does all this prove but the universal belief that the time had come when the Saviour of the world was to appear in accordance with the prophecies?

But the Gentiles were also filled with this universal expectation. In order to understand this all the better, we will briefly consider the providence of God with regard to the pagan nations on the eve of the coming of the Redeemer. The Desired of the nations was destined to be the Saviour of the world, and His religion was to be spread everywhere.

Therefore, we see that God—Who had chosen the Jewish people to preserve the belief in the one true God and to prepare the world for the coming of the

Redeemer—likewise chose another, a pagan people, the Roman, to weld under its sway all the nations of the ancient world into one vast empire, so that the prophecy of Daniel be fulfilled. The barriers which divided the nations into camps were first to fall; the earth, according to an ancient tradition, was to be made straight and level; and the human race was to return to its original unity.

The building of the tower of Babel shortly after the deluge marked the dispersion of the children of men and the confusion of their language, and since then an incredible division existed among the nations. They were strangers to each other, enemies and barbarians, and came into contact with each other only on the field of battle or in the enclosures for slaves. But as soon as the hour has come for the redemption of the human race all nations must be united into one great people, one vast empire, in order to be able to receive the benefit of its renewal. Hence we see that in the course of events, which were directed by God, all the nations of old lost their independence and were absorbed by the Roman empire. It was not enough that the known peoples entered into this unity, even unknown nations gradually left their distant homes and approached nearer and nearer and were eventually forced into this union by the power of the Romans. The Latin tongue was another tie that bound them together. It was spoken and understood from one end of the world unto the other. The emperors used it for their laws and decrees, and the governors issued their proclamations in it. Hence the inscription on

the cross of Christ was composed in Latin by Pontius Pilate.

And now the moment was come when for the first time one language united all the peoples of the earth.

In consequence of this immense revolution, so majestically announced by the prophet, everything was in readiness for the coming of the Redeemer.

The barriers which had so long kept the nations apart as enemies, were swept away, all heard and understood the same language. The salvation of the world can spread far and wide over the broad roads that lead from one end of the Roman empire to the other, so that "every eye can see and every ear can hear, how the glory of the Lord and His word have been made manifest," as the Prophet Isaias said. The Roman generals despite themselves helped St. John the Baptist to literally fulfill these words: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His path. Every valley shall be filled: and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made plain: and all flesh see the salvation of God" (Is. xl, 3; St. Luke iii, 4-6).

This then my dearly beloved, was the vast empire which the great Prophet Daniel had foretold, by means of which God outwardly united the nations in order to make salvation accessible to them. Even the pagan Romans were penetrated with the thought that a higher hand had guided their affairs. Their greatest orator, Cicero, cried out in the Senate: "Who is so devoid of sense that if he look up at the

heavens he will not perceive that the gods exist? But if he have recognized the existence of the gods, he must likewise understand that this world empire has risen, will be enlarged and preserved by their guidance." The Gospel confirms this truth by telling us that the Emperor Augusta had issued a command to all the governors that all the subjects of his empire should be enrolled and counted. This applied equally to the land of the Jews. In obedience to this command Joseph accompanied by Mary proceeded to Bethlehem, and thus the prophecy was fulfilled that the Saviour should be born in Bethlehem. Truly, the hand of God is visible here.

At this time the coming of the Redeemer was generally expected not only among the Jews but also among the Gentiles. The pagan authors of that period bear witness to this expectation. The three wise men of the East confirm this in an even more surprising measure: "Where is the new born king of the Jews? We have seen his star!" We find a still more wonderful proof in the fact that nations from the furthest ends of the earth, hitherto unknown, were speedily wending their way toward the Orient. And thus was fulfilled the word of God announced by the Prophet Aggeus: "Yet one little while—and I will move all nations; and the Desired of all nations shall come" (Agg. ii, 7-8).

Can we offer more evident proofs for this wonderful migration of men, for this universal expectation of a Redeemer than these? But this truth appears still more striking when we consider that from the

moment our Saviour came on earth this general expectation vanished and faded away even among the pagan nations, just as the countless bloody sacrifices of the Jews and the Gentiles ceased as soon as the unbloody sacrifice of the New Law, the holy Mass, was instituted. Here again we have the evidence of the hand of God and of the glory of the Christian faith.

How, finally, can we explain the constant, powerful and insistent growth of the longing for and the expectation of the Redeemer in the heathen world? Here again the magnificent providence of God shows itself plainly in the preparation of the nations for the Redeemer.

The nearer the time approached for the coming of the Saviour, the deeper both the Jews and the Gentiles fell into utter misery. The power of Rome had indeed conquered the nations, but beneath the hard yoke of the victor and under the influence of paganism there arose a measure of wickedness, misery and disorder that exceeds all conception. The nations yearned deeply for a Saviour. But so it must be. The human race was obliged to travel by two roads. One of these was the way of the knowledge of evil. God had already told our first parents in Paradise that yonder tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—of good if they were obedient, of evil if they transgressed His mandate. Their own eyes and especially those of their posterity were soon to behold the horrors that were to follow man's determination

to seek his welfare in his own way after having thrown off his allegiance to God. When they had departed from the ways of God, He left them to the devices of their own hearts. Before them yawned an abyss of misery and corruption that filled them with terror, and wrung from their oppressed hearts a despairing cry for the Redeemer.

The second road was the way of the knowledge of good. All those who had fallen a prey to misery and were helpless and forlorn, were to recognize all the more clearly the greatness and benignity of the saving compassion, the abyss of the love and the goodness of God, from the measure of their own abysmal degradation. To this compassion of God and His love they would stretch out their hands so that they might build the more closely this new covenant of reunion. God allowed us all to sink deeply in order to render us capable of seeing His benign mercy.

But man was to learn still more effectually that he who presumes to be like unto God and refuses Him honor and obedience, will gradually become so degraded that four-footed and creeping beasts will be his gods, aye, that giving himself over to unnatural vices, he will become like unto them. This terrible degradation was to make him aware of his boundless poverty and from this lead him back into the compassionate arms of God. Hence, after the deluge of vice and idolatry had passed, God sent us His divine Son, and through Him that daughter of heaven, the Christian religion, like another dove of peace. In

the fullness of time she came like a sister of charity to heal the gaping wounds of mankind. And in truth nobly has she accomplished her mission.

Thus the world recognized, and recognizes to-day, but one great object of its desires and its expectation: Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

The operation of God is not less visible in His promises than in their fulfillment and in the preparation of the nations for the coming Redeemer.

Jesus Christ is indeed the Lamb of God which was led to the slaughter from the very beginning (Apoc. xiii, 8); Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of all things, the heir of the centuries that are passed, and the father of all future time, Christ yesterday, and to-day and the same for all eternity.

May you all, my dearly beloved, increase in your faith in the Saviour, increase in your hope in Him and in your love for Him. The promises and the prophecies have been made more for us Christians than even for the Jews and the Gentiles. The truth, and the fact of their accomplishment in our Divine Saviour will make our faith appear in a clearer and more wonderful light. The fulfillment of all former promises gives us the assurance that whatsoever Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world has promised or threatened will be accomplished in us. Hence we shall either possess eternal life with Him and His saints in heaven, or we shall be condemned to eternal death with Satan and his angels in hell. If, therefore,

we obey His commandments and the commandments of His holy Church, He will also fulfill the promises He has made to us, and we shall see Him one day face to face for all eternity. Amen.

SERMON III

THE APOSTLES' CREED AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."—ST. JOHN XVII, 3.

We have seen that the fall of our first parents had compassed the ruin of the race, and that unless a Redeemer were sent, man was irretrievably lost. God in His sweet providence deigned to teach man Himself, for sin had done its dire work, and man was ignorant of truths eternal. In fact no sooner had Adam fallen, than God sought him, brought him to a knowledge of his condition and called him to penance. In like manner He had compassion on the whole human race, revealed Himself to it, and by means of true divine religion renewed the bond that had been rent asunder by sin and paganism.

Yes, in truth, true religion may be likened to a Sister of Charity who dresses the gaping wounds of humanity, gives comfort to the heart, and peace to the conscience. Religion is like to the dove that after the Deluge rejoiced the heart of Noah with the green olive branch. She is the sublimest handiwork of God. After the horrors of paganism are past, she consoles, sanctifies and saves millions of souls. She makes the

nations moral and happy, and like the sun casts her blessings broadcast over the earth.

But, my dearly beloved, our divine Redeemer Himself was obliged to come in order to announce the true religion. God had promised Him already in Paradise, and His Prophets foretold the Saviour's coming. It was necessary, however, to prepare men so that they would be more anxious to receive Him. They were obliged to wander over two roads, the way of good and the way of evil, as was previously told about the Tree of Knowledge in Paradise. And in fact the deeper they sank into sin and into the horrors of idolatry, the better they recognized the good which they had lost, and the whole misery with which they were burdened. Such is the case to-day. No sooner has a Christian committed grievous sin, than he feels the loss of grace and of a good conscience, and equally the weight and wretchedness of sin.

Jesus Christ became our Lord and Saviour. For our sake He descended upon earth to teach and to redeem us. And no other name is given to men in which they may be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ. At His name every knee must bend, and every tongue confess that our Lord Jesus is in the glory of the Father. Therefore He Himself spoke the consoling words: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." We can reach Jesus only through true religion, and true faith alone can obtain true religion. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," says St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephe-

sians (iv, 5). The Apostles received this divinely true faith from the lips of our Divine Saviour Himself, and they in turn taught it to the world. However, before they went forth into the world, in obedience to our Lord's command, they composed the Apostles' Creed as it lives to-day on the lips and in the hearts of all Christians.

Therefore we shall to-day consider the Apostles' Creed and its significance.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

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Christian life is based on the three divine virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. The chief contents of these virtues are set forth in few but concise sentences. The Apostles' Creed contains what we must believe; the Our Father what we may hope for; and the Ten Commandments what we must do or omit. "Whatever belongs to the Christian faith refers either to a better knowledge of God, or to the creation and government of the world, or to the redemption of man, or to the rewarding of the good and the punishment of the wicked, and therefore to eternal happiness or damnation" (Rom. Cat., p. vii.). St. Augustine tells us that before the Apostles, obedient to the command of the Saviour, separated to announce the word of God to the nations, they resolved, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to condense the Christian faith in a short formula which would enable them to impress it all the more easily on the minds of the faithful. This was the origin of the Apostles' Creed (Aug. Sermon, 59). Just as our Lord taught us and indicated

to us in the seven petitions of the Our Father the contents of all our petitions and forms of prayer, so likewise did the Apostles embrace in the twelve articles of their profession of faith all that the Lord revealed.

Our faith in God naturally expresses our belief in His omnipotence, His wisdom and providence, in the creation and conservation of the world. When we believe in Jesus Christ we also believe in the fall of man, redemption, the bloody sacrifice of the Cross and the perpetual memorial of it, the unbloody sacrifice of the altar. We believe in grace regained and in the means to obtain it—the sacraments;—our faith in the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier of our souls, makes us hope for His gifts and His promised assistance. In these three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we profess our faith in the Blessed Trinity. When we believe that the one, holy, Catholic Church was established, we also believe in its four marks of truth, its unity under one head, its infallibility, its duration until the end of the world, its only true teaching and its holy sacraments, its power to bind and to loose, *i. e.*, to give commandments, and to ordain what is necessary for the salvation of the soul, for the celebration of divine service and for the preservation of good morals. Our faith in the communion of saints is an acknowledgment of the militant, suffering, and triumphant Church. Hence we believe in a mutual union, in our invocation of the saints of heaven, their intercession for us, and our prayers for the living and the suffering souls in purgatory. In the remission of sins we believe and

hope, in the power granted by Christ to His Church to remit our sins through the instrumentality of its bishops and priests. In the resurrection of the body and life everlasting we believe, in the day of judgment, the resurrection of the body, the rewarding of the good, and the punishing of the wicked; hence in the eternity of heaven and hell.

Wherefore, whatever the Christian world must believe is contained in the Apostles' Creed as the flower in the bud, the plant in the seed, the fruit in the blossom. Besides the Apostles' Creed we have three other professions of faith. They were occasioned by newly risen heresies, and were composed by the united bishops gathered in three great Councils for the purpose of giving the Christian faithful a means of determining the true faith of the Catholic Church from the false doctrines of the heretics, and thus enabling them to remain loyal to the one only true Church. They are built upon the foundation of the Apostles' Creed, and are nothing more than an amplification of what is contained in germ in that Creed.

When the bud bursts forth into full bloom, it adds nothing new or alien to itself. It merely develops its own being, and brings out what lay hidden within. It thus gradually unfolds the entire wealth of its beauty and displays the wonders of its construction.

The Nicene Creed was the first amplified profession of faith. When Arius denied the Divinity of Christ and spread his heresy ever farther, many Catholics fell away from the faith and accepted his godless teachings. The bishops gathered in council at Nice, in the

year 325, and condemned the heresy. The creed in which they embodied the ancient Christian faith was more explicit and decided in its expressions than was the case in the Apostles' Creed. Very soon, however, a new heretic, Macedonius, sprang up. He denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and represented Him as a mere creature and servant of God. The Pope again assembled the bishops of the Catholic world in council at Constantinople, in the year 381. Here the Nicene Creed was amplified in such sort that the Divinity of the Holy Ghost and His consubstantiality with the Father and the Son are more distinctly and sharply accentuated. This amplified profession of faith is called the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. In order to distinguish it from the Apostles' Creed it is also known as the *Symbolum*, or the *profession of faith of the Fathers*. You are all familiar with it, as the priest still recites it at the Mass, where it is known as the Credo.

The second general profession of faith is that of St. Athanasius. The priests still recite the formula when saying their breviary on Sunday. It contains a very distinct and excellent exposition of the dogmas concerning the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. This explicit statement of the most important doctrine of our holy faith was designed to protect all faithful Christians against any and all errors on these points, and to furnish them with the means of rendering a better account of their belief.

The last general profession of faith was called into

being by the Council of Trent, and was promulgated by Pope Pius IV in the year 1564. It is named the Tridentine Creed. Over and above the contents of the foregoing formulas it contains also in twelve articles all those ancient dogmas of faith which former heretics did not deny, and which were never expressly mentioned in these other creeds. In the sixteenth century, however, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and other heretics denied them. Such were, for instance, the Church with her visible head; the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; Holy Eucharist; the sacraments of Penance, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, Matrimony; Purgatory, the Communion of Saints, etc. Hence it must be recited by all those who are to receive an ecclesiastical office, or who have received from God the grace of conversion from heresy to the true faith.

Thus much about the Apostles' Creed and its amplification in the three later general formulas. We shall now consider its significance for the whole Church and for the individual Christian. The number of the Apostles, as well as the number of the articles of faith in their common creed, is mysterious and significant. Just as the chosen people of Israel claimed descent from the twelve sons of Jacob, so we Christians, the sanctified people of God (according to the expression of St. Peter i, 2, 9) and of the New Law, have received the twelve Apostles as our spiritual progenitors. When the Israelites traversed the desert in quest of the Promised Land they found twelve fountains of water (Numbers xxxiii, 9) where they

quenched their thirst. The twelve Apostles are the twelve fountains of living waters for all those who are traveling heavenward, for the Lord says: "He that shall drink of the water that I will give them, shall not thirst forever." With this water the Apostles stilled the thirst of men for truth, for knowledge of the one true God and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

When the Jewish people approached the Promised Land Moses sent out twelve spies (Deut. i, 23). In like manner did Christ send out His twelve Apostles to take possession of the world by means of faith. The whole world was His Promised Land, since the Heavenly Father had said to Him: "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." The high priest of the Jews wore over his vestments a breast plate which was adorned with twelve jewels and which bore the words "Light and Truth." Thus also the twelve articles of faith have become twelve jewels. The Apostles, as the representatives of the true and eternal High Priest, bore them out into the world, and by means of them shed abroad light and truth, and thus won the nations to the Saviour of mankind.

When the Jews entered into the Promised Land they were obliged by divine command to erect an altar of twelve stones on Mount Hebal Ebal (Deut. xxvii, 5). In like manner when the twelve articles of faith have been received into the heart they form an altar on which the knowledge of the one true God and of Jesus Christ whom He sent burns as a radiant light

of faith. And finally, twelve golden lions stood on the steps of Solomon's throne. Courageous as lions the Apostles went forth into the world, and with their cry awakened the nations from the deathlike torpor into which paganism and sin had plunged them, and brought them as booty to the King of kings. Through them and through their faith we now can reach the throne of the Most High, and behold Him face to face.

As mysterious as is the Apostles' Creed in its twelve articles, so significant is it for the whole Church and for every individual Christian.

Our Lord Jesus Christ appointed the Apostles as our teachers, our priests and our shepherds. He therefore committed to their care His doctrine and His sacraments. He sent them to teach all nations, to administer His sacraments to them, and to exhort them to observe all He had commanded. It is evident that once the teachings of the Apostles gained an entrance into the hearts of men, the faith did not lie dormant there, but the believers spoke of it to others and thus manifested it outwardly. Hence the Apostles selected the twelve most important points of the faith in Jesus Christ, rendered them more conspicuous and united them into one. This is called the Apostles' Creed; it is also known as the Apostles' symbol of faith. Symbol means a sign upon which all agree. It is the sacred watchword, by which all true Christians can recognize each other and upon which they all agree.

Doubtless such a common profession of the same

faith is calculated, as such, to increase in the individual as well as in the Church the strength and joyousness of faith both inwardly and outwardly. We accomplish with enthusiasm that which we do in company with others; our own faith increases when we are united with others in love and devotion to it.

But this does not exhaust the significance of the Apostles' Creed. By means of this common profession of faith we adhere to a belief not invented by ourselves, or compiled for us by heretics three hundred years ago. The faith to which we belong is the one which took its beginning from the Holy Ghost Who came down on the Apostles on the first feast of Pentecost, Who has preserved this faith intact in the Church until the present day and Who has propagated it through the centuries as the real word of God. How can any one find comfort in a dogmatic system when he knows *the man* who originated it, and the time when it was invented and the circumstances under which it was spread among men? Or what becomes of his belief in the divine promises concerning the truth of the one Church and the assistance of the Holy Ghost? How comforted and strengthened the soul is when it is in harmony with the belief of all times and all true Christians up to the days of the Apostles.

Just as there is but one Lord, so there can be but one faith. Hence there is but one true faith and only one formula corresponding to this faith which has come down to us from the times of the Apostles. One God and way, and one truth, but also one pro-

fession that binds all true Christians into one harmonious whole in the Church of God. Millions and millions of tongues proclaim it: There is but one God the Father, the Almighty Creator, one Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, one Holy Ghost, only one Holy Catholic Church, and in her the communion of saints, in her the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection and life everlasting. This cry extends back to the Apostles, and the centuries that have vanished and the generations of the faithful that are past—they all re-echo it from out of their graves from the heights of heaven, from the depths of the earth: “one God, one Lord, one faith” (Ephes. iv, 5). And the cry rolls onward through the ages until the end of the world: There is but one God, one Lord, one faith, only one true Church.

Hence all those who are bound together by the one true profession of faith are united with the past, the present and the future, and by that fact with the true kingdom of God on earth. Thus encouraged and strengthened, they will co-operate with each other for the one God and Father, Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, for the one Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, for the one Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier, for the one Holy Catholic Church, for the one end, for the resurrection and eternal life. This co-operation will enable them to fulfill their acknowledged duties toward God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, as well as toward the Church. They will thus participate in the eternal promises that are attached to the true faith and its profession.

Thus much concerning the mysteries and the significance of the Apostles' Creed. From what we have seen you can, my dearly beloved, easily understand why total or partial apostasy, the denial or disfigurement of the different articles of faith, are so terrible, aye, the greatest sin that man can commit. Christians, heretics, did what the rough soldiers at the foot of the cross did not do, namely, rend the seamless garment of the Lord. The unity of faith is this seamless garment, the bridal robe of the Church. This they have torn and the patches with which they have adorned themselves, should, forsooth, be the whole garment, the full unity of faith! Therefore the Apostles warn the faithful against no sin so much as against apostasy, and no other sin do they flagellate so terribly as this one. To deny the faith means nothing else than to deny the truth. But Christ is the truth, therefore to deny the faith means to deny Christ. To divide the faith means to accept some of the truths, and to reject and disfigure the others. And this is naught else than to divide the truth; but Christ is the truth, therefore it is a dividing of Christ. "Is Christ divided?" exclaims St. Paul (1 Cor. i, 13). But half a Christ is no Christ, and whoever boasts of possessing a faith that is half true and half false boasts in vain. "Is Christ divided?" No. "One God, one Lord, one faith"; then also only one true profession of faith.

Therefore my dearly beloved, hold fast to your faith and its symbol. The latter is the watchword that will designate you as true Christians on earth;

it is also the countersign that will open the gates of heaven for you. "He who believes in me will be saved"; that is, he who believes everything not merely half or two thirds. The Apostles' Creed is likewise our shield against heresy and infidelity. It condemns all heresies, some of them expressly, but all of them in the one, holy, Catholic, apostolic Church, which the Holy Ghost has armed with authority to explain and preserve the faith intact. It is furthermore a weapon against despair: I believe in God the Father, that merciful Father, whose divine providence watches over men and directs all things for the best. It is a weapon against despair: "the forgiveness of sins"; it is a support of hope: "communion of saints and life everlasting."

Let us use the Apostles' Creed in the proper manner. Thus we shall enter into the faith which the Apostles preached, the martyrs sealed with their blood, the confessors defended. The faith that through the centuries has brought into the communion of saints, into life everlasting, countless Christians who say to us in the words of the Lord: "Yea, truly happy are they that believe." Amen.

SERMON IV

THE NATURE AND LIFE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

“To God be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, world without end.”—EPHES. III, 21.

1. God created man that he should show Him honor, love, adoration, and obedience and finally be happy in heaven. But not even an angel can comprehend what God is, much less a human being. Nevertheless God has made a wonderful book from which we can learn what God is. This book has two pages—heaven and earth. According to the expression of the royal psalmist, the heavens proclaim by day and by night the majesty and glory of God by the wonderful and regular course of the sun, the moon and the stars. The earth, which is the second page of this immense volume, is peopled with rational and irrational beings, and their voices tell us in unmistakable terms of the goodness and providence, of the wisdom and power of God. But when men could no longer understand this language and transferred their adoration to mere creatures, when the Jews deserted the ways of the Lord, our Saviour came down upon earth to create a still more wonderful book, from which all mankind might learn the truth and obtain the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ Whom He sent. This new and splendid volume is the Catholic Church.

The beauty and truth of the Church lead us to a new knowledge of God and to salvation. The Church unites all men in the one language of faith, hope, and charity. She ministers to us grace and redemption, peace and happiness on earth. She is the second earthly paradise, the second ark of Noah, the new covenant of God with men, the vestibule of heaven and the mother of the living.

Therefore, beginning with to-day, I wish to speak of the nature and life of the Church, of her marks and her attributes. If we rightly understand her nature and her teachings, every doubt will vanish. The sublime consciousness of being a Catholic and of being in communion with the faithful of all ages, yea, with the very saints in heaven, will inspire us with new strength, new love, and with renewed zeal for real Catholic life. It shall therefore be my purpose to show you the nature and the life of the Catholic Church, and to demonstrate to you that as Jesus Christ is God and man, so also are the human and the divine combined in His Church. O Jesus, assist me with Thy grace!

Jesus Christ is the king and head of all creation, both visible and invisible, of heaven and of earth. For His sake all things were created, all things are preserved and directed. He is the beginning and the end of all things, the pivotal point around which all ages and nations and men revolve. The history of the world circles around Him, either in His favor or against Him. But He is also within Himself the fullness of all wisdom for angel and man. He is the



plenitude of justice for all men, through Him alone angels and men can be sanctified and justified. He is the fullness of all sanctity. Whatever of holiness there has been on earth has found and still finds its source in the sanctity of Christ. He is the fullness of redemption, and whoever, from Adam down to the last human soul, has been saved, could be so solely and alone through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

But he is also the mediator between God and man. Therefore at Holy Mass we say, after the consecration: "Through Him, and with Him, and in Him is to Thee O God, eternal Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory." All the good we do, the sacrifices and prayers we offer, ascend to God through Jesus. In like manner every heavenly grace and mercy and gift of Providence reaches us through Jesus. Yea, the praise that creation gives to God finds its true expression only in Jesus, the chief of all creation. The universe with all its creatures is like a wonderful instrument that proclaims the praise of God, but Jesus is the master who touches the instrument, and gives to this hymn of praise the proper consecration.

Jesus Christ is the only true king of heaven and earth, the eternal high priest, who offers up the bloody sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of the world, the supreme prophet or teacher who came upon earth to announce the truths of heaven. He is the light of the world. In this threefold character He has established His kingdom on earth. It is the kingdom of God, the kingdom of grace, of truth and redemp-

tion. He has conferred upon His Holy Church His triple power: the royal power, that she may guide and govern the faithful on the way of salvation: the power of the priesthood, that she may offer up His unbloody sacrifice and administer His sacraments: the prophetic or teaching power, that she may spread and preserve the truths announced by Jesus. And thus this threefold power makes redemption the common property and the inheritance of the world. The Church must, therefore, show herself worthy of the Redeemer and be like Him in her nature, her marks, her attributes, and her spirit. She must be worthy to be the house of God on earth, in which He dwells in a special manner, worthy of the wonderful redemption, worthy of the providence that God has established for the salvation of souls. And far as heaven surpasses the earth, eternity time, the soul the body, so far also must the Church surpass all earthly kingdoms.

2. Therefore, just as they err grievously who deny the Divinity of Christ and represent Him merely as a wise man, and thereby strip Him of all His glory and at the same time rob themselves of grace and of the merits of redemption because they have proven themselves traitors to their divine Saviour, so grievously do those likewise err who look upon the only true Church as a purely human institution, a religious party—the pet expression of modern liberalism—with a man as its chief, a few men as bishops and priests and a few more adherents. They place the Church on an equal footing with a political party, a municipi-

pality, or a railway corporation, with its president and directors and stockholders. This unworthy view of the Catholic Church is fairly common in our day. This explains the many measures adopted against the Catholic Church, and gives evidence of either a total lack of understanding of the holiest and most important things, or of a total bankruptcy of faith notwithstanding much protestation of respect for religion.

My Dearly Beloved: It is only through the most intimate union of body and soul that man possesses reason, will, memory, life and beauty, and is enabled to accomplish great things. Destroy this union and he decays and dies. In Jesus Christ we find the divine and the human natures combined in the one and the same divine person, and in consequence of this union Christ is our Saviour, our Lord and King, our grace, life and happiness, the prince of angels, of men and of the universe. In like manner the human and the divine, the visible and the invisible, are closely allied in the true Church.

The divine element in the Church is the Holy Ghost, Who is her soul; the human and visible element is represented by the Pope, the bishops, the priests and the faithful, and all these combined form the one Church, the true kingdom of God on earth. Wherefore, as Christ Himself tells us, this kingdom is indeed in the world but not of the world. The kingdom of truth and of grace is not a material, but a spiritual realm.

And, in fact, my dearly beloved, the Eternal Father, by His omnipotence, has called the visible uni-

verse into being and everywhere He lives in it in an invisible manner. He continues to preserve it by His omnipotent wisdom, by His bountiful providence, and if for a moment He should withdraw His sustaining power, creation would fall back into the nothingness from which He has taken it, just as man decays and dies as soon as the soul has left the body.

Therefore the Son of God will never separate Himself from His humanity or His kingdom, since He effected the hypostatic union for the purpose of founding, as our high priest, our teacher and king, the supernatural kingdom of grace and of truth. He lives eternally as the God-man in heaven to be the happiness of men and angels. And for all times will He dwell upon earth in an invisible manner to be our Lord and Saviour, our physician, our high priest and our teacher. And from the day on which He sent His spirit upon His Apostles in Jerusalem He has not and will never divorce Himself from the true Church. "He will remain with you even unto the consummation of the ages!" The Holy Ghost is the soul of the Church, and all of us, the faithful and priests and bishops in union with the Pope, Christ's vicegerent upon earth, are members of her body.

From this we can understand why the Catholic Church is called the kingdom of God, the body, yea the Bride of Christ. The Holy Ghost takes the place of the Son of God, and in the stead of the humanity of Christ the visible Church teaches and saves. In this capacity she worthily continues within herself Christ's threefold office of king, of high priest

and of prophet. If God alone was able to create the world, God alone can preserve it. If God alone could redeem the world, God alone can preserve the fruits of His redemption in undiminished vigor as the priceless treasure and heritage of the world down to the end of time. The Holy Ghost accomplishes this in and by the Church. He preserves the teachings of Christ in all their purity in and by the Church. Therefore, heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Christ shall not pass away. And if the whole world should assail them, and if heresy upon heresy should arise, and if the opinions and views of men change day by day, yet will the Church forever preserve the one true faith. In and by the Church the Holy Ghost distributes to us the graces and the merits of Christ. Therefore the seven sacraments and the unbloody sacrifice will endure undiminished in the Catholic Church until the end of all time. The Holy Ghost governs the Church, and therefore let persecutions come whensoever they will, let princes and nations and people arise against her, let them pass laws as numerous and as stringent as they like, let them use violence and deceit against her—yet will they avail nothing; the Church remains the same throughout the centuries, and the gates of hell will never prevail against her.

And thus the kingdom of God upon earth, and thus the true Church of Christ, is worthy of her Redeemer, worthy of her redemption, worthy of the divine truths which she proclaims. But in such guise she is adjusted to our weakness and strong enough to resist the

malice and the errors of the world. The religion of Christ has formed an apt instrument in the Church. It is not dead. It has not fallen into oblivion, but it continues to live in health and vigor.

The sacrifice of the cross is not the last act of redemption, for all the coming generations experience its living power and profit by its atoning intervention between God and man. It is with no uncertain voice that the mandates and the warnings of Christ come to us from the shadows of the past; they are living in the ever present and sound vividly on our ears. Our Divine Saviour has not been taken from us by His Ascension into heaven, but He continues forever the life of His redemption in His mystical body, the Church, and in her and by her, He forever abides in our midst. His spirit, His example, and His love continue to manifest themselves to us in all their divine beauty and tenderness.

And therefore, my dearly beloved! The Church is the saving ark in the midst of this world's deluge of sin, to which we may confidently turn with the perfect assurance that she will convey us to safety and peace. She is the new Jerusalem, the vineyard of the Lord, the grand altar of sacrifice from which all faith, all that is good and meritorious ascends to heaven. She is the living body which imparts a vigorous life to all its members. She is the spouse of Christ who gives to men their birth as children of God and leads them to life eternal. And if it be true that God in all His works seeks as much the happiness of man as His own glory, why should He do less for the

Church upon whom our salvation depends? If every creature, every flower, the sun, the moon and the stars have been commissioned to elevate us to God, the Almighty Creator, how much more urgent must not be the mission the true Church has received? It is for this purpose that our Saviour most richly endowed her and promised her His assistance for ever. If God in His adorable providence forgets none of His creatures, neither the flowers of the field nor the hungry raven nor the sparrow on the housetops, how much greater must not be His solicitude for the salvation of our souls? Therefore He has made the nature and the life of the Church which He founded worthy of Himself, and her attributes worthy of the human race which it was to save.

We have reason to thank God from the depths of our hearts that he has deigned to let us be born in His Holy Church. We should heartily share in her sorrows and in her joys. We should never forget to pray for the propagation of our Holy Faith and contribute towards this object as much as is in our power. Above all things, however, we must beware never to join the enemies of our Holy Faith in vilifying the most glorious work that has come forth from the hand of God, lest we incur His just judgment. Rather must we ever strive to gain the reward of being associated in the victory of the Church of God triumphant in heaven by the fearless and steadfast profession of our Holy Faith. Amen.

SERMON V

THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH—HER UNITY AND HOLINESS

“Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it—that He might present to Himself a glorious church.”—EPIH. V, 25, 27.

The last time I spoke to you we considered the personality of Christ the Redeemer and the nature and life of His Holy Church. Jesus Christ is, at one and the same time, God and man, and as such He is the chief of creation, the King of heaven and earth, our eternal High Priest, Lord and Saviour. In like manner the Church which He founded continues within herself the human and the divine life. Instead of the person of the Son of God we have the Holy Ghost, and instead of the visible humanity of Christ we have the Pope, the bishops, and the priests and people as the human element in the Church. In this way the Church perpetuates the threefold office of Christ on earth until the end of all time—the kingly office by directing the faithful on the path of salvation, the priestly office by offering sacrifice and administering the sacraments, the prophetic office by teaching and announcing the eternal truths to all the peoples of the earth.

This union alone renders the Church worthy of

the Divine Saviour. She is His Bride to whom, as her dower, He has entrusted the fullness of His power, of His merits and graces for the salvation of souls. This union makes her truly the mother of the faithful whom she alone has brought forth anew. It makes her the kingdom of God on earth, the human habitation worthy of Him, the new Covenant, the new Jerusalem, the grand altar of sacrifice, the body which imparts celestial life to all its members. It makes her the second ark and the rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. The Church is the mouthpiece of Christ's religion, through which He speaks to men for ever.

But in order that the world may know that the Catholic Church is the only true Church of Christ, that she is the kingdom of God on earth, that she is the city of God on the mountain, towards which the eyes of friend and foe are turned, Our Divine Saviour has impressed on her four resplendent marks whereby every one may know that she is the true Church. These four marks are: Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity. We shall consider the two former marks more closely to-day. O Jesus assist me with Thy grace!

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1. A mark, my dearly beloved, is something whereby we can recognize a given thing, and distinguish it from another, especially from the false. For instance, we may tell a genuine gold piece from a counterfeit by means of the ring of the metal, the weight, etc. The four marks enable us to distinguish

very easily the true Church from all pretenders, all sects and heresies. The first one is her union and unity.

Our Divine Saviour founded only one true Church. There is but one Lord, one God, one faith, and therefore but one true Church where this one true faith is cherished and taught; just as there is but one heaven, one earth, one purgatory, one hell, one Paradise, one ark, one Old Testament, one kingdom of God, one shepherd and one flock. We can deduce this even more convincingly from the consideration of the body of Christ. The Son of God appeared upon earth for the purpose of uniting Himself with man and of leading man to eternal happiness. All men must be welded with Him into one body, into a new human race which He has redeemed, just as all men are bound to the old Adam and the old sinful race by original sin. This incorporation in Christ constitutes the Church; she is His body and we are her members. There can be but one head, therefore but one body, and consequently but one true Church. The nature of things teaches us this fact. Such, moreover, is the conviction of mankind, and in all ages we find even the pagans persecuting those who do not share their belief, because of their conviction that their religion was the only true religion.

But the true Church must also be united if she wishes to possess the mark of truth—"For every kingdom that is divided within itself, will be destroyed." Wherefore, our Divine Saviour in His last prayer begged for union: "That they all may be one as

thou, Father, in me, and I in Thee" (St. John xvii, 21). And in truth the Catholic Church is one in her supreme head, one in her teaching, one in her sacraments.

The Church is one in her head, the vicegerent of Christ upon earth, the successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, the supreme shepherd of all bishops, priests and faithful, and one in obedience to him. This splendid character of unity, of authority and of obedience displayed during nineteen centuries manifests more clearly than anything else the divine hand which has founded the Church and continues to preserve it. Amid all the vicissitudes of earthly affairs, amid all the unrest of the human mind, amid all the malice of men and the storms of ages, this rock of unity rises majestically, unshaken by the tempestuous billows of the world's history. Nations and thrones and dynasties have disappeared, shattered by the storms of revolution or of war, have gone without leaving a trace behind them, but more resplendent than ever the mark of the unity of the Catholic Church shines forth like a beacon light of truth to guide the oppressed and unsettled peoples.

Especially in our day, when the social bark is menaced with dire destruction on the raging sea of human passion, when far on the distant horizon the gathering clouds betoken the constant threat of the storm of war, when contempt for authority has become rampant, when discontent at prevailing conditions is seething among the dregs of the masses, when unrest has seized upon all and the thoughtful are

driven to despair by the apprehension of things which are to come—the one beacon light amid it all that gives assurance of peace and comfort and of safety is the splendid unity of the Catholic Church.

In anticipation of better things all eyes turn to Rome the eternal, where stands the great white shepherd of Christendom, calm and undisturbed amid the surrounding turmoil, teaching, encouraging, comforting, chiding, warning his own sheep and their shepherds. Nay, even the enemies of the Catholic Church join with us in looking Romeward, for even their bitter hatred cannot so blind them to the fact of this resplendent unity, and they are constrained to recognize that there lies the kingdom of God, the one great moral force in the world.

3 By her unity under one supreme head, the Catholic Church preserves the unity of faith throughout the world. When men in their pride threw off their allegiance to God, and began to build the Tower of Babel, God punished them by confusing their language. But when our Divine Saviour erected His Tower, which in truth reaches unto heaven itself, namely, His Church, the Holy Ghost came down on the feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem, to bring to the people the one true language and nationality that had so long separated the nations. One language now unites all the Catholic peoples of the world,—the language of heaven, the language of one and the same faith. In this language alone, there is neither English, nor German, nor French, nor Bohemian, nor Italian, nor Indian, nor Negro, but all are believers

and Catholic. The Catholic is our true mother tongue, the language of the Church, our mother. It is the language she has learned from her divine Spouse, it is the language that unites us with the Apostles, martyrs, confessors, the faithful of all the ages, yea, with the saints in heaven, with the angels and with God our Saviour.

Let confusion grow in the world, let opinions and views and judgments and errors change and multiply a thousand fold—the language of the one Catholic faith never has changed and will never change. This is another beacon light of truth that illumines the world and baffles all malice, and the hand of God gives testimony to the truth of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church is likewise one in her sacrifice and in her sacraments. The words of the Prophet Malachias find their fulfillment here: “I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts (to the Jewish people): and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For 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 oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malach, i, 10-11).

This prophecy has been wonderfully fulfilled in the Catholic Church. Since the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem the countless sacrifices of the Jews have ceased, and with them have ceased and vanished from the face of the earth the numberless bloody sacrifices of paganism. Only one sacrifice is offered up from

the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, at every hour and minute of the day or the night over the vast expanse of the terrestrial globe—the unbloody sacrifice of the New Law in the Catholic Church. This clean oblation unites all the faithful, all the Catholic people, and everywhere on the wide, wide earth, it is one and the same sacrifice. Can we imagine a more remarkable accomplishment of the divine promises than this? When Jesus Christ the Redeemer appeared upon the earth, the world still reeked with the blood of untold sacrifices; but paganism is gone, its temples and altars are destroyed, its priesthood has vanished, and its sacrifices have ceased. And whithersoever in the world we wend our steps, be it to the frozen plains of the north, or to the sunny slopes of the southern hills, we encounter everywhere one sacrifice, the unbloody sacrifice of the New Testament, the Holy Mass of the Catholic Church.

5 Furthermore the Church is one in her sacraments, and through their instrumentality she unites all the faithful scattered through the world. The Catholic may traverse the length and breadth of the American continent, he may plunge into the wilds of Africa, he may wander among the monuments of civilized Europe, or seek to fathom the secrets of Asia, everywhere he meets the Catholic priest or missionary, a Catholic church or chapel, and he feels he is at home because he finds there the same sacraments and the same oblation. Unity is as much the mark of the kingdom of God on earth, as it is that of the kingdom of heaven.

2. The second mark of the true Church is her

sanctity.—The Church must be holy, because she has been founded by our Divine Saviour, who is holiness itself and has come to bring us holiness. The kingdom of God on earth, the realm of truth and of grace, the new covenant of God with men, cannot be otherwise than holy. Therefore the true Church has received the plenitude of sanctity that she may sanctify the human race and every individual member thereof.

Touch
by
holiness

Full
his holiness
so that
might so
others

She communicates this holiness to us by means of her teachings of faith and morals. These contain the divine truths and commandments, which are holy in themselves and will sanctify every one who faithfully observes them. It is superfluous to demonstrate this, because every one is conscious of the fact that neither the teachings nor the commandments of the Catholic Church contain anything that is unholy or dangerous to good morals. But whoever contradicts her faith or her commandments sinks into infidelity, into sin, and eventually into an abyss of vice. Our daily experience presents us with the most palpable proofs of this assertion.

same

This fullness of sanctity, which is necessary to salvation, the Catholic Church gives to every individual by means of her sacraments. These sacraments purify the soul, endow it with the grace of God, enlighten it, and raise it to the highest rank of nobility, namely, to the dignity and holiness of a child of God and heir of heaven. The sacraments unite with the soul in an admirable manner, in every situation in life, in every condition and vocation. They greet us at the portals of life and accompany us to the very

grave. If, therefore, you would be cleansed from every stain of sin, if you would be sanctified and made rich with the grace of God, receive the sacraments.

And, indeed, my friends, all of holiness on earth, all of virtue, and all the miracles of faith and of love, and of humility and of purity, the wondrous choirs of the saints of God, who are the true pearls, the splendid crown and ornament of the human race, the college of the Apostles, the bands of countless martyrs, confessors and virgins of every condition; the holy innocence that shines forth from the eyes of the Christian child, the patience of those who suffer, the steadfastness of those who are persecuted, the joy and peace of pure hearts, the sweet hope and resignation of the dying—they all have drawn their holiness from that plenitude which the Catholic Church as the kingdom of God possesses for the faithful and for the salvation of the world.

Just as the myriad dew drops hanging on vine and bush mirror the splendors of the rising sun in all the radiance of the rainbow's colors, so do the holiness and the virtues of the divine Son of grace—Jesus Christ—reproduce themselves by means of the teaching, the commandments and the sacraments of the Church in millions of human souls in hues and tints of unutterable loveliness.

The Catholic Church undoubtedly possesses numerous adherents of every sex and condition who have been, and who now are sinners. There have been priests and bishops and even popes who have led lives that were not in conformity with the dignity of their

high calling. The Catholic Church however, cannot be blamed for this. The fault lies, not in her belief, not in her commandments, not in her sacraments, but in the corruption of human nature that is inherent in every one without distinction, and that has not been brought into subjection by the means of grace. The sinners are the losers, but the sanctity of the Church, or her faith, or her commandments, or her sacraments are not any more affected than the sun loses in splendor or beauty when its rays have fallen on objects unworthy of its benefits.

Unity and holiness are therefore the first two marks of the true Church, and where they are lacking there is not the Church of Christ, but only a sect, a branch lopped off from the trunk of the tree of life. A wonderful union reigns in heaven and binds together the angels and saints and Jesus and God. The Church is the image of the kingdom of heaven on earth, and, therefore, like her divine prototype, she must be one. And he only is a Catholic who is bound to her by the same faith and the same sacraments. This unity is a great comfort to us, for it gives us the encouraging consciousness that we are not alone in the world, cast off and without the means of defense. The Catholic stands with us and for us, for us and with us stand the faithful of all the ages who form with us a wondrous whole, the mystical body of Christ, His kingdom on earth and the entrance into heaven.

We further find consolation and strength in the sanctity of the Church. Should it be that we have fallen into grievous sin, we still belong to the holy

Church on earth, provided we have not denied the faith, or otherwise caused our exclusion from her communion by our own fault. The tares belong to the field as long as the wheat has not been cut, and there are good and bad fish in the net as long as they have not been separated. The separation of the good from the wicked, of the just from the sinners in the Church will take place at the moment of death, and finally for all eternity, on the day of the Last Judgment.

As little as the filth of the earth can besmirch the splendor of the sun, so little can sinners dim the sanctity of the Church. And this is a matter of great comfort for both the sinner and the just man. The just lose nothing, and the sinner can regain everything. By means of her teaching and her sacraments the Church bestows from the fullness of her sanctity mercy and grace and personal holiness on men.

My dearly Beloved! Let it be our earnest endeavor to live together in peace and charity and harmony, one with the Church and all her children in the living faith and in the worthy reception of the sacraments. Let us devote ourselves to that holiness which is becoming to the Christian, worthy of Christ and of his Church, which gladdens the conscience, ennobles the soul, and which will carry us upward into the glorious company of the saints, where, as a recompense and a crown for our Christian life on earth, we shall see and enjoy the Triune God face to face amid joys unending. Amen.

SERMON VI

THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH—HER CATHOLICITY

“You are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.”—
EPH. II, 20.

God is not parsimonious. His magnificent works are restricted neither to time, nor place, nor in application. They all bear the impress of their Creator. Witness the universe, so wonderful in its grandeur and extent; its untold myriads of creatures enjoy the omnipotence, the providence, the wisdom of God, and though they know not their Creator, nevertheless they honor and praise Him by their existence. So also the true Church of Christ may not be restricted to a few men only, nor to a brief span of time, nor to any region of earth. As the true kingdom of God she must embrace all men, all lands, and all times.

Christ the Redeemer came upon earth for the whole human race. He binds together all the ages, and unites the earth with heaven itself. His Church, therefore, can have no other mission than to perpetuate the Redemption throughout the entire world, to preach the truths of heaven everywhere and to lead all men to the one true faith and to eternal happiness. What Paradise with its tree of life once was for our first

parents, what the ark was for Noah and his family during the deluge, and what the ancient Law was for the Jews in preparing them for the coming Redeemer—that the true, the Catholic Church must now be for the whole world and the entire human race. She is the second paradise with the tree of life of the Blessed Eucharist for all those who strive to escape the deluge of infidelity and vice. She is the new covenant of God for all those who seek in the hope of the Saviour, who has come, redemption from sin and eternal death.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, as there is but one Paradise, one ark, and one old Covenant, so there can be but one true Church. And as they were holy in themselves, so must the Church be holier still, because she is called upon to lead men to true holiness and to eternal life. Christ the Redeemer came for all men, for all times, the past, present and the future. Hence His Church must be all for all, that is, Catholic or universal, and therefore she must continue to teach and to believe what the Apostles taught and believed. Therefore I shall now speak to you of the Catholicity of the Church, her third mark. O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. The true Church of Christ must possess the distinguishing mark of Catholicity or universality. It is the will of God that all men be saved, and our divine Saviour came on earth for all men and died for all upon the cross. For, according to God's promise to Abraham, all nations were to be blessed in Him. No more eloquent reason than this can be assigned why

the only true Church founded by Christ must embrace all men, all lands, all ages, and must preserve and propagate the redemption for all without distinction. Therefore our divine Saviour said to His Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi, 15). "And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Math. xxviii, 20).

And in fact, my dearly beloved, the ancient Law, the synagogue, was established only for one people, the Jews, and it was to serve as a vestibule to the New Law, which was destined to include within itself all nations and all men. The Catholic Church is the New Covenant of God with men. It is spread over the whole earth. It has converted all the Christian nations, and also those who in later times fell away from the Catholic faith.

It is most wonderful to note that all heresies are named after their originators. They last for a time, but usually in the course of three hundred years they disappear. Thus the Arians are named after Arius, the Manichæans after Manichæus, the Nestorians after Nestorius, the Pelagians after Pelagius, the Hussites after Huss, the Lutherans after Luther, the Calvinists after Calvin, the Zwinglians after Zwingli, and so the Anglicans, Puritans, Methodists, etc., down through the whole list. But most of these sects are in a state of dissolution and split up into hundreds of smaller sects. There is only one Church that bears no merely human name but the glorious name of her divine Founder; there is only one Church that through

the ages calls herself the Church of Christ, and Jew and Gentile and blatant heresies know her and call her only, albeit unwillingly, by the appellation of the Catholic Church, and that is the one true Church. The Catholic Church embraces all times and all countries and all nations, and whosoever, from the days of Adam down to the last man, wishes to be saved, even though he be one of those heretics who have retained baptism and administer it validly, belongs to the true Church by his baptism. She is the kingdom of God on earth and therefore must be Catholic or universal.

The true Church is not only one and holy but also truly Catholic in her teachings. The centuries find no variation in her faith, and succeeding generations hold the same belief. She is Catholic, because divine revelation which has been entrusted to her as the leader of the world, embraces all truth. Whatever there is of divine truth in the world, whatever was revealed to Adam and later to the Jews, whatever of truth has not been lost among the errors of paganism, all belong to the Catholic Church as the heir of all truth. Every revealed truth that the heretics have preserved intact belongs to the treasure of faith of the Catholic Church. She is the pillar and ground of truth, and as such she is obliged to preserve the plenitude of divine revelation intact until the end of the world. Our divine Saviour asserts this in the following words: "The Holy Ghost will guide you in all truth, and He will inspire you with all things whatso-

ever I have taught you, and He will abide with you all days unto the end of the world.”

The true Church is likewise Catholic or universal in her sacraments. The prophets announced the glories and the attributes of the coming kingdom of God on earth, of God's true Church. Just as the Prophet Malachias foretold the clean oblation of the New Law which was to be offered up from the rising of the sun until the setting thereof, so did the Prophet Zacharias foretell the seven sacraments. An angel of God communicated to him this revelation: “And the angel of God said to me: What seest thou? And I said: I have looked, and behold, a candlestick all of gold, and its lamp upon the top of it; and the seven lights thereof upon it; and seven funnels for the lights that were upon the top thereof” (Zach. iv, 2). Jesus Christ is indeed the candlestick of gold, He is the light of the world that illuminates every man. But the Church is the lamp in which our divine Saviour has deposited the fullness of His graces and truths. The seven funnels and lights are the seven sacraments through which the wealth of grace and redemption and of merit is applied to every human being.

And in truth, my dearly beloved, the true Church is not only one and holy, but she is also Catholic or universal in her sacraments. The Church offers Baptism to all men without exception, to Jew and Turk and Gentile. All nations are invited to come and be cleansed in its life-giving waters. The sacrament of Penance is refused to no sinner in the wide world

who is willing to receive its benefits. To the dying is brought the grace and the strength of Extreme Unction; the faithful of every sex and condition may partake of the Holy Eucharist if they be prepared to receive it worthily; to none is denied the fullness of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, all who fulfill the necessary conditions may share in the blessings of Matrimony, and though all may not receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, still all may benefit by it, since the priests are sent to all, to the faithful and the infidel, and they go forth into the world to preach the Gospel to all nations.

The true Church is Catholic in her sacraments. They last forever, and no matter how many draw grace and truth and redemption from them, they remain inexhaustible. The blessings of the Prophet Eliseus effected that oil should not fail the poor widow of Sarepta as long as the famine lasted. The Church, widowed on earth because of the ascension of our divine Saviour, will never be in want of the oil of grace, for the blessing of God is upon her. This oil forever flows from the seven-armed candlestick of the sacraments, inundates the souls of all who seek it, enlightens them, gives them grace and sanctifies them as long as the world shall last.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, the word Catholic is not a vague or meaningless word, nor is it the term of reproach certain hostile writers would like to make it. The grandeur and truth and beauty of the kingdom of God on earth are contained in this word, Catholic. None but the kingdom of God, none but

the true Church is and can be Catholic, because she alone can embrace everything, time and eternity, grace, truth, every individual and the whole human race, the just and the wicked, for who is not with Christ is against Him, and who is not with His Church is against her. She comprises all because she is Catholic or universal. Hence she alone unites all men, all nations, all countries, all ages, the past with the present, the present with the future, and the future with eternity, for she is the kingdom of God worthy of God and the Saviour.

We too, especially in this our day, are often asked the question which was put to John the Baptist in the desert: "Who art thou?" One who is enlightened, or liberal, or capable of giving an opinion? And we, too, confess and do not deny, and we confess it openly and fearlessly: We are to be numbered neither among the so-called enlightened nor the liberals! Who are you then? And joyously our answer comes: I am a Christian; I am a Catholic! How great a dignity holy baptism confers upon a Christian! It is the covenant with God. Grace and participation in the divine nature are our portion. We are the companions of the angels, and our souls are the temples of the Holy Ghost. We are the anointed of a royal and a priestly race. Our bodies are called to the glory of the resurrection and of immortality. For us Christ has become man, Redeemer, Saviour and King, that we may be the children of God, the heirs of heaven and of eternal happiness.

Yes, I am a Christian; it is my joy, my pride, my

badge of honor. And if once again I am asked: "Who art thou?" I shall answer: I am a Catholic, born in the bosom of the one true Catholic Church, God in heaven is my Father, and my mother on earth is the Catholic Church, the bride of Christ, the rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, the pillar and ground of truth, the ark of Noah, which the Holy Ghost guides and protects and directs in all truth, the kingdom of God and of His grace on earth. I am a Catholic, a brother, a sister, of the Apostles, the martyrs, the confessors and of all the saints, in communion with them and with all the faithful. One language of faith and of love animates us; the self-same sacraments unite us, the same holy sacrifice binds us together. My faith reaches as far as the Apostles, my hope as far as Christ, my love as far as heaven itself, and it is part of that love which unites the saints and Catholics in one community. I am happy and proud and honored to be a Catholic.

Three hundred years ago Luther concocted Lutheranism, Calvin made himself responsible for Calvinism and Zwingli proclaimed Protestantism. Who were their forebears? Catholics all. The Lutherans believe Luther, the Calvinists or the Reformed believe Calvin, the Protestants believe Zwingli. I am a Catholic, I believe God, I believe Jesus Christ and His Holy Church.

The enemies of our faith and of our Church taunt us with a lack of patriotism, and say we Catholics have no other native land than Rome. Yes, we have a mother country and we love it more sincerely than

those who deride us. But we have also another native land, the Catholic Church, our spiritual mother country. We have one home on earth, the home where we were born, we have a second home in the Catholic Church where our souls were born again to grace and salvation. Our father, the father of all the faithful is the holy Father, the vicegerent of Christ, and the supreme head of the Church, who unites all the faithful, all the bishops and priests in one body, in one faith. He is the keystone of the Church and the rock upon which the Church is built and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Yes, we are Catholics, and we honor, love and obey our Holy Father; in him we honor our Lord Jesus Christ and Peter the Prince of the Apostles. We are Catholics. No mockery, no suffering for conscience sake, will make us become untrue to the principles of our Holy Faith, or will make us forget the allegiance and the respect we owe to the supreme head of the Catholic Church.

We are Catholics! This is our honor and our joy, our boast and our hope. Let us never be ashamed of this profession, though a world of unbelief rise in its might to smite us. Let us be loyal to our faith forever, so that on the last day Jesus Christ and His saints may acknowledge us as their own, and we may enter into the glory of the Church triumphant in heaven. Amen.

SERMON VII

THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH—HER APOSTOLICITY

“You are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.”—
EPH. II, 20.

St. Ignatius, who was Bishop of Ephesus in the second century, and a disciple of the Apostle St. John, and who later laid down his life for the faith, writes the following brief but true words to the Christians of Smyrna: “Where Jesus Christ is, there is also the Catholic Church” (Ep. ad., Smyrna, C. 8). And in fact, where Jesus Christ, the King of Heaven and earth, and the Redeemer of men is, there must also be His kingdom of redemption, of grace and of truth. He is the cause of our happiness in heaven. Heaven is His kingdom, the home of the saints, the paradise of angels and of men, the Church triumphant. He is upon earth and continues His work of Redeemer in an invisible manner in His Church, the kingdom of grace and of truth.

He alone is the one true Redeemer, and the Church which He instituted is the one true Church; one with our Saviour, one in herself, one in her supreme head, one in her faith and her sacraments. Christ is holiness itself, and whatever is holy in heaven or on earth receives its sanctity and grace from Him, the inex-

haustible fountain of holiness. Wherever Jesus Christ abides, there is His grace and holiness; He continues to abide and to live in His Church, and therefore she is holy. Hence St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: "Christ 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" (Eph. v, 25-27). Because the Church is holy, the Apostles called the faithful holy, the companions of saints, the honored guests of God, in brief, a holy people. We obtain holiness, however, by the reception of the sacraments and the observance of the teachings of holy Church.

Where Jesus Christ is, there is also His Church. But He was the Redeemer of the whole world, of all men, and of all times; therefore, He established His Church for all men, for all times and for the whole world—hence she is Catholic, or universal. Jesus was with His Apostles. He chose them and taught them, so that like unto the twelve sons of Jacob, who were the corporal ancestors of the Jewish people, the twelve Apostles should become the spiritual progenitors of all the faithful in the whole world. So our divine Saviour abides with the lawful successors of the Apostles—with the head of the Church, the Pope, and with the bishops. The Church now, as ever, is Apostolic. With the assistance of the Holy Ghost we will consider more closely the fourth mark of the Church, namely, her Apostolicity.

O Jesus assist us with Thy grace!

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The fourth mark of the Church is her Apostolicity; she must be Apostolic. St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: "You are built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph. ii, 20). And in very deed, my dearly beloved, just as the twelve sons of Jacob were the corporal progenitors of the Jewish people, so did the twelve Apostles of the Lord become the spiritual ancestors of the Christian people. We are built upon the Apostles, since we still possess their Apostolic inheritance. The Catholic Church has indeed preserved that inheritance. She alone continues to believe and to teach what the Apostles heard from the lips of Our Divine Saviour, what they themselves believed and taught. She alone continues to offer up the self-same sacrifice which Our Divine Saviour instituted in the presence of His Apostles, commanding them: "Do this in commemoration of me." She alone continues to administer the seven sacraments which Our Divine Saviour instituted and which the Apostles, by virtue of His mandate, began to dispense in Jerusalem on the first Feast of Pentecost. Moreover, the unbroken line of Popes and Bishops are the successors of the Apostles to whom Our Lord gave the promise: "Going therefore into the whole world teach ye all nations, and behold I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world."

The true Church of Christ is Apostolic. With one voice she continues to announce the teachings of the

Apostles, and with one voice and one heart Catholics throughout the world believe what the Apostles heard from the lips of God and believed. The true Church is Apostolic—behold the splendid spectacle of truth throughout the entire world. As with one hand the bishops and the priests offer up to the heavenly Father the same holy sacrifice which the Apostles themselves offered up, and with one heart and one soul the faithful assist at this holy sacrifice and unite their devotion and their prayers with those of the priests. Throughout the wide world bishops and priests dispense the same sacraments which the Apostles received at the time they were instituted by Our Divine Saviour, and which they administered to the first Christians. In like manner the faithful everywhere receive, as from one hand, these self-same sacraments from the bishops and the priests.

But not enough, my dearly beloved! Countless millions of believers gather around their Supreme Pontiff, around their bishops and priests, assist with them at the same sacrifice, receive from their hands the same sacraments, and profess with them the same faith, just as in the days of the Apostles, and thus form on earth a vast congregation which literally believes what Our Divine Saviour taught His Apostles to believe and observes what He commanded them to observe. In this congregation, moreover, all the promises He ever made find an ample accomplishment. Verily, no grander proof for the truth of the Catholic Church can be imagined than the mark of her Apostolicity.

But her claims to be the true Church of Christ are still more wonderfully vindicated by her unbroken line of bishops as successors of the Apostles, and particularly of the Popes who succeed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, in the Apostolic See of Rome. The Pope in our day is the center of unity, just as St. Peter bound together into one Church the other Apostles, the bishops and the priests whom they ordained and the entire body of the faithful. The bishops and the priests and the faithful form one Church because of their union with the Pope in Rome. The words of the promise which Our Divine Saviour gave to St. Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," ring clearly down the centuries. This consciousness and faith of the Church abide forever, and though Peter as man be dead, yet as Christ's Vicar on earth he continues to live in his successors.

Storms of relentless fury have raged around the Papacy, and at times it seemed to the eyes of the world that the waves of infidelity must drive the bark of Peter to inevitable ruin on the rocks, but in the moment of supremest danger the Lord arose and bade the roaring winds be hushed and the raging billows stilled. The mightiest dynasties of emperors and kings have gone down into the darkness of the tomb, whole nations have been swept from the face of the earth, and world-empires have been hurled to direst destruction, but out of the raging sea of malice and persecution looms grand and unshaken the rock upon which the

Church is built—to-day as yesterday and forever the Pope is the successor of Peter.

The Pope is the head of the Church and her infallible mouthpiece, who continues to proclaim the living truths of God which the Apostle Peter gathered from the lips of his divine Master. He stands, now as ever, like Peter in the midst of the Apostles, the center of unity and of faith, the beacon-light of truth which illumines the world. And though the Pope be but a weak, sinful, mortal man, still as Pope he is the successor of the Prince of the Apostles, the infallible teacher of the Church, the heir of the centuries, greater than Abraham, because of the divine promises, greater than Melchisedech in his character of king and high-priest, greater than Moses in his supreme office of lawgiver of the new Covenant, as Vicegerent of Christ Jesus, as God's visible representative on earth, and as supreme head of the Church. In him as head and teacher the Church is one in faith; in him as high-priest she is holy; in him as guide and shepherd she is Catholic, and in him as successor of St. Peter she is Apostolic.

Not one of the numerous sects, by what name soever they call themselves, be they Protestants, Lutherans, Calvinists or Anglicans, can show this splendid mark of Apostolicity in teaching, in the sacraments, in the sacrifice, in the unbroken chain of bishops and in the successors of the Prince of the Apostles. This they themselves are obliged to admit, whether they will or no. Long centuries passed before any of these sects was in existence. They cannot, therefore, have

drawn their origin from the Apostles and consequently they are not Apostolic. The very names they have appropriated to themselves from their founders, who fell away from the Catholic Church, give ample confirmation of this. Thus the Arians are called after Arius, the Lutherans after Luther, the Calvinists after Calvin, the Hussites after Huss, and Protestants in general are so called because of their protesting against the Catholic Church. One and all they lack the mark of unity. In one thing only are they united, and that is their opposition to the Catholic Church. In all things else they are diametrically opposed to each other. Everyone believes as he pleases. They do not possess the mark of holiness, because God, Who is the author of all sanctity, bestows it only on His true Church and her faithful as a mark of her truth. Hence it is that the Catholic Church is so marvelously rich in saints of every condition in life.

Furthermore, the sects who have foresworn their allegiance to the Catholic Church are smitten with sterility. To the Apostles and their successors, Christ, the Redeemer, promised an abounding fruitfulness. This explains why the Catholic Church has converted half the world to the Christian faith.

The sects lack the mark of Catholicity or universality. Sixteen centuries passed before they sprang into being; they are mostly national or racial in scope, and hence are not found everywhere, and they will disappear in the course of time. No sect has ever existed for more than three centuries. After that it enters into a state of complete dissolution. The

sects have no bishops, or if so they are bishops in name only, like those of the Anglican Establishment, without orders, without Apostolic succession. They have no autonomy because they have no supreme head, but are dependent upon the will and the caprice of worldly princes or governments, who arrogate to themselves headship in matters spiritual. They have no priests, no sacrifice, no sacraments except baptism and matrimony. They are, therefore, not Apostolic, and, by that fact, not the true Church of Christ, but limbs severed from the great tree of life, whose branches spread over the whole earth and bring forth wonderful fruit of grace and redemption. This magnificent tree of life is the Catholic Church.

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, the Catholic Church in her unity and holiness, in her Catholicity and Apostolicity, is the true Church, the true kingdom of God on earth. Through Our Divine Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, all salvation and grace and redemption came to the world, and so the world must now receive salvation and grace and redemption from His Church. The facts bear out this statement; for whithersoever we turn our eyes we behold the profound peace the true Catholic experiences who lives and dies in the arms of the Catholic Church. Look whither you list and you will find the true believers of every sex, age and condition happy in their Catholic faith—that faith which unites them with the faithful of all times and all places, that unites them with the Apostles, the martyrs, and all the saints in heaven in the sweet expectation of sharing their happiness and of resting

with them in the love of the Saviour. What union, what strength and what tranquillity does not this certainty and light of faith generate!

When do you, to whom I speak, experience your greatest happiness? I will tell you. It is when your faith is most alive, when you are in a state of grace and of innocence, when you are leading a truly Catholic life. And notwithstanding all this, what senseless objections and lies and accusations and calumnies are constantly hurled against the Catholic Church, against her teachings, her commandments, her religious practices, and, sad to say, there are even many Catholics who do not know their own holy Church.

Wherever we see a new awakening to Catholic life, a return to the faith of our forefathers and to the high principles of Catholic morality, we behold at the same time an enormous increase in the activity of the forces of evil. The pestilential breath of infidel science and the insidious poison of a godless press smother the noblest aspirations in the breasts of untold thousands. We owe it chiefly to the sensational newspapers of the day that efforts towards true progress are so often stifled in their inception, and instead mankind is lured back to the godlessness, the immorality and the nameless dishonesty and corruption of pagan times.

What wrong has the Catholic Church ever committed? Catholic! To whom do the living and the dying, the despairing sinner owe their sweetest consolation? To whom do your children owe their innocence and grace, filial piety, joyousness and respect

for parental authority? To the Catholic Church alone, to her teachings and her sacraments that make so deep an impression on the childish mind and heart. But if their grace, their innocence, their piety and their reverence have fled, it is owing to the godlessness and the bad example which surround them. To whom do you owe honesty, security of life and property, loyalty, morality, justice, peace and tranquillity, the festivities that relieve the monotony of life and the hope beyond the grave? To the Catholic Church alone, to her faith, her commandments and her sacraments. And if all these be ruined and shall disappear we will owe it to infidelity, to blasphemy, and to the unbridled press.

And if you look beyond your own selves, and the limited sphere of your family and your own surroundings, to a broader horizon, how grand a spectacle the Catholic Church presents to view! She is indeed great in the life of every individual, but how incomparably greater in the life of the nations! The Catholic Church alone and not the mockers, the godless and turbulent, who, beginning on Mount Calvary, has stood by oppressed humanity. It is she who has made virtues spring up from the soil of corrupt paganism—virtues the very name of which were unknown to the world. She moulded souls of such purity, nobility and fortitude, that even to this day we are obliged to admire them. The Catholic Church converted the barbarous nations, educated and civilized them. And in our day she alone can stem the tide of evil which threatens to submerge the peoples in a flood of misery

and turmoil; she alone can unite the nations and re-establish order and peace.

The Catholic Church alone can say to the nations: I have made you great. Austria was formed by the Catholic Church, and she was great as long as she was Catholic; she has been on the verge of disruption ever since she began to scrape away this true mortar of every national edifice. Germany was made by the Catholic Church, and she was a world-empire as long as she was Catholic. France became great through her Catholic faith; ever since she denied her faith she has been torn by revolution. England was an island of saints while she was Catholic.

There are even Catholics who do not fully understand what the Catholic Church is as the kingdom of God. They do not wish to believe in her divine mission and her divine promises. They do not know and do not wish to know the vital powers and the divine privileges which the Saviour granted to His Church for the purpose of enabling her to fulfill her work on earth, of being a blessing to all the nations, of saving all men and of preserving grace and truth on earth until the end of time.

The Catholic Church is reproached with being inflexible and immovable. This is all folly! Life is never without motion; and the Church's steadfastness in the faith is the greatest boon for the world. Have you ever heard a foundation or a pillar blamed because it was firm? What would become of our churches and our homes if their foundations and their pillars were insecure? It is this firmness which gives

peace and security, tranquillity and beauty and protection against the storms of the world. If faith and the eternal truths and the commandments of God were subject to the daily changes of men's opinions, then the world would indeed become a perfect pandemonium of discord, of tyranny and godlessness. But under the present circumstances the Church alone can say to every religious error, to every system invented by men, to every fickleness of human opinion: "I know you; there is nothing new under the sun. I knew you in Jerusalem, in Alexandria, in Byzantium, in the days of the ancient Jews and of the ancient pagans. Even then I condemned the present-day theory of man's descent from the brute." The Church alone can say to the nations: "I know you, I stood by your cradle, and in the course of the centuries I was your inseparable companion in times of woe as well as of glory." The Church alone can stand before the thrones of kings and truthfully say: "I know you, I have seen your ancestors and will in turn look upon your posterity."

Yea, as the sun can say with certainty, I will shed my light over the world again to-morrow and also in the future, so the Church, relying upon the promises of God, can say with assurance: "I shall exist to-morrow, and during all future time, and in spite of the clouds of malice, in spite of the storms of persecution I will pour forth upon the world the light of faith and of grace, and all flesh, all men will see the salvation of God."

By the grace of God we have found this light, let

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us preserve it amid the lies and the wickedness of the world, so that it will also preserve us in the day of judgment and lead us to eternal bliss. Amen.

SERMON VIII

THE CHURCH MILITANT ON EARTH—SIGNIFICANCE OF HER BLOODY PERSECUTIONS

“If the world hate you, know that it hath hated me before you.”—ST. JOHN XV, 18.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is most admirable in His Incarnation, for as a winsome babe He came to the manger at Bethlehem to seek and sanctify the realm of childhood. And indeed the fullness of grace, the innocence and the charm which the Divine Infant possessed have taken up their abode with Christian infancy. Every Christian child is like a dew drop which reflects the adorable beauty of the Divine Child Jesus. For this reason Christian infancy attracts to itself the complacency of God, the love of the angels, the motherly solicitude of the Church, and the sympathy, and the delight of men.

Our Divine Lord and Saviour is admirable and adorable in His public life as the teacher and model of the adult world, in the splendor of His heavenly virtues, of his meekness and mercy, His goodness of heart and His mild gravity. The sinner, the sick, the unfortunate of every degree appealed to Him with confidence, and even His enemies were glad to look into His compassionate eyes.

But there is nothing more glorious, nothing more touching, nothing more adorable than Jesus in His bitter suffering. What speaks more forcibly to the soul, what encourages and comforts us more, what strengthens and elevates more our faith, hope and charity, than this Passion of Christ? Yea, if Jesus be wonderful as the Son of God, if He be lovely as the divine Infant in the crib, consoling in His miracles of love and of mercy, awful and sublime as the Judge of mankind—He is a thousandfold more consoling, more adorable and more gracious in His bitter Passion and death. No tongue can speak, no pen describe, no angel portray how close Jesus has come to us in His persecutions and His sufferings. There He manifests most powerfully His love and His yearning for the salvation of our souls, and confirms the truth of His teaching and the divinity of His mission.

The same is true of the Catholic Church. However splendidly her very nature and being prove her to be the true Church of Christ, however convincingly and superbly her glorious marks present her to the world as the kingdom of God on earth, however strikingly her Unity, Holiness, Catholicity and Apostolicity demonstrate the truth of her teachings and the divinity of her constitution—there is still another attribute that loudly proclaims her truth: it is her likeness to the suffering Redeemer. His persecutions and sufferings have been bequeathed to her as her rightful heritage. As a loyal bride she shares no other lot than that of her Divine Bridegroom.

The Catholic Church is inseparably united with martyrdom, with sufferings and persecutions of every kind. The Herods, the Pilates, the Pharisees, the Jews and all the other enemies of our Divine Saviour are alive to-day as then, and they pursue the Church with the same implacable hatred with which they once encompassed the death of the true Messiah. "If the world hate you, know you that it hath hated me before you. Remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (St. John xv, 18-20). This is why the Church of Christ on earth is known as the Church Militant. It shall be our province to consider this attribute and the glory that accrues to the Church from her bloody persecutions.

O Jesus, assist me with Thy grace!

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1. There is, my dear friends, but one kingdom of God. Its branches, however, are spread over heaven, earth and purgatory. Of this sublime realm of God, Jesus Christ is the king, for it is indeed the kingdom of those whom He has redeemed, it is His Church. In heaven it is called the *Church Triumphant*, because the true believers, our brethren in Christ who have preceded us in life and in death, now triumph with Jesus over sin and death and hell for all eternity. In purgatory it is known as the *Suffering Church*, because the faithful must there make atonement for their sins so that, cleansed from every breath and stain of sin, they may enter in the splendor

of grace, into the ranks of the blessed who make up the triumphant Church of God in heaven. On earth it is called the *Church Militant*, because until the end of time it must wage a constant warfare against hell and sin and persecution. These are not indeed three different churches, but the one, only, true Church. It merely manifests its life differently in heaven, in purgatory and on earth. In this it is like unto our Divine Saviour, who is one and the same on earth and in heaven, although on earth He suffers and in heaven He is in His glory and majesty, or is like the true believer, who is the same on earth as he is in purgatory and in heaven, though on earth he is obliged to combat sin and the devil, in purgatory he is obliged to suffer, and in heaven he is happy for all eternity. The same holds good of the true Church, on earth, the *Church Militant*.

It is, therefore, no idle fiction, my dearly beloved, to compare the true Church on earth to the Bark of Peter, which was cast about by the winds and the waves on the waters of the Sea of Galilee until, in the moment of supremest danger our Divine Saviour bade the wind and the waves be still. The Church is the ark around which, at all times, the tempestuous billows of persecution and suffering rage. But, like Noah's ark, the Church is guided and protected in a wonderful manner by the omnipotence and providence of God. The life of her Divine Spouse was one of constant persecution. He was condemned to carry His cross, He was crowned with thorns, He was nailed to the cross and exposed to the insults and the

jeers of a bloodthirsty rabble. She, the Bride, may therefore not expect that her life be cast in pleasanter lines than was His. And indeed she is crowned with the thorns of tribulation, she has become the great cross-bearer, she is nailed to that cross and cruelly exposed to the merciless taunts of her enemies, aye, and every evil from which the world suffers is laid to her door. Against her, too, have risen new Herods in the form of ruthless tyrants, new Pilates in the form of godless civil powers, new Pharisees in the form of false Catholics, new Sadducees in the form of sectarians and heretics, who have all conspired against her. Wonderful to behold, it is only the Catholic Church which is obliged to weather all these storms. This fact alone is luminous and sufficient proof that she, and she alone, is the kingdom of God, the Church of Christ on earth, for in her alone are fulfilled the words of the Redeemer: "As they hated me, so will they hate you; as they persecuted me, so will they also persecute you."

And, in fact, no sooner had the Church begun to spread over the empire of pagan Rome than the most terrible persecutions were incited against her by the new Herods, the tyrants of the nations. Nero was the first to open the long series of bloody persecutions. The Church was drenched with the blood of her martyrs. This is a glorious period in the Church's history, for her sanctity and divinity shone forth in a splendid light, a light that illumined and converted the pagan nations. And to this day these bloody persecutions have not entirely ceased. The Church bled

at every pore in Holland, Sweden and Denmark, in Ireland and England during the 16th century, in China and Japan during the 17th, and in France during the 18th century. More recent times have witnessed the terrible persecutions to which the Russian Diocletian, Czar Nicholas, subjected the Catholics of Poland. Nor can we have entirely forgotten the late bloody persecutions of the Christians in China and Cochin-China. There never was a tyrant who did not persecute the Catholic Church.

2. But, my dearly beloved, the Church bedewed with blood, the Church surrounded by the countless armies of her martyred children furnishes the most soul-inspiring, the most glorious evidence of her divinity and truth, the clearest proof that she is indeed a Bride worthy of the divine Redeemer, whose sufferings she shares. The Saviour is indeed admirable when He announces the eternal truths, and His words made a most powerful impression on the listening multitude, but nevertheless His divine teachings began to spread over the earth and to convince mankind only, when He spoke from the pulpit of the cross, whereon He sealed His doctrines with His blood and gave up His life amid excruciating tortures as a martyr to the truth. Then was the moment come when the pagan centurion exclaimed: "Verily, this is the Son of God." The moment was come when numbers of Jews beat their breasts and were converted. The hour had dawned when from the cross the Christian faith conquered the world and vanquished paganism. The

great Apostle St. Paul knew of nothing more convincing to preach than *Jesus crucified*.

And thus through the ages we behold the Church in her martyrs, in imitation of the example given by the divine Saviour, standing fearlessly before their judges ready to lay down their lives for their faith in Christ, in His redemption, in His divine doctrine. The martyrs gave up life and goods in order to glorify Jesus before the world. And in fact it is not so much the words of the Apostles and the missionaries that have converted the world, as their blood. Illustrated by their blood the Catholic faith has won millions of pagans to the Redeemer. Tertullian, in the third century, had already said: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians." For the blood of the martyrs was a sermon in deeds far more eloquent than any sermon in words. It was a most brilliant defense of the truth of the Christian doctrine and of the divine institution of the Church for the salvation of the world.

Indeed, my dearly beloved, if our Divine Saviour, surrounded in heaven by all the splendor of His majesty and His glory, may rejoice, as head of the Catholic Church, in His faithful on earth, it is chiefly owing to the bloody persecutions to which the Church Militant has been and is being subjected. Then it is that her glorious martyrs yield up their lives for His honor and glory, and confess and glorify His name before the world in the midst of the greatest tortures. "God is consoled in His servants." It is most won-

derful! Our Divine Saviour, who enjoys in Himself the supremest bliss and is Himself the source of all heavenly comfort, is consoled by the holy martyrs, those most glorious of the faithful children of the Church, for all the sins and insults that are daily heaped upon Him. Their blood, the purest after that which trickled down from the cross upon the curse-laden earth, contributes marvelously toward the reconciliation and the conversion of the world.

But the Church is also consoled by her glorious martyrs. They are her most worthy children, the pride and the crown of the immaculate Bride of Christ. She educated and instructed the martyrs, she nourished them with the sacraments, she strengthened them in their sufferings by pointing out to them the bitter passion and death of their Saviour on the cross. Should she, then, not feel consoled and rejoiced when she sees how the noblest of her children, in bonds and ignominy, steadfastly confess their Christian faith? When she sees how the martyrs, by the ravishing splendor of their example, make amends for the scandal given by degenerate Catholics? Yea, verily, those days, when Catholic Christians in their death glorified the Saviour and His Church before the eyes of the world, when the martyrs, adorned with the imperishable crown of victory, were incorporated into the triumphant Church in heaven amid the hosannahs of rejoicing angels and the plaudits of sainted Christians—those days were also days of splendor and glory for Christ and His Church.

3. But, my dearly beloved, there is a still more

glorious sense in which the Catholic Church stands forth in her bloody persecutions as a true follower of her Redeemer. Our Divine Saviour as teacher of the world announced heavenly truth; but as the eternal high priest He also instituted at the Last Supper the unbloody sacrifice, and offered up the bloody sacrifice on the cross for the reconciliation of man with God. And thus His true Church must not only daily offer up the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, but she must also make the bloody sacrifice of herself and of her holiest children. This has ever been done by means of the holy martyrs. Thus the words of St. Paul find their ample fulfillment: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service" (Rom. xii, 1).

The martyrs reached the climax of glory when they were alike priest and victim, when they glorified Christ the Redeemer and confessed His holy Name, not merely by the purity and the holiness of their lives, but by the shedding of their blood.

Indeed if God at the very dawn of religion looked down with complacency on the sacrifice of Abel, His just servant, and on the sacrifice of Abraham, and on the clean and holy oblation which the high-priest Melchisedech offered Him under the form of bread and wine, with how much greater complacency, with how much graciousness must He not have looked down upon the splendid sacrifice which the militant Church and her holy martyrs offered Him, not indeed in the blood of animals, but in their own flesh and

blood. This is the most perfect following of Christ, the sublimest homage, which Christians can offer God, the highest act of adoration and the most admirable expression of perfect love! "God is wonderful in His saints" (Ps. lxxvii, 36). And St. Jerome says: "The sufferings of the martyrs are the triumph of God."

4. Only that Church can be the true Church of Christ which is most like to her Redeemer. She must not only perpetuate His teachings and His sacrifice on earth, but must likewise share His sufferings as the supreme testimony of her love. The Militant Church on earth, the Catholic, is the true Church. The numberless bloody persecutions instigated against her by the hatred of the world, by paganism, by the godless governments of every age and clime, prove her to be the true Church of Christ. As a reward for all His love, for all His mercy, for His divine doctrine, the Redeemer stands in presence of the Jewish people, clothed in a cloak of purple, crowned with thorns and holding a reed in His hands. In like manner the Catholic Church stands before the world clothed with a purple garment, the blood of her martyrs; behold her, the thorn-crowned Bride of Christ, overwhelmed with suffering, ignominy and persecution; behold her the thorn-crowned mother of sorrows, who assuages every human misery, though she herself is afflicted with countless woes and sufferings! Her paths are truly through the midst of thorns, but these very thorns spur on millions of Christians to persevere bravely on their own thorny road of suffering and affliction, so that they may obtain the crown of eternal glory and

join the ranks of the Church Triumphant in heaven.

Behold the Church with a reed in her hand, the reed of weakness, of patience, of meekness and forgiveness, with which to overcome an obdurate world. Before this reed the most powerful empires have gone down to ruin, the mightiest thrones have been shattered, the most terrible persecutions have lost their violence, and forever and for aye, the Catholic Church stands victorious and continues to spread throughout the world. Verily, here is the hand of God. The sufferings and the persecutions of the Church make her appear more radiant and real in our eyes. And as Jesus Christ Himself is most amiable, most consoling, most adorable in His bitter passion and death, so also must the Catholic Church be most consoling and most worthy of our love in her sufferings and persecutions. Her example should comfort us, her patience should strengthen us in our own sorrows, her persecutions should make us steadfast and courageous, when we in our turn are made the objects of scorn and contempt because of our Catholic faith and life. We too must wage a constant warfare for the sake of our Divine Saviour, so that like the martyrs, we may finish our course, keep the faith and enter, joyful and victorious, into the abodes where eternal pæons of victory resound and faithful Christians, in the company of Jesus and of His saints, enjoy the unending bliss promised by His own words: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for my name's sake. Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be exceeding great in heaven." Amen.

SERMON IX

THE CHURCH MILITANT ON EARTH. HER UN- BLOODY PERSECUTIONS

“Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”—ST. MATTH. V, 10.

Nothing better demonstrates the truth of the Catholic Church than the constant persecution to which a godless world subjects her. She has inherited in all its fullness the hatred which Jew and Gentile, Pharisee and Herodian, not only bore in their hearts but openly manifested against her Divine Saviour. The Redeemer foretold that His Apostles, His servants, His faithful, and His Church would fare no better than He Himself: “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” And in the course of the ages this prophecy has been amply fulfilled, even before our very eyes. The Church as a faithful bride patiently shares the fate of her Lord. She too is crowned with thorns; she too is nailed to the cross; she too is bedewed with the blood of her martyrs. But just as the Redeemer is wonderful and adorable in His bitter passion and death, so the true Church shows in her bloody persecutions, in the countless numbers of her martyrs, a greatness, a truth, a beauty, a divinity, which surpasses a thousandfold all the other splendid efforts which she employs for the con-

version of the world. Although the marks of the true Church, her unity, her sanctity, her catholicity and apostolicity betoken that God is with her—for indeed, He has, as it were, built the Church on these four mighty and indestructible pillars as His abode on earth and as a secure asylum for mankind—still the likeness which the Church shows to the suffering Saviour in her sorrows and her persecutions demonstrates far more clearly the divinity of her vocation to save the world and to comfort the faithful.

Just as St. Joseph strove to defend from the machinations of Herod that most precious treasure entrusted to his care, the Divine Child, so the Church has ever striven to defend against the attacks of the Herods and the godless of all times, the Catholic faith, grace and redemption, as the most precious trust confided to her for the welfare of the world. Like St. Joseph she spares no pains, no effort; she recoils not even from persecution, if only she may preserve this priceless treasure. For this very reason she is called the Church Militant, against whom all the powers of iniquity have conspired.

I spoke last time of the bloody persecutions of the Church, in order to show her truth and beauty. To-day I will speak of her unbloody persecutions, for they are worse and more dangerous than the former. They proceed from heretics and wicked governments; the former attack the Church in her faith, the latter in her possessions and her life.

O Jesus, assist me with Thy grace!

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1. An old Greek fable tells of the Titans, giants of prehistoric times, who in their audacity wished to scale high Olympus itself. To attain this end they heaped mountain upon mountain until the thunderbolt of an avenging god dashed them to the ground. Such Titans or giants of godlessness have ever arisen against the kingdom of heaven on earth, as Christ calls His true Church. This has given rise to the persecutions against the Catholic Church. The pagan emperors were the first giants of impiety. They attempted to wipe Christianity from the face of the earth by shedding the blood of the Christians in profusion. Nay more, they declared themselves divine and exacted for themselves divine honors and worship. The pagan emperors tolerated every form of superstition, ungodliness and vice. For the Church and the Christian faith alone they reserved their most relentless and cruel measures; at the price of her life-blood the Church, and she alone, preserved the faith and with it the benefits and the blessings of Christianity to the world. In the meantime the omnipotence of God dashed to the ground and annihilated the idolized pagan emperors with their empire.

But even during the days when the persecutions, instigated by the Roman emperors, were still raging in all their bloody fury, there arose a second generation of Titans to assail the kingdom of heaven. They appeared in the form of heretics, who did not, indeed, threaten the life of the faithful, but who designed to wage a far more pernicious warfare against what Christians prized even more highly than life

itself, namely, the doctrines and the faith of the Church. If faith itself be destroyed, the Church will automatically cease to exist. The numerous herd of false teachers who rapidly succeeded each other did not at once direct their attack against the whole body of the Church's dogma, but slowly, steadily, one by one they took them up, disfigured them and tore them to pieces. In the course of centuries there is not a single Catholic doctrine, not an article of faith, not a mystery that has not been questioned or denied, so that at present there is not a tittle of divine revelation which has not been, or is not being, made the object of ungodly criticism or of impious denial. The very existence of God, the personality of our Divine Saviour, the Blessed Virgin in her dignity as Mother of God, the Divine Sacrifice, the immortality of the soul, eternity, heaven and hell, are made the mockery of vile tongues and are positively denied. This second persecution is promiscuously tolerant of every heresy, every folly, every madness of the ancient and the new world, down to the renewed theory of man's evolution from a monkey. It hates but one thing—one thing alone it pursues with its venom, and that is the Catholic faith. It is the destiny of the Church to suffer, through the ages, the same persecutions to which her Divine Lord was subjected by the Pharisees and the Sadducees, for they constantly attacked His teachings and cast suspicion on all He said and did.

The pagan emperors constituted themselves gods, and so, like them, the second Titans end by self-

deification. It is the apotheosis of human reason, which places itself above God, above Jesus Christ, His Church and the teachings of the faith, and constitutes itself an infallible court before which everything must pass for judgment. It displays itself impudently in the sciences, in books and schools and periodicals, and is the cause of all perplexity, contradiction, doubt, ignorance, impiety, blasphemy and hatred. The omnipotence of God has likewise hurled this second attack against His Church to the ground. The force of this second storm is now well-nigh spent. The Protestants belonging to the numberless sects have at the present day no choice left but that of joining the Catholic Church, as so many have already done in England, Holland, Germany and our own country, or of becoming adherents of modern paganism.

The Catholic Church has splendidly withstood all the violence of this storm of centuries. There, impregnable as the Lord built her, she stands a beacon light to the nations. The tempest lashed the waves to fury and hurled them mountain high against her, but the waters fell back in harmless foam, and the beacon stands calm and undisturbed, sending forth the pure rays of her light of faith in undiminished power to guide the nations of all the world, on their way to God, to life eternal.

2. During the middle of the last century a third persecution against the Church had been gathering its forces out of the second. This is the most dangerous and ruthless of all. Just as the cruelty of

Herod only benefited the innocent children, so the Roman emperors by their bloody persecutions only benefited Christianity; for never did she show herself in such radiance of truth and virtue as during the days of her greatest suffering. She took the pagan world by surprise and converted it. Nor have the countless heresies caused the Catholic Church any damage. What she lost in Europe by apostasy, she regained in Asia, Africa and America, and the Catholic faith shines as ever in the undimmed splendor of its unity throughout the world.

But this third persecution proceeded from the interior of the Catholic Church herself, and was directed against her own inner life. Consummate cunning and malice distinguished its procedure, for under the mask of friendship and protection, under the caption of reform and enlightenment, an attack was organized such as the world had never seen. This most baneful of all persecutions was reserved to Catholic princes and governments. They forced their way into the very sanctuary and hesitated not to lay their unhallowed hands upon the altar itself. They pretended to regulate everything and endeavored to gain control of even the most sacred functions. They hemmed in the Church on all sides, assumed tutelage over her and robbed her of her rights, her liberties and her possessions. They destroyed order and discipline, and forbade the conferring of ecclesiastical orders, the giving of blessings, the holding of processions and pilgrimages—all the manifestations of the Church's life. What was the result? Catholic

life, once so flourishing, now languished, works of piety were forgotten, the zeal for charitable institutions died out, old habits of industry and honesty vanished and respect for constituted authority became a thing of the past even among Catholic nations. The Lord's day was neglected. Instead grew up religious indifference, ignorance of man's most sacred obligations, impiety, immorality, luxury, dishonesty, discontent, and, finally, revolution. Whole generations were corroded and remain so to this day.

But just as the pagan emperors ended by becoming self-made gods and then went down to their destruction, just as the heresies deified reason and are now in a state of dissolution, so the third persecution naturally culminates in the deification of the State. The mask is fallen, the State is without religion, without God—it is its own god. Therefore it has but one battle to fight and that is against the Catholic Church.—Its ultimate purpose is the dechristianization of the peoples. A State without a God must necessarily hate the Catholic Church as its natural-born enemy.

1. The dechristianization of the nations is effected in a twofold manner: First, the deified State declares that it is the source of all right and justice. But if the State is the only source of right and justice, it strictly follows that no other law or right has force or value; then there is no divine or ecclesiastical or international law, no personal or civil rights, no true freedom, no justice, no liberty of conscience or of opinion, except only in so far as the State may be pleased to allow it. Every justifiable opposition is

branded as rebellion against the State, and so every effort is made to destroy the life and the activity of the Catholic Church. On the contrary, under pretext of enlightened toleration,—the toleration of the pagan emperors of old,—every protection and facility is given to lies and slanders and errors, aye they are welcomed with open arms as staunch allies in the one great fight—the fight against the Catholic Church.

2. Secondly—the aim is the dechristianization of our children by means of schools without religion, where the Catholic faith is misrepresented and held up to the scorn of the pupils in a multiplicity of ways; the dechristianization of the family by means of civil marriage and divorce; of the student body by means of infidel or irreligious universities under the pretext of advancing the cause of liberty and of science; of the adult world by means of a subsidized press, of theatres reeking with lewdness and immorality, and of secret societies. When the child, the family and civil society have been thus gradually dechristianized—then, of course, it is assumed that the Catholic Church will be very near her last end, and what is left of her can be destroyed without great difficulty. This saddest of all the persecutions is very much like the action of Herod, who did not indeed condemn Jesus, but clothed Him with a garment of mockery with the purpose of robbing Him of the last remnant of respect and love in which He was held by the people. In like manner godless governments clothe the Church in a robe of derision by abandoning her

to every possible insult, with a view to depriving her of the people's love.

God also permits this persecution. It has furnished an excellent opportunity of drawing a sharp line of demarcation between the good and the wicked, between virtue and vice, between hatred and love; indeed it is a glorious time for the Catholic Church and her loyal children. It is particularly in our day, when the iniquities of the world have conspired against her, that the Catholic Church stands forth in all her grandeur and majesty, the true beacon light of unity in faith and salvation, a sure guide and consolation for the oppressed peoples. And it is this commanding attitude that fills her enemies with rage and drives them to despair.

3. The pagan emperors of old have gone down to ruin and their world-empire has been destroyed. The different heresies are now undergoing a slow but sure process of disintegration. Like them, all the States that have discarded God and His law are hastening to inevitable destruction. And it cannot well be otherwise. The adorable wisdom and providence of God have admirably adapted the Catholic faith to the life, the habits, the needs, the liberty, the aspirations of the individual as well as of whole nations. Take it away from them, and the individual as well as the nation will perish. Take a being out of the proper sphere of its existence, and see how it suffers. Look at the fish out of water, the bird deprived of air and freedom, the beasts of the woods and the mountains enclosed within the confines of a cage. Thus and

much more does man suffer, do nations languish, when they are rudely torn from the atmosphere of Catholic life and faith. Such a life is no longer natural; it is injurious and a menace to existence itself. Those who tamper with the faith of a nation, who work at its dechristianization, call it by whatever name hypocrisy dictates, enlightenment, liberty or toleration, they are the peril and the enemy of that nation, for they are undermining its very life and existence. It is the first endeavor of every sectary and revolutionary to dupe the people, by means of insidious definitions, into throwing aside their Christian faith, so that in the resultant turmoil he may gain the mastery and acquire wealth.

In fact the man who has lost his Christian faith, who rejects Christian teachings and precepts, no longer believes in honesty, conscience, retribution, or charity. He throws off every restraint, he seeks his personal advantage in everything and earth is his paradise, procured, if necessary, by a life of public or private crime. What is true of the individual is equally true of the nation. If there be any honesty, morality or loyalty left, it is owing solely and alone to Catholic faith, to Catholic life,—not so-called enlightenment, not to the promised happiness and brotherhood of man nor to the swarm of worthless periodicals.

My dearly beloved! When the Catholic Church opposes this avowed purpose of the deified State, when she vindicates her divine mission and her rights, she defends thereby the Christian family, true liberty, the

true welfare and rights of the individual as well as of the nation. And if for this she is made to suffer, if she is persecuted and hated, she suffers and is persecuted because she, and she alone, can warn and save the nations. Infidelity and vice and error and secret conspiracies have never yet retarded the downfall of a people but have rather hastened it. The public press of our country is barely tolerant of, certainly not friendly to, the Catholic Church. For once that it is forced by circumstances to say something in her favor, it is a thousand times the vehicle of the vilest slanders and insults against her, her institutions and her children. And in this it enjoys the protection of the country's fundamental law. Why should this be so? Because the Catholic Church is the hereditary enemy, and the people must be taught to hate and to despise her and all that she stands for.

We Catholics have indeed been obliged in the past to listen to many a malevolent misrepresentation, many a sneer and taunt cast on our glorious faith. And we, good poor fools, have accepted all and kissed the rod that struck us. In this land of liberty, we alone are considered aliens and must apologize for having the temerity to exist. Are these the limitations of freedom of conscience? Are these the equal rights guaranteed to us by the constitution which our forefathers helped to frame and for which so much Catholic blood was shed?

The Catholic Church by strenuously opposing the dechristianization of the nations and suffering for her principles, can alone save the peoples. And if she

cannot attain this object, not she, but the nations will suffer. Like her Divine Lord she battles against the impiety and the corruption of the world. And in this particular point she proves herself worthy of the Redeemer as His true Church. In this warfare she is more splendid than in peace and gives evidence of the divine power that is assisting her. She fights and suffers because she seeks for souls and desires to save the faith and redemption for the coming generations, until finally her efforts will be crowned with victory, and there will be but one flock and one shepherd on earth.

We too, my dear friends, must fight, at least for ourselves and for those who belong to us, so that we may preserve that most precious treasure entrusted to our care,—our Catholic faith. Everything depends on it,—not only grace and truth and eternal life, but also our very temporal existence, right and justice, order and well-being. And if in our sphere we have saved the Catholic faith from the machinations of the Herods, the Pharisees and the Jews, it will in turn save us for time and eternity and will lead us to the blissful vision of our Divine Saviour, to whom be praise forever. Amen.

SERMON X

THE ONLY SAVING CHURCH

“And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.”—*ST. MATTHEW. XVIII, 17.*

God in His goodness and wisdom gave the ancient world a wonderful representation of the Redeemer by means of prototypes and prophecies, so that His figure was familiar to all people long before His coming. In like manner He foretold the character and the attributes of His holy Church from the very beginning of the world. She is the new paradise on earth endowed with the tree of life, the Blessed Eucharist. She is the true ark in the midst of the deluge of the world's iniquity. She is the temple of the true Solomon, possessing the altar of holocausts, the Holy of Holies, and the seven-branched candlestick of the Sacraments. She is the new covenant of God with men, the new Jerusalem, the city of God on earth. These types of holy Church express in clear drawn lineaments her truth, her marks, and her attributes. Hence every Catholic who honors and loves his Church may rejoice that he is privileged to live and to die in the paradise of God on earth, in the ark, in the temple, in the city of peace. This

privilege will enable him to enter into the eternal paradise, and, into the heavenly Jerusalem.

The Church is likewise beautifully pictured in the new Testament. I wish to choose for you particularly one representation, because it is specially adapted to illustrate the subject of our present consideration. It is the picture of the bark, tossed about by winds and waves whilst Jesus sleeps peacefully within it.

In such wise is the true Church of God on earth, the Catholic Church, tossed about by persecutions bloody and unbloody, so that her enemies are convinced that they have reached the goal of their ambitions, and that her final ruin is almost accomplished. But fear not! The bark of the gospels bore a most precious freight, namely, Jesus Himself, and therefore could not be wrecked; so, in our day, the Church bears within herself a priceless jewel, Jesus Himself: "Behold, I am with you all days until the end of the world." Storms and persecutions may rage as they list, the militant Church cannot be destroyed. Jesus only seems to be asleep and seems to leave His Church to her own resources. But the moment always comes when He arises and bids the storm and the waves be still.

The Church is, indeed, this ark or this ship. The Pope, as a second Noah, as a second Peter, is her pilot; the bishops and the priests are the sailors, the faithful are the passengers, the sacraments and the graces are the provisions, faith is the mainmast, hope is the anchor, and love is the sail. The Holy Ghost breathes on the sail and safely propels this glorious

ship over the bosom of the stormy deep into the haven of paradise.

We shall then my dearly beloved, consider to-day another attribute of the Church, and learn another grand truth. If we wish to escape the inclemency of the storm and desire to land safely on the shore of eternal bliss, we must be in the ship of the Church, not out in the deluge of iniquity. If we wish to obtain grace, faith, redemption and eternal life, we must be in the one only true Church. Therefore, the Catholic Church is called the only Saving Church.

I wish to speak of this truth to-day. This is all the more necessary since ignorance and confusion of views are rife everywhere, and infidelity and hatred misrepresent Catholic teachings, and even decry them as being cruel.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. I believe, my dearly beloved, that every Catholic is firmly convinced of this at least, that there can be but one true Church. For as God alone has created the world, so He alone can preserve it, and as the Son of God alone redeemed the world, so He alone can preserve the fruits of His redemption to the world. No man, no, not even an angel, can teach and save the human race in other ways and by other means than those by which the Son of God instructed and saved the world. But He conserves the fruits of His redemption and His revelation to all future generations until the end of time in and by His Church. Therefore there is and can be only one true Church, one

kingdom of God on earth, just as there is but one kingdom of God in heaven, one Redeemer, one Lord, one faith, one baptism as portal of admission into the true Church, even as her prototype, the ark of Noah, had but one door. And just as there was but one paradise with the tree of life, so there is only one true Church with the new tree of life and its fruit, Jesus and the Blessed Eucharist, so that "All who eat thereof, shall not die, but attain to life everlasting." And as there was but one Old Covenant, so there is only one New Covenant. I hope that this is clear and convincing to all of you.

For the very reason that there is only one true Church, she is as the kingdom of God on earth—not only one, holy, and apostolic, but pre-eminently Catholic or universal. She contains within herself for all times, for all men, for the whole world, all the graces, all the truth and all the fruits of redemption. And whatever there is of holiness and blessedness to-day, yesterday, and to-morrow, belongs to the true Church, the Catholic Church. Therefore she rightly calls herself the only saving church. It is not she who ascribes to herself this sublime quality, it is Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Judge of all men, Who has bestowed on His Church this attribute: "And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."

In fact, my dearly beloved, it is not the Church but Our Divine Saviour Himself, who, as Redeemer and Judge of the human race, obliges every one to belong to the only true Church, to believe her teachings, to

observe her commandments and to use her sacraments, if he wish to share in the fruits of the Redemption and is anxious to be saved. The nature and being of the true Church clearly demonstrates this truth. She alone is the kingdom of God on earth, the Bride of Christ, His mystic Body, the second paradise on earth, the second ark which the Holy Ghost guides and rules. Pagans who knowingly refuse the salvation offered them, sinners who live on in impenitence, believers who obstinately refuse obedience to the Church, heretics who deliberately continue to abide in error, are evidently not in the path of salvation, of grace and redemption. The Redeemer Himself pronounces sentence: "If he hear not the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." It is the Redeemer who says: "He that believeth not" (namely he who believes not according to the faith announced by the Church as the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost) "is already judged" (St. Mark xvi, 16; St. John iii, 18). It is therefore the Redeemer, Who died upon the cross for all men so that they might have a knowledge of the truth and thus be saved—it is the Redeemer and not the Church who pronounces judgment. The Church merely repeats the words of Christ and of the Apostles. And where is the man who would be impious enough to accuse Our Divine Saviour of cruelty because He reasonably and justly made the entrance into His true Church a necessary condition of Salvation!

The Church is the mother of the living, the mother of all those who are in the state of grace and are on

the way to salvation. And as Christ Himself had only one mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and as every man can have only one mother in the flesh, so we all can have only one spiritual mother, who gives us birth into life eternal. Hence the great bishop and martyr of the third century, St. Cyprian, says clearly and truly: "He cannot have God as his Father who has not the Church as his mother."

The Catholic Church, therefore, my dearly beloved, is the only saving Church. This expression embraces two thoughts: the Catholic Church is the way to salvation, and no other religious body, no sect separated from the Church possesses even the entrance to the way of salvation. He who belongs to the Catholic Church is a member of Christ, because the Church is His body. He then who belongs to Christ is on the way to salvation, as St. Paul tells the Romans (viii, 1): "There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Furthermore, Jesus Christ is the tree of life; he only who is a branch of this tree has life in him. But it is through the Church alone that we are grafted on this wonderful tree. Moreover, the Catholic Church alone possesses the means which are absolutely necessary to obtain salvation. She has the true faith, the sacrifice, the sacraments, and the power to forgive sins. Hence, if any one in the Church uses these means worthily he is on the way to salvation. Now there is only one way, one truth, one life, and that is Jesus Christ: "I am the way, the truth and the life." But Jesus Christ continues to live for men only in

His Church: "Behold I am with you all the days until the end of the world." Therefore the true Church is the only saving Church.

2. What assurance of salvation, then, can any other religious sect or body give us? Only one true Church was founded by Jesus Christ, as every intelligent man can readily see. Hence no other teaches in the name of Christ, no other announces His undiminished truth, no other dispenses all His sacraments, no other has the power to forgive sins in His name, no other commands in His name or with His approbation. How, then, can the way, the truth and the life be in any other? What other guarantee of salvation can we have? None whatsoever. There are, indeed, many of the Christian sects who still teach some of the truths that are absolutely necessary for salvation, and some have retained the sacrament of baptism, but for all that they cannot lead men to salvation by this means. The Catholic Church alone can do so, for these truths and this baptism have belonged to her from the beginning. The sects have sundered the ties that bound them to the Church, while retaining some of her truths and her baptism. Separation from the Church, however, means separation from Christ. Such a separation can never lead to salvation.

The Catholic Church is the only saving Church, in fact she is obliged to call herself so. If she failed to do so she would practically admit that there is no great difference between the true Church of Christ and the sects that seceded from her, between truth and falsehood, between Christianity and paganism, be-

tween faith and infidelity. She would herself cast a doubt on the divinity of her institution, she would deny that there was any obligation of belonging to her, although Our Divine Saviour made this a necessary condition of salvation. She would, in fact, herself teach indifference in questions of religion, and declare that it matters little whether one be Catholic, Protestant, Jew, pagan, or nothing at all. How could the Catholic Church be guilty of such impiety? How could she deny her own truth and prove a traitor to the mission given her by God to lead all men to a knowledge of truth and to eternal life? Therefore she calls herself, and is obliged to call herself, the only saving Church. With this declaration she vindicates divine revelation and the truth of Christianity, and thereby saves for men and for nations the faith and the foundation of their temporal and eternal welfare.

With this dogma the Catholic Church does not presume to interfere with the judgment of God. She no more condemns all those who outwardly do not belong to her than she canonizes all who are Catholics. What the Catholic Church condemns and what every man must condemn, are sin and error and falsehood. She does not say *who* is saved, and *who* is damned, but she teaches *what* will lead to salvation and *what* to damnation. In this, as viceroy of Christ, she possesses an infallible judgment. She foretells damnation to the impenitent Catholic just as she does to the obstinate infidel, or to him who deliberately pays homage to error. But this judgment is passed on impenitence, on unbelief and error, as the Saviour Him-

self said: "If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican; for he who does not believe will be condemned."

3. But now, my dearly beloved, we will consider more fully the glorious and consoling truth contained in these words: *The only saving Church.*

All those of the human race who have ever been saved, either inwardly or outwardly, beginning with Adam down to the last man, all the just, all the ancient patriarchs, down to the days of Moses, who obtained salvation by their hope in the coming Redeemer and by their just lives; the prophets, the saints of the Old Law till the advent of Our Divine Saviour; all the pagans who were such through no fault of theirs, but who led upright lives and were so disposed that had they had the opportunity of hearing the Gospel they would have gladly believed and been baptized; all the heretics of Christian times who, without their knowledge or consent, were born and reared in error and still abide in it through no fault of theirs, but who have been validly baptized and are so disposed that they would willingly join the true Church if they had the opportunity of receiving the proper instruction,—all these have been saved by the Catholic Church alone. One Redeemer, one Church; what belongs to the Redeemer belongs also to the Church, and what belongs to the Church belongs also to the Redeemer. Only one thing belongs neither to the Redeemer nor to the Church, and that is falsehood and error and sin, and hence all those who knowingly and deliberately give themselves over to error and sin, be they Catholic or

Protestant, Jew or Gentile, have no claims on the Church.

This is, therefore, the greatness of the Catholic Church. She is the only saving Church, because she is the kingdom of God on earth, the true ark, the new covenant, the bride of Christ who as mother of the whole human race has received the fullness of all truth, of all grace, of all redemption as her dower from her Divine Spouse. The purpose Our Divine Saviour had in view when He gave her all this was that she might direct His household on earth, give men their spiritual birth, and in His name, teach and guide and forgive sins and intercede for all.

4. There are three further truths that we learn from this, my dearly beloved. The Catholic Church alone is truly tolerant, because she is the only saving Church. Like her Divine Lord she condemns but one thing—deliberate error and sin. She does not, however, condemn the erring or the sinners. She hopes and prays for their conversion. The so-called spirit of toleration of our day is a snare and a delusion, a lie and perversion of the truth, because it promotes unbelief, impiety, and religious indifference, because it puts truth and falsehood, faith and unbelief, virtue and vice on an equal footing, and drags them down into the same mire, and because it hates and persecutes only one thing—the Catholic Church.

The second truth is that all those who constantly raise their hand against the Catholic Church and have no higher ambition than to direct their attacks against her should fall down on their knees and thank God

that the Catholic Church exists. If they are still able to hope for grace and mercy, if it is still possible for them to save their souls from eternal perdition, they can hope to do so only through the Catholic Church. But if they be not truly converted they can expect no better fate than befell the other enemies of God, who inevitably went down to ruin. The Church, however, quietly pursues her course as she has ever done during the past nineteen centuries, as she does to-day, and will do in the future.

He who lays hands on the Church, lays hands on the redemption and on the Saviour Himself. When Saul was on the way to Damascus in order to put in chains the faithful whom he might find there, he heard a powerful voice that cast him to the ground: "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" Our Divine Saviour did not say: "Why dost thou persecute my bishops, my priests, my disciples?" but, "why dost thou persecute me?" for he who lays hands on the Church and persecutes her, thereby persecutes the Saviour Himself, because she is His kingdom. If any one revolts against the law or the authorities of the land, we say immediately that he is a rebel, that he is guilty of treason. To persecute the Church, therefore, means to wish to annihilate salvation and redemption, and those who do so are indeed traitors to God and enemies of their country and their fellow-men.

The third truth is that those nominal *Catholics* who have not only renounced their allegiance to the Church and refused to obey her commandments, but have even made common cause with unbelievers and impious sec-

taries, and conspired with them to attack the Catholic Church and her institutions, or in other ways have given comfort and assistance to her enemies, are far worse than honest pagans, Turks or Protestants. These latter do not know what they are doing and are in error without fault of theirs, but the nominal Catholics must know what they are doing, and if they do not know it and do not wish to know it, it is their own fault. Therefore no pagan, no Turk, no Protestant can sin so grievously against God and our Divine Saviour as a Catholic can. The Catholic has greater graces, he has the truth, the sacrifice, the sacraments, he has the fact of the existence of the Catholic Church during nineteen centuries, he has before his eyes the example of true Catholics, therefore his guilt is all the greater, and Catholic princes and peoples who have attacked the Church, have always been punished more terribly by God than pagan, Turkish or Protestant nations.

When the nations are carried away by the tempest of passion, when they no longer obey the laws of God or of man, and the powers that be, instead of stemming the tide, are borne along with the torrent, then the Church alone lifts up her voice and, like Moses coming down from the mountain, proclaims the commandments of God and calls attention to the judgments of God. This scene is enacted daily in the heart of man, this world in miniature. When the turmoil of the passions threatens to bear away the heart and deadens the voice of conscience, then it is again the Catholic Church that raises her voice in warning; but she also

presents the means of grace by which we can escape destruction. Well is it for us if we listen to her voice, if we obey her commandments, for then we are surely in the way of salvation, and we then experience the truth that the Catholic Church is the kingdom of God on earth, the only bridge and passage to the kingdom of God in heaven. Amen.

SERMON XI

THE KINGDOM OF TRUTH AND THE REALM OF FALSEHOOD. THE CHURCH IS INFALLIBLE

“The Church is the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”—I TIM. III, 15.

Nothing can surpass in grandeur and impressiveness the symbols whereby the Church of God, her nature and her attributes are revealed to us. Can a more expressive type be imagined than the picture of the second paradise on earth to which the Church is likened? She is in very truth the new paradise created by the Redeemer where we can regain innocence and grace; where the tree of life, the Holy Eucharist, affords us nourishment; where we can earn for ourselves the resurrection and the immortality of the body, and by giving our undivided allegiance to God and His Church obtain an eternity of bliss. Can a more beautiful representation of the Church be found than the picture of the ark, wherein it is possible for the faithful to weather safely the storms of life, and escape the deluge of sin and iniquity under the protection of God and of His holy providence? Our Divine Saviour Himself calls the Church the city of God set on a hill. There the pilgrim can readily see her and thither bend his steps. No need, then, for him to fear that he will wander into by-ways or

fall over a precipice. She is the bark of Peter, which struggles against the waves and the tempests of this world, but will never founder, because she bears within her the most precious of treasures, namely, Jesus Christ Himself.

St. Paul calls the Church the "house of the living God." It is within the fostering precincts of the parental home and under the loving care and protection of father and mother that children thrive and joyously pass the days of their childhood in grace and innocence. The Catholic Church is all this for her faithful children as the house of the living God, but when the child flees from the hallowed precincts of his father's home, he wanders aimlessly, without protection through the world and readily falls a prey to desolation or to vice. The man who leaves the Catholic Church, or refuses to obey her, no longer possesses the love of a merciful God; the grace of Christ has deserted him. In him the friendly light of the Catholic faith has ceased to shine; for him the sun of Christian hope has hid its face; his life no longer feels the warming breath of love divine. The peace and comfort which the sacraments were wont to give him are now denied him. The feasts of the Church with their cheerfulness have ceased to brighten the dull monotony of his life, and prayer no longer refreshes his heart and mind. Men grow dead and cold and gloomy with the death and chill and gloom of sin and infidelity.

But, my dearly beloved, St. Paul also calls the Church the "pillar and ground of truth." By these

words the Apostle names the most eminent of qualities, and the one most essential to her very life and being, namely, infallibility. Since peace of conscience, the grace of God, and eternal life depend on the true faith, it is evident that we must have the certainty that the Catholic Church as the teacher of the world does really possess divine revelation in its entirety. As the sun casts its unfailing light over the universe, so the Catholic Church spreads the splendor of divine truth over the world, and as this Church rests firm and unshaken on its foundations and its pillars, so according to the expression of the Apostle, the Catholic Church is the very ground and the pillar on which divine revelation reposes. Hence, he who believes in the Catholic Church, has himself built the edifice of his faith on her strength. Before God, before Jesus Christ and in his own heart, he is certain that his faith cannot deceive him. The Church as teacher of the human race enjoys the prerogative of infallibility.

But before we proceed to a fuller consideration of this consoling truth, we must, for our better understanding, dwell for a few moments on the kingdom of truth, and the realm of falsehood.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. In order that the infallibility of the Church in matters of faith and morals may become clearer and more impressive to your minds and hearts, I will remind you of a phenomenon that manifests itself in a twofold manner in the moral world. You have frequently observed this, for everyone feels it within him-

self and daily experiences it, without, however, being clearly conscious of its real nature. As soon as we have obtained a distinct conception of this phenomenon and find it confirmed by our own daily life and in the history of nations, the infallibility of the Church in matters of faith becomes self evident, so much so that it not only appears to us as a revealed truth, but even so necessary and obvious that if anyone deny it, he thereby degrades himself to the level of the ignorant and the impious.

We are often asked what it is that specially characterizes our stirring age. Some have said it is lack of character, others indifferentism, still others declare it to be materialism or liberalism. All these, however, are only the manifestations, the effects of the fundamental character that rules everything, of the one principle that animates everything. And this character and this principle is falsehood. Falsehood is the proper stamp of our age, it is a mist that involves all countries, it is the steam that gives motive power to all action, it is the engine that every phase of society, civil, scientific and political, uses in its operations, it is the golden calf to which men do homage and around which they dance.

It is not without a purpose that our Divine Saviour called Himself, by preference, "the truth"; it is not without a purpose that He speaks of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Truth "who will teach you all truth"; it is not without a purpose that He calls His Church the kingdom of truth. In contradistinction to this He called Satan "the father of lies," and

his domain "the realm of falsehood." This twofold designation expresses the two fundamental principles diametrically opposed to each other, which move and govern the moral world, and from which all manifestations proceed. The kingdom of truth, conformably to its nature, fructifies in faith, holiness, virtue, morality, right and justice, true law and order, grace, peace, charity, well-being and blessings in all the spheres where divine truth flourishes and reigns supreme. On the contrary, the realm of falsehood naturally produces impiety, unbelief, superstition, religious error, sin, vice, hatred and discord, injustice and partisanship, fraud and dishonesty, brawls, rebellions and all kindred evils.

Satan began his empire and his reign in paradise with a lie, and its consequences soon showed themselves in the ruin of man's true happiness, in unbridled passions, in sin and death. Paganism, a fruit of this first lie, was nothing else than a colossal lie in its sacrifices, its dogmas, its systems, its so-called virtues and virtuous ways, and it was but seldom and dimly that it showed a gleam of revealed truth.

Hence, our Divine Saviour began His kingdom, not with sufferings, but with the truth: "For this was I born, for this came I into the world—that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth my voice" (St. John xviii, 37). It was for the sake of truth that falsehood nailed our Divine Saviour to the cross. Christ's kingdom is the kingdom of truth, and therefore falsehood hates it and calumniates it and persecutes it through the ages. In

the very beginning the Jews and the pagans calumniated the Church; and from calumny proceeded to persecution, to violence and cruelty. Julian the Apostate did not act differently. He began with lies, and hired swarms of manufacturers of lies, just as is done in our day in order to benumb the minds of men, to confuse them and excite them. As soon as the lies had accomplished his purpose, he proceeded to persecute the Catholics openly.

The heretics of all times have never done otherwise; they began with calumnies and ended with violence. Falsehood was everywhere the main dependence of the so-called Reformation. "Lie bravely, something will always stick," was the watchword of Luther. The minds of men were stultified,—confused and excited, then as now, by countless lies in word and pamphlets and books. Princes, especially, very readily passed from calumny to violence and cruelty. The sixteenth century furnishes us with terrifying examples of this. It is false that the majority of Catholics gladly and willingly abjured their faith. Violence completed what slander had begun. With lies a Gustavus Vasa stultified his Swedes, a Henry VIII the English, a Philip of Hesse, an Elector of Saxony, a Margrave of Brandenburg, a King of Denmark their subjects; and to calumny they added violence, the prison and the sword.

It was by falsehood that Gustavus Adolphus induced the Germans to go to war with their emperor, and to attain his purpose he kept in his pay a multitude of liars and slanderers. All the handbooks of history,

the journals, the schools, the colleges, the universities are overflowing with lies against the Catholic Church, against Philip II of Spain, Tilly, and Emperor Ferdinand II, but abound with enthusiastic praise for the so-called Reformation. Even Schiller openly admitted that a man who reads his history of the Thirty Years' War and believes it, is thoroughly deceived. Nevertheless this romance is still consulted as a source of historic truth.

Emperor Ferdinand II, one of the greatest of monarchs, and the real savior of Austria, enjoys to-day less consideration in his own country than Gustavus Adolphus or Garibaldi. Calumny is answerable for this. Frederic II of Prussia was a master of lies, and he gained more victories over Maria Theresa by his lies than by his brilliant exploits of arms. The French Republic with its "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" was (and is) a fabric of lies. Its reign was a reign of horror, of slavery and of the guillotine. Falsehood is more powerful to-day than it ever was, and calumny and misrepresentation are the chief factors in the service of arms and of politics. Truth is a dish rarely served to the people. A vile crew of newspaper scribblers, in the pay of governments and of the "interests" make of our public press a veritable factory of lies. So-called public opinion is too often created by the boldest slanders of an irresponsible press. Elections are quite frequently nothing but fraud and deceit.

Everywhere we hear the cant phrases and promises of happiness, the welfare of the people, liberty and

toleration, equal rights for all; but they are downright lies, for never has the world seen more misfortune, poverty, tyranny, injustice, oppression of conscience and disregard of rights hallowed by centuries and even of the rights of God than our times can show. Turn where we will, everywhere we see the reign of falsehood—in business and in private conduct, on royal thrones, in politics, in the sciences, in assemblies, in office, in houses of parliament, in addresses, in lectures, in legislation, in law-suits, in the courts, in public and private life, now under the guise of speculation, of business affairs, of etiquette, then under the guise of honeyed words and stock phrases, and again under the mask of public opinion, of enlightenment, of progress. Whosoever dares to oppose falsehood is put down as an offensive partisan, a benighted mind, an intellectual slave, and even the eternal truths are represented as a mere matter of opinion.

Iniquity alone can show a goodly array of men of positive character, goodness but few of them. The vast majority are engaged in the service of falsehood and change their conscience and conviction with the accession of every new power. They wish to be in the service of their own personal greed and advantage. But if a party fail lamentably in the fulfilling of its promise of better things it covers up its defeat and maintains control of affairs by having the party organs flood the country with a deluge of lies against the monasteries, the Catholic Church, the bishops, the Jesuits, the religious orders, the nuns, against the Pope and his counselors. Falsehood is the engine that does

the work, the steam that furnishes the motive power for everything, the mist that covers the world and the golden calf to which the multitude pay homage and around which they dance.

But wherever falsehood reigns, everything becomes rank and rotten and is in a state of decay. Ancient authority, respect for law, faith and loyalty, morality and order, peace and prosperity, the family, citizenship, communities, corporations, the different classes of human society are all undergoing the process of a gradual dissolution. The ground is disappearing from under the feet of entire nations and governments, for falsehood can offer no solid and lasting foundation. Falsehood may, indeed, for a brief time cover the universal sepulchre replete with rotteness with a veneer of enlightenment, culture and progress, but the final outcome can only be dissolution and corruption. Hence we perceive everywhere a universal unrest and movement among the peoples as during the time of the advent of Our Divine Saviour. There are very few who understand this general unrest and movement, any better than the pagans could explain it in their day. Efforts are made to suppress and to stem their agitation by means of constitutions, of hollow promises, and of legislation; but all in vain. The Spirit of God now impels and draws the nations towards the Church as formerly He led them on to the Redeemer. The Church is the kingdom of truth, and where truth prevails there also reign peace and order, right and justice, true prosperity and the welfare of nations. She is the kingdom of redemption, and where redemption

obtains, there flourish grace and faith, morality and honesty. She is the beacon-light built by God on a rock. There she rises majestically out of the stormy ocean waves. Her bright light pierces steadily through the encircling gloom and marks out for the individual as for the multitudes the luminous paths by which alone they can hope to find tranquillity of heart, peace of mind, temporal and eternal welfare.

2. Therefore, my dearly beloved, must the true Church, as the house of the living God, as the kingdom of truth in opposition to the baneful realm of falsehood, be infallible, so that she herself may not fall a prey to error and falsehood, and may be able to fulfill her world-wide mission of saving men through the ages. The Church is infallible in the announcement and conservation of revealed truth, because she is the house of God, Who is a living and not a dead God and consequently can and will make good His promises. The Church is infallible because she is the body of Christ, who abides with her all days unto the consummation of the ages. She is infallible because the Holy Ghost animates and vivifies her, and guides her into all truth and inspires her with everything that our Divine Saviour taught while He was visible here on earth. If all the nations of the earth are to be blessed in Him, the promised Redeemer, they must all be able to acquire the knowledge of His truth. Therefore, His truth must be preserved until the end of time. To the Church, the representative of the Redeemer and the teacher of the world, this office has been confided. And if she is to fulfill this sublime

mission the assistance of the Holy Ghost must make her infallible in announcing and preserving the teachings of faith and morals. This is the grace of vocation given to her by the Holy Ghost when He descended upon her on the day of Pentecost, and for which the promises of God are a guarantee.

Reason and conscience demand that the true Church of God be infallible. The Church is not a mere school, an educational establishment, no mere human association like a constitutional society, a stock company, where everyone may speak, teach, opine as he sees fit; she is the kingdom of God on earth, the kingdom of grace and truth. Her dignity and destiny demand that she be infallible. The divine truths, the sacrifice, the sacraments demand it, so that they be preserved on earth until the end of the world in all their fullness and life-giving power. No such thing would be possible were they subject to the changes of the opinions of the day and to the wonderfully confused and self-contradictory judgment of men. All future generations that are destined to share in the true faith of the Redeemer and in His redemption demand it; they demand of the justice of God that the true Church be infallible. Our own conscience demands that, calm and unaffected by the doubts and idle talk of men, it may repose a childlike confidence in the truths and promises of God. Even daily experience teaches us that the Church of God must be infallible. Princes, authorities, and the courts ascribe to themselves a kind of intellectual infallibility in their laws, decrees and judgments. They cannot well do

otherwise, or else all authority would crumble, every citizen would deem it his privilege to criticize and overthrow whatever is necessary for the public weal. The father with regard to his children assumes a sort of human or intellectual infallibility; the teacher does the same towards his pupils; the master toward his apprentice; in fact, everyone in authority does so with regard to those who are subject to him. They do not and cannot permit their subjects, their children and their pupils to cavil at their decisions, teachings or commands and proceed as they see fit; were such license given to question every law, every decision, there would soon be an end to all political, civil and parental authority; there would soon be an end to all law and order, all peace and tranquillity; there would be an end to the family, the school, to the arts and sciences.

Man, not sustained by authority and given over to his unbridled passions, soon sinks to the level of the beast, and human society becomes a hell on earth. Therefore all those statesmen, who constantly try to undermine the authority of the Church and make every effort to hold her up to the scorn of the populace, are the veriest fools, because thereby they dig their own graves and the graves of thrones and nations. The more the authority of the Church disappears, the more surely likewise, vanishes the prestige of those constituted in authority, the prestige of parents, of teachers, of masters, and all is threatened with destruction in the turmoil of a universal upheaval. The Catholic Church is infallible in her dignity as teacher of the

world, because this prerogative has been promised to her by God; because it is a necessary consequence of the nature of eternal redemption and of divine truth and is essential to the welfare of the world, for she sustains and preserves thereby every other human authority and makes it respected, necessary, and fraught with blessings.

In fact, my dearly beloved, as God is the eternal truth and unerring wisdom, so must the mouth-piece through which He speaks to us also be infallible. But this mouth-piece is His Church. Through her God speaks to us to-day, as He once did to the Jewish people through Moses and the prophets. As the kingdom of God on earth, by means of which all men are to be made happy, and all nations blessed, the Church contains in unimpaired fullness the benefits of the redemption, the whole treasure of grace and the entire deposit of revealed truth. She knows no limitations of time, no barrier of space, no counting of the number of her redeemed. The almighty power of God is made visible in her as the rock against which the storms of the world dash themselves in impotent rage. By her unity of faith she preserves divine revelation to the world, and by her infallibility she safeguards the very foundations of society, namely, authority, and protects it against the deluge of countless harmful errors which spring in endless succession from the unrest of the human mind.

Truly as the sun by steadily adhering to its course is the greatest benefactor of the physical world, causes the regular order of the seasons and the fertility of the

soil, disperses the clouds and the mists and the storms, so is the Catholic Church the greatest benefactress of the moral world. Without her, chaos would reign supreme. In fact, just as the sun, the moon, and the stars, the whole firmament in its grand unity loudly proclaims the omnipotence and wisdom of God, so does the Catholic Church in her unity proclaim the truth and wisdom of God. She is the wonderful spectacle on which the gaze of all centuries, all nations, all men, of the good and the wicked, of believers and unbelievers, of friend and enemy, is fixed.

All eyes are turned to this rock of truth which alone stands unshaken amid the turmoil of the world, and even the indifferent and the enemy feel disquieted. They feel in their inmost hearts the might of truth, this unique divine power which divides the world into two camps,—into the kingdom of truth and the realm of falsehood, for Christ or against Him. “He who is not with me is against me, and who hears not the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.”

We are and we wish to be with Christ, my dearly beloved, we wish to hear His Church. We hear her cry through the entire world and the centuries re-echo the cry, “I believe, I hope, I love.” And this wonderful declaration resounding from every heart and every tongue is the only source of salvation, of peace and order, of truth and justice for all men, and its only means of obtaining eternal happiness. May this beautiful speech, as the true Church of God can

alone teach it, forever make melody in our heart. "I believe, I hope, I love," and may it become for us the hymn of praise, which we shall sing with the Church in an eternity of bliss. Amen.

SERMON XII

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

“The Spirit of truth will teach you all truth.”—ST. JOHN xvi, 13.

The Catholic Church is splendidly and faithfully portrayed by the figure of the ship, which bears Jesus, and resists successfully the fury of the tempests and the roaring waves that threaten to engulf her. From the very first day of her existence until the present moment the Catholic Church has been obliged to do battle with the widespread hostility of the realm of falsehood which brings to the assault a formidable array of lies and calumnies, of countless errors, of hatred and impiety. But the Church bears within her the Saviour of the world Who has said—“Behold I am with you all days until the end of the world.” She, therefore, cannot suffer ship-wreck, but will endure until the end of the world, be the lies and errors and persecutions ever so numerous and terrible. In Jesus the Church possesses the full power of redemption, the whole treasure of God’s grace, the entire deposit of revealed truth. All future generations until the day of judgment are destined to share in these, because it is the will of God that all men of good will be saved. For the same reason the true Church can

never become the victim of the realm of falsehood, can never fall into error or lose the truth.

She cannot do so, because, since the Holy Ghost came down upon her on the day of Pentecost, He has been her protection and guide, according to the divine promise: "The Spirit of truth will teach you all truth and will inspire you with all I have taught you, and He will abide with you all days even unto the consummation of the world." So long as the soul is united with the body, man lives on earth, and so long as the Holy Ghost is united with the Church she is and remains the true Church and cannot err. But the Holy Ghost abides with the Church until the end of the world, and hence she can never err but will always teach the truth. His divine promise is given to men for their consolation and eternal welfare and is necessary for peace of conscience and certainty of faith. Therefore, as God, who is eternal truth and wisdom, can neither deceive nor be deceived, so also can His true Church neither deceive nor be deceived. She can never teach error nor be led into error by men, which means, in other words, the Church is infallible. This prerogative of infallibility is most necessary to her, that she may really be the kingdom of truth and teach the true faith.

To-day, therefore, we shall consider the infallibility of the Church more closely.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. We will, my dearly beloved, first answer the question, in what does the infallibility of the Church

really consist? Her infallibility consists in this, that the Church in all that appertains to the teachings of faith or Christian morals cannot err. The light of reason helps us to recognize certain fundamental truths, as, for instance, the whole is greater than its part. In like manner the Holy Ghost unerringly guides the Church in her conception of the truths which our Divine Saviour taught. Reason further keeps alive in us the knowledge of these natural truths without which human life is not imaginable. Similarly the Holy Ghost keeps alive the consciousness of revealed truth in the Church. In continuation, therefore, of the teaching office of Christ, the Church must proceed ^{and has proceeded} through all the countries of the world, solving the doubts that may arise against the teachings of faith or morals, antagonizing and refuting the ever recurring errors, repelling the attacks directed against faith, condemning and repudiating false doctrines. For nineteen centuries she has successfully demonstrated the falsity of countless erroneous systems, answered all questions, decided all contentions, and the Catholic faith has been preserved to us in undiminished splendor and shines out wonderfully in its oneness over the whole earth. Human systems and errors, views, judgments, follow each other through the course of centuries like the countless waves of the ocean, and they disappear without leaving a trace behind them to make room for new ones, which will in time share the same fate; the faith of the Catholic Church alone is forever the same, because the Church is infallible. This experience of two thousand years

proclaims loudly enough for whoever has ears to hear and is of good will that here the hand of God is manifest and stamps the seal of His omnipotence and unerring promises on the Church.

No matter what her enemies may say, the Catholic Church has never invented new dogmas of faith. Again and again this calumny has been refuted, but ever and anon the many-headed hydra of falsehood arises and hisses its lies to the world. This, the Catholic Church cannot do and never has done. She has bled and suffered and made heavy sacrifices to preserve the deposit of faith intact. She suffers still because she follows not the trend of the times, nor tries to curry favor with the mighty, nor betrays the faith or the commandments or the sacraments to the idol of the day, in a word, because she is the Church of God and is in possession of the eternal promises. When the Catholic Church declares that a doctrine, which has been believed at all times and in most places, is a revealed truth, and consequently an article of faith, she does not thereby invent any new dogma, but merely confirms the divinity of its revelation. Thus, for instance, in the year 1854 Pope Pius IX, in unison with all the bishops, solemnly declared that the belief of Catholics in the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady is a divinely revealed truth. He did not invent a new doctrine, for through the centuries we find faith in it clearly expressed. For ages a feast was celebrated in its honor on the 8th of December; altars and churches were erected to commemorate the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The condemnation

of the different heresies that have arisen in the course of time has furnished the occasions for the strict definition of the Catholic faith. This was true even in the days of the Apostles, and so will it be until the end of time. According to the promises which God made to her that the gates of hell should not prevail against her, that the Holy Ghost would direct her in all truth and would abide with her all the days even unto the consummation of the world, the Church is infallible, because she is the kingdom of truth, the teacher of the world, and the pillar and ground of faith.

2. Conscious of this, and relying on the divine promises, the Catholic Church has ever vindicated her prerogative of infallibility by deciding questions of faith and condemning heresy. The Apostles, even in their first council, held at Jerusalem, said: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts xv, 28). Thus they expressed their firm conviction that because of the assistance of the Holy Ghost they could not err. The Church holds the same language through the course of the ages, and the same results attend her decisions in matters of faith and of morals. The Apostles did not err and the Church has never erred. As the preceptress of the world, pointing to her infallibility, she has been able boldly to present herself to announce the faith as the necessary condition to eternal salvation. Relying on her infallibility she demands of kings and emperors as well as of their subjects, of the learned and the unlearned, the rich and poor alike unconditional belief in her teachings which

she announces in the name of Christ. She demands the homage of the intelligence, a sacrifice that requires of human pride its greatest self-denial. Relying further on her infallibility in matters of faith, she excluded from her communion, and denied her sacraments to those who refused to give her their allegiance. Christ Himself commands her to act thus: "He who will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." "He who hears you hears Me." To hear the Church, to obey the Church in matters of faith and morals means, therefore, to hear and to obey our Divine Saviour, the eternal truth Himself. And why? Because the Church is infallible.

In every century she calls out to the great minds who follow the path of error: So far and no farther. Your pronunciamientos, your learned theories, are errors. For nineteen centuries she has examined and condemned all the heresies, answered thousands and thousands of questions on matters of faith and morals, solved innumerable doubts and decided countless contentions. [She has done it without fear, without tremor; she has done it in face of the whole world; she has done it with the quiet assurance that she has never swerved from the truth. Her decisions have earned for her the hatred and the persecutions of the powers of earth, of impious princes and countless heretics. She has suffered and bled for them, but for all that she has never swerved a hair's breadth from the truth and from her definitions of faith.

The judgments of the Church have been closely

scrutinized and weighed by scientists, princes, worldly courts and heretics. To-day they are still being examined and weighed, and what has been the result of this investigation lasting for these two thousand years? In spite of this tireless scrutiny not a single error, not a single false step in her definitions of faith can be laid at the door of the Church. In fact the greatest scientists, the greatest minds, overcome by this power of truth, have humbly submitted to the decrees of the Church. Many there are who have everywhere sought the truth, in the schools and in the sects, but nowhere was their craving satisfied, nowhere did they find peace of mind. Restlessly they roamed until they took refuge in the Catholic Church, where they found all they had looked for, truth, peace of mind and of conscience and joy of heart. Verily God's almighty assistance operates here and "it is wonderful in our eyes!" We here plainly see the fulfillment of God's promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church, and that the Holy Ghost will direct her in all truth, and will inspire her with everything that Our Divine Saviour taught His Apostles. The Church is the mouth-piece of God on earth, and because God cannot err and deceive, His Church likewise cannot do so. "Who hears you, hears Me." This is the consolation, the assurance, the safety of conscience of the Catholic. He stands on solid ground; he believes God and, therefore, he believes His Church, and this firm faith is the cause of his grace and redemption, the tranquillity of his con-

science, the hope of his soul and, finally, the cause of his eternal happiness.

3. Countless heretics have, indeed, come forth from the Church, even bishops and priests have taught error, but the Church in the universality of her teaching office to which infallibility has been promised—and not to the individual bishops, much less to the priests—has never erred and has never taught any new doctrine. Her enemies have never been able to show any evidence that the Church in the course of centuries had attained her faith. Tireless have been their efforts at all times to find some fact to base their contention that the Church has swerved from the pure teachings of Christ; and when they thought that at last they had really found something, their rejoicings proved, to their chagrin, to be premature, for in every instance it was shown by the writings of the Fathers and by the decrees of the general councils of the Church that what was taken to be an entirely new dogma was really taught and believed in the days of the Apostles.

Another circumstance places the Church's infallibility in faith in a still brighter light. The Catholic Church has ever excluded from her communion all those who have refused to make their submission to her, and, in accordance with the mandate of Our Divine Saviour, "He who will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican," has treated them as heretics. Herein she never made distinction of persons, whether they were emperors or kings, like

Henry VIII of England, or bishops, or priests, or scientists. Persecutions might follow, but the Church never wavered or faltered. Mere temporal considerations could not move her, for higher interests were at stake. The faith and with the faith, redemption and eternal happiness must be saved for untold thousands.

In fact, my dearly beloved, what would have become of the faith in the course of time amid the restless mutations of the human mind, amid the constant turmoil of human passions, amid the deluge of errors that under one guise or another constantly inundate the world, had not the Church, firm as a rock, defended the faith? She did it, strong in her consciousness that infallibility in her teaching office was promised to her by God. This is why the Catholic faith is so glorious through the ages in its oneness, and we can exclaim with the Apostle—"Our faith—that is the victory which overcometh the world!"

The Catholic faith is also our victory if we hold as true all that God has revealed, and all that the Catholic Church proposes for our belief. By it and with it we are secure against every error; by it and with it we are in living communion with the faithful of the entire world, back through the centuries up to the days of the Apostles, and forward to the very saints in heaven. The sublime consciousness of being in full possession of the truth through the instrumentality of the infallible Church, gives us peace and comfort, tranquillity of heart, light for our reason, strength and courage for our will, so that we can also obey the commandments and the teachings of our holy

faith and thus obtain an eternal victory over Satan, death and hell. The Church in her infallibility as the teacher of the world and of every individual is our sure guide on the way to heaven where the glorious recompense of our faith will be given us and we shall enjoy God and our Saviour forever, for "Our faith, that is the victory, which overcometh the world." Amen.

SERMON XIII

THE POPE AS SUPREME HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

“Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”—ST. MATTH. XVI, 18.

God wrote the truth of His Church into the Ancient Law by means of prototypes, and proclaimed her grandeur and glory by the mouth of His prophets, just as in the ancient days, He depicted the character of the Redeemer with strokes of divine masterfulness, by prophecies and figures. He did this that all who have ears and eyes might hear and see, in the same way, both the sending of the divine Redeemer and the establishment of His Church as the sublime work of God for the salvation of men, and that they might believe in and accept it. In fact, what was the entire Ancient Law, with its sacrifices, its temple, its sanctuary, its ark of the covenant, its manna, its seven branched candlestick and its ceremonies, but a luminous symbol of the New Law, a vestibule to the Church? Just as Our Divine Saviour perfectly fulfilled, in His person and in His life all the types that symbolize Him, as, for instance, the paschal lamb, the serpent on the cross in the desert, the innocent Abel, Joseph in Egypt, the prince of peace and the high-

priest Melchisedech, Moses, the Prophet Elias, etc., so also does the Catholic Church, as the New Covenant of God with men, splendidly fulfill all the types and prophecies that have reference to her. The true Lamb of God is now daily offered in sacrifice in the Church, and, under the form of Holy Communion, as the heavenly manna, refreshes us on our pilgrimage through life. The faithful have passed through the waters of holy baptism in order to reach the promised land of the Church. The seven branched candlestick of the sacraments gives them grace and divine light. The feasts of the Jewish people, Easter and Pentecost, have attained their real significance only in the Catholic Church. The seventy-two elders of the Jewish people and their twelve progenitors are perpetuated in a higher manner in the seventy-two disciples of the Lord and in the twelve Apostles, who are the spiritual ancestors of the Christian people.

But still one more type is to find its accomplishment to which the Ancient Law owed its union and the subordination of all its members. This type is the high-priest. Was it not fit that this should find a most magnificent fulfillment in the New Law, in the true Church of God? And as a matter of fact it has been fulfilled in a most sublime manner. The Divine Architect has taken care that His Church should as little lack a keystone as the Ancient Law, for it needed this to give it unity and stability. This keystone is the Pope, the high priest of the New Law, the supreme head of the Catholic Church, and the visible representative of Christ on earth.

We shall, therefore, speak to-day of the Pope as the supreme head of the Church.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

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1. At the Last Supper, my dearly beloved, Our Divine Saviour prayed for the unity and the union of His Church: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me; that they may be one as we also are—that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (St. John xvii, 11, 21). The unity of the Church is the first and most prominent mark of her truth. Infidels and heretics may deny the holiness and apostolicity of the Church; one thing they cannot deny, because of its striking evidence in the world, namely, her unity in faith, in her sacraments, and in her hierarchical order. But it would be absolutely impossible to preserve this unity for any length of time amid the persecutions and storms to which the Church has been exposed did she not possess a supreme head. Had there been no supreme head, scattered assemblies of Christians might indeed have sprung up throughout the world, but they never would have been united into one great Church. A multitudinous variety of contradictory creeds might have been formed, countless modes of worship might have been employed, but no unity in faith, no unity in sacraments, no unity in sacrifice or in worship would ever have been possible. The best proof of this is the actual existence in the world of the large number of religious sects which can never agree among them-

selves and constantly renew the confusion of the tower of Babel.

“Every kingdom divided against itself shall be destroyed,” said Our Divine Saviour. In fact, my dearly beloved, every family, every society, every body politic, every city, every country must have a head of some kind, call him by whatever name you will, mayor, governor, president, prince or king. Without a head it is impossible to preserve peace or order, much less develop any activity for the upbuilding of a community or conserve the advantages already gained. Should, then, the Catholic Church alone be lacking in what the whole world acknowledges to be a prime necessity for any institution,—she who is spread through the whole world for the purpose of keeping all nations, all countries in the unity of Catholic faith and life and of protecting them against the unrelenting attacks of enemies and infidels? God owed it to His wisdom and His providence to give His Church a visible chief to preserve intact the deposit of faith, and to save the generations of all times to the end of days. God gave an answer to this question for the assurance of all the redeemed when He said to Peter, and in his person to his successors,—“Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

For this reason we see our Divine Saviour preferring Peter before all the other Apostles. To Peter He confided in a special manner the keys of the kingdom of heaven, namely, the power to bind and to loose,

to judge and to sentence. To Peter alone He gave the power to guide the whole flock, the bishops and the priests and the faithful. It was first to Peter that He gave the power to forgive sins, and that in a supreme degree, and upon him alone did He bestow a new name,—Peter, by which his relation to the Church as foundation and keystone was clearly expressed. For Peter alone did Our Saviour say a special prayer that his faith might not waver and that he might confirm his brethren, the Apostles and bishops in the faith. It was to him first of all the Apostles that Our Divine Saviour appeared after His resurrection and announced to him that he would die a martyr's death, a prophecy that was brutally fulfilled. For like his Divine Lord and Master, Peter died nailed to the cross, with this difference, that he was crucified with his head down.

The Acts of the Apostles tell us how the other Apostles and the faithful recognized and honored Peter as their head and as the visible representative of Christ after the resurrection. Like a new father of the family, St. Peter arises in the midst of the orphaned disciples. Where he is, there they are. He presides over, and directs their assemblies; he orders the election of another Apostle in place of Judas; he is the first to announce the Gospel to the Jews on the feast of Pentecost, and he receives the firstlings of the Gentiles into the Church. His name is always mentioned, whilst the other Apostles are mostly indicated by these words—"Peter and the eleven," "Peter and the others," whereby his primacy is

briefly but effectually designated. The most wonderful fact, however, is that Peter chooses Rome, the capital of the Roman empire and of ancient heathendom, as the first see of Christendom, and here closes his active life with a martyrdom worthy of his high dignity.

2. Peter, the man, is indeed dead, but his high dignity as vicegerent of Christ on earth, his office as supreme head of the Church survives in his successor, the Pope. In like manner the episcopal, the sacerdotal dignity is perpetuated in the bishops and the priests who are the successors of those who are dead. In the same way does the imperial power continue to live in the successor of the deceased emperor. Men die, but as little as the faith dies with the death of the faithful, so little does the sacerdotal, the episcopal or the papal power die; it will last until the end of the world.

The divine promise—"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"—re-echoes through the ages. It lives on in the faith of the Church; it lives on in the conviction of Catholics that the Pope as the successor of St. Peter is the supreme head of the Church, the visible representative of Jesus Christ, the Supreme Pontiff of the New Law and the heir to the divine promises.

In fact, my dearly beloved, the immense importance of the Popes as the keystone and the crown of the unity of the Catholic Church is evident in her struggles for the preservation of the faith. Twenty-

nine Popes died as martyrs, more than seventy are honored as saints. Wherever the faith was imperiled by erroneous teachings, the Popes, from the days of the Apostles, have stood forth as the teachers of the faithful, mindful of the words of our Divine Saviour that in virtue of their office they were called to strengthen the bishops, the priests, and the faithful in the faith. Indeed, what would have become of the faith in the midst of the countless heresies had not the Popes, as supreme teachers and sentinels, constantly cared and battled for its preservation? After God's providence we have to thank the Popes that throughout the Catholic world the profession of faith sounds as though it proceeded from one mouth. They have ever defended the faith with their very life's blood. They have instructed the erring, excluded the recalcitrant and have opposed even emperors and kings in matters of faith.

It was the Popes who in accordance with the mandate of Christ, sent forth the messengers of faith to preach the Gospel to the pagan nations. As the Apostle Paul came to the Prince of the Apostles, Peter, to receive the confirmation of his teachings, so in later times the bishops and missionaries came to the Pope, to receive from his hands their apostolic mission and his blessing for the conversion of the heathen. Thus came Saints Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of Poland, St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, St. Austin, the apostle of England. In our own day the missionaries still go forth into the world in the name

of the Pope to preach the gospel of peace to the nations.

The Popes as the center of unity and in their quality of Supreme Pontiffs of the Catholic Church, maintain the faithful throughout the world in the unity of the sacrifice and the sacraments. If it were not for the Popes, the sacraments as well as the doctrines of faith would long since have disappeared from the face of the earth and from the use of the faithful. As the Supreme Pontiffs of the Catholic Church, the Popes have ever exercised their vigilance for the unity of faith and the maintenance of divine worship and the sacraments. They have particularly maintained the sanctity and the indissolubility of marriage against passionate princes. This alone constitutes them the benefactors of nations and of families. What would have become of the sacrament of matrimony in the course of time had not the Popes with such power and courage, without fear of menace or violence, fought for its sanctity? What would have become of woman, even in the Christian Church, and to what slavery and indignity, as among the Turks and pagans, would she not have been reduced, had not the Popes taken her under their protection, and preserved for her the dignity and the rights that belong to her by virtue of the Christian law and of her vocation?

But the Popes are also the supreme shepherds of Christianity, and, as such, have the mission to encourage and to hold all without distinction, bishops and priests and faithful to the proper fulfillment of

their obligations. If the Popes had not exerted themselves for the honor and the protection of the bishops, the bishops would long since have become the prey and the soulless tools in the hands of impious governments to the fearful detriment of the faithful. If the Popes had not kept a watchful guard over the clergy, they would long since have either fallen from the height of their dignity and vocation or else they would have become victims to the lust of power and the tyranny of worldly rulers. If throughout the Catholic world the bishops and the clergy, with exceedingly rare exceptions, are so thoroughly united, it is owing entirely to the Popes. If throughout the Catholic world Christian communities are united in the faith and in the sacraments, in divine worship and in the feasts, it is again owing to the Popes. The Pope is the center of unity in the Church.

As in every country, for the sake of peace and order, there must be a supreme judge, a supreme lawgiver and leader who finally decides and regulates public questions, and to whom all can have recourse, so also in the Church, as the kingdom of God on earth, there must be a supreme teacher, a supreme judge, lawgiver and shepherd. This is the Pope. He is the Moses of the New Law, the visible representative of Jesus Christ, the rock upon which the Church is built, the keystone which holds together this magnificent structure. The Church is really united through the Pope; through him the bishops and priests are one, and one with the faithful through

the whole world. Through him we are all one in the faith, holy, Catholic, and apostolic.

For this reason Our Divine Saviour, on the eve of His bitter passion and death, prays so urgently for the unity of His kingdom on earth, His holy Church. The Church is destined to be the family of God on earth. The Pope is the father in God's stead, holy Church is the mother, the children are the faithful. But as in the family peace and blessedness and prosperity and love can only reign when harmony unites the father with the mother and both of them with the children, so is it also in holy Church. Let her enemies conspire against the Church as they will, as long as she is one with her supreme head, our Holy Father, they can gain no lasting advantage. Only a kingdom divided against itself will be destroyed.

Just as the Archangel Michael did battle in heaven against Satan and the fallen angels, so the Pope to-day, as yesterday, in his quality of teacher, high-priest and supreme head of the Church, wars against impious and hostile governments. And as the Archangel Michael maintained a vast number of angels in loyalty and obedience to God, so on earth the Pope maintains bishops and priests and faithful in loyalty and obedience to the Divine Redeemer. What, more clearly than the immortality of the Papacy, can prove the truth of the divine promise—"Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"? Verily the omnipotent hand of God and the splendor of His

wisdom and providence here reign supreme. For, my dearly beloved, no matter how terrific the storms that have raged against the Popes in the world's efforts to destroy the Church, their attack has been futile—they have fallen back in confusion from the rock on which the Church was founded. The enemy are all well aware that if the shepherd be stricken, the flock will disperse, bishops and priests will be intimidated, and the faithful will disappear. Mighty empires, powerful thrones, great nations, dreaded conquerors have gone forth in battle-array to conquer the Papacy. They succeeded in driving the Popes into exile, in putting them to death and in robbing them of Rome and their temporal possessions, but, to-day as yesterday, the Pope rules the Church, and empires and nations and rulers and conquerors have gone down to ruin and death. This plainly manifests the hand of God and the truth of His promise. Nothing can better demonstrate the importance of the Papacy for the unity and preservation of the Catholic Church until the end of all times, than its wonderful vitality.

The great bishop and martyr of the third century, St. Cyprian, has written magnificently concerning a supreme power in the Church: "Two powers cannot exist in the Church; the Lord has provided only one for her. The Lord has founded His Church on the harmony of unity, not on the contradiction of duplicity. There is only one episcopacy of which each has a part assigned to him, and there is only one

Church which, by virtue of her own fruitfulness, spreads over the whole earth. Thus there are many sunbeams but only one sun; the tree has many branches, but only one deep-rooted trunk; there are many side-streams, but only one source from which they can all draw in abundance. You cannot take away the rays from the sun because unity will not permit such a division. Break the branch away from the tree and it will dry up. In like manner the Church, illumined with the light of the Lord, spreads her rays over the whole terrestrial sphere, and still it is only one light that sheds its beams in every place. She spreads her branches over all the lands and lets its abundant waters flow through every region, yet the trunk is but one, only one the source, and only one mother. Who will now maintain that this unity, which is firmly founded in God and most intimately united with the divine mysteries, may be torn asunder in the Church, may be broken by the dissensions of opposing doctrines and divided by constituting an alien bishop? No, there may be but one bishop in the Church (Cyp. i, p. 48).

Verily, my dearly beloved, as there is but one Divine Saviour and only one true Church, so there can be but one supreme head, one Holy Father the Pope. We must remain united with him in faith, love and obedience, as the children of a family are one with the father, if we wish on earth to be united with Jesus, the invisible pastor of our souls, and to see Him in heaven, where He is forever the head of all

His faithful who prove themselves worthy, by their loyal Christian life and their love for holy Church, to enter into the ranks of the saints in eternal happiness. Amen.

SERMON XIV

WHAT THE POPES HAVE DONE IN AND FOR THE CHURCH

“Ruling over the present people, and by the strength of wisdom instructing the people in most holy words.”—ECCLES. XLIV, 4.

It is a nation's foremost duty to keep in honored memory the names of its great men, its heroes and benefactors. There is no nation so small and insignificant, none so great and renowned but would have gone down to inevitable ruin had not God in His infinite wisdom and kindly providence raised up in its midst at the opportune moment men of gigantic mental and moral proportions, who, as rulers and law-givers, as heroes or as great saints, rendered extraordinary services in saving the country from desperate perils, in maintaining peace or in establishing the supremacy of law and order. Every nation has a right to be thankful for and also to be proud of its great rulers, its heroes and its saints. To its rulers and heroes it erects monuments as a perpetual remembrance for all coming generations; to its saints it dedicates altars and churches. Said Jesus Sirach, in the Old Testament, to the Jewish people—“Let us now praise men of renown, and our fathers in their generation. The Lord hath wrought great glory through His magnificence from the beginning. Such as have

borne rule in their dominions, men of great power, and endowed with their wisdom, showing forth in the prophets the dignity of prophets and ruling over the present people, and by the strength of wisdom instructing the people in most holy words. . . . Let the people show forth their wisdom and the church declare their praise" (Ecclus. xliv, 1, 4).

What, indeed, would have become of the Jewish people had they not had a Moses, a David, the prophets, those great figures of the ancient dispensation, who largely influenced not only the Jewish people but also the adjoining pagan nations and as fore-runners of the Lord prepared His way? And yet Moses as leader, prophet and lawgiver of the Old Testament was merely a type of the new Moses whom God has placed in the New Covenant, in His holy Church, in the person of the Pope. As leader he is destined to illumine the path of salvation, and as law-giver, supreme judge and teacher, in matters of faith and of Christian morals, he shows the way out of the slavery of sin to the promised land of eternal happiness. What would have become of the Catholic Church, of her unity and holiness, had she been without the Popes? If it had not been for the Popes, what would have become of the faith, the sacraments, divine worship, and especially of Christian marriage? They have been the greatest benefactors of Christian nations, more so than rulers, law-givers and warriors. The words of the book of Jesus Sirach can be applied to them with the utmost truth: "And ruling over the present people, and by the strength of wis-

dom instructing the people in most holy words." Therefore, it is a sacred duty for us to heed the words of the invitation. "Let the people show forth their wisdom and the church declare their praise."

Therefore I will speak to-day of what the Popes have done in and for the Church. This subject is one of the greatest importance, because the Popes and their activity in the world are objects of the most virulent and unjust prejudice, and also, because every Catholic is under the necessity of standing by and with the Pope in unity of faith and in obedience.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. As you are all aware, my dearly beloved, the Apostle St. Peter was the first Pope or Father of the Faithful. Him the other Apostles obeyed as the visible representative of their divine Lord and Master, who had chosen Peter for this dignity and high office. From the day on which Our Divine Saviour ascended into heaven St. Peter became in fact the chief of the Apostles, of the disciples and the faithful. He took precedence everywhere, spoke for them, directed the assemblies of the Apostles, and ruled the Christian community in Jerusalem. It is the same at the present time. From the moment when Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, selected for himself and his successors Rome as his permanent See, and sanctified and sealed it with his blood, the Papal Primacy, based on the promise of God, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,"—began

to display its wonderful vitality for the extension of the Church, and the welfare of the world. Terrible was the battle that the Church had to wage during the first three centuries with the pagan Empire, until finally the victory of the cross over ancient heathen Rome and the triumph of Christianity over the Capital, the stronghold of world-controlling paganism, was won. Twenty-nine Popes, following the example of Peter, Prince of the Apostles, died the martyr's death. They stood at the head of those armies of Christian heroes, who, more by their blood and sufferings than by the holiness and purity of their lives, paved the way for the faith in the Divine Saviour in the hearts of the heathen.

St. Peter in bonds sent forth bishops from Rome into the Roman provinces, especially France and Spain, to convert the nations. Neither did his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, forget their pastoral duties even in the midst of the most bloody persecutions. To every known country did they send missionaries, and if these found there a bloody death, Rome sent forth new bands, until the victory of Christianity over paganism was won either by the blood of the martyrs, or by the word of the messengers of faith. With this victory there went out from Rome a complete transformation of the old world to new quickening life, a new and Christian order of things. To the remotest corners of the world the blessings of Christianity, the liberty of grace, Christian truth and morals penetrated. Bishops and missionaries came to Rome to receive from the

Pope their consecration to a life of apostolic activity.

As a matter of fact, my dearly beloved, the successors who occupied the Chair of Peter were mostly men eminently worthy of him, men of great and powerful minds, remarkable for their holiness of life or for their energy and learning, who stamped the seal of their spirit on their times and traced out the lines of the world's history for hundreds of years. What no ruler could do was possible for the Popes. They roused the nations of Europe to a feeling of Catholic solidarity, brought them together to make common cause against the infidel and to rescue the Holy Sepulchre and the holy places of Jerusalem from the hands of the Turks. Kings acknowledged the Popes as arbitrators, and to the Popes the people appealed against their august rulers when they robbed them and trod their rights under foot. Princes appealed to the Pope for aid and protection against their rebellious subjects or against neighboring princes. Many a devastating war, many a bloody quarrel was prevented solely by the Popes, grievous injustice was righted at their instigation, enmities were laid aside and reconciliation effected.

The Popes protected Italy against the devastation of the Huns and Vandals; they set a limit to the advance of the Turks by uniting the Christian princes against them; and how often did they not effectually help Austria in her struggle against those terrible enemies. In days not so far distant Pope Pius VII alone did not bend the knee to Napoleon I. He

alone dared with unflinching courage to withstand the violence of this conqueror, before whom all Europe trembled, though he knew full well that prison and exile and suffering awaited him. Who alone in our day, though defenseless and deserted, robbed and practically a prisoner, dares fearlessly to protest against impiety wherever manifested? It is our gloriously reigning Pontiff Pius X, whose name has become inseparably linked with everything that is great and noble, fearless and courageous.

2. Who can recount all that the Popes have done and suffered for the preservation of the Christian faith in all its purity and integrity? The history of the Church for nineteen centuries tells it fully in detail. The Popes, beginning with Peter, were alone the supreme teachers of Christianity, from the height of their watch tower they saw the oncoming hosts of error and infidelity, and prepared an ample defense against their onslaught. If the Popes had not been thus active, what would have become of Christian truth, of Christian science and law in the turmoil of human passions, of pride and of the spirit of contradiction. Christian faith, Christian life and justice would long since have disappeared from the face of the earth, had not the Popes as the supreme teachers and pastors of the Christian world courageously defended them and had they not, in accordance with the mandate of Christ, protected and confirmed bishops and priests and people in the faith. The preservation of the Catholic faith is the glorious achievement of the Roman Pontiffs.

The Popes have also rendered wonderful service in fostering the interior life of the Church, the purity of morals, monastic and sacerdotal discipline, the advance of civilization, the abolition of slavery and of serfdom, and especially in the maintenance of the sanctity and indissolubility of Christian marriage against licentious rulers, who, carried away by their passions, presumed to break through every barrier of Christian law. Universities and schools, the arts and the sciences owe their existence and their days of greatest glory to the Sovereign Pontiffs. And even in our day, when men of culture wish to round out their education, they take up their pilgrim's staff and travel to Rome, where they find not only the most magnificent sanctuaries of the Catholic faith, but also the greatest treasures of art and science.

What though in the long line of two hundred and sixty-four Popes, of whom twenty-nine were martyrs and seventy-seven saints—the greatest spectacle in the history of the world—what though an infinitesimally small number of these led disedifying lives, what effect can this circumstance have on the sanctity of the Papacy, or how can it derogate from its benevolent activity? The bitterest enemies of the Catholic Church have never been able, justly or unjustly, to count more than eight out of all the Popes, who by their private lives dishonored their high dignity. Among the twelve Apostles there was one Judas; among bishops and priests there have been many; and countless of the faithful lead wicked or unchristian lives, in spite of their dignity, as children

of God and of their holy faith. Who, because of this, will dare cast a slur on the episcopacy or on the priesthood, or question the sanctity of the Catholic faith? No reasonable man will do so. Show me among the princely and royal families of Europe, or among the opponents and judges of the morals of the Popes, any such proportion of men of blameless life as we find in the dynasty of the Popes. Moreover, there is a fact that vindicates and exalts the Papacy in a most splendid and glorious manner. A very few Popes may indeed as men have led lives that were not edifying, but there never was a bad *Pope*. By this we mean that there never has been one who abjured the faith, taught heresy, overthrew a moral precept, defended injustice, or favored impiety or immorality. The human element in the Pope is weak and sinful, just as in the priest and in the ordinary Christian. To the man in him, therefore, we must impute the sin and the evil deed. The Pope as such we cannot condemn without inflicting grievous injustice on him.

3. But, my dearly beloved, if we wish to understand better the beneficent activity of the Popes in and for the Church, we must not forget the endless struggles through which they had to pass. At first the warfare was with paganism, then with the Eastern and the German emperors, then with the French, Spanish and English kings, and then with the countless princes and rulers, who in their presumption and pride of power constantly menaced and oppressed the Church. How often were not the Popes forced into

prison? How often were they not robbed, sent into exile, and, as fugitives, compelled to wander from place to place, without help, without protection, without refuge! Add to this the countless struggles they had to carry on against ever-recurring heresies at all times and in all quarters, against the treacherous malice of Josephinism, against the trespass on Church property, against the seizure of monasteries, against the acts of violence which godless governments committed upon priests and bishops, or the faith and morals of the Christian people, Christian education, and the sanctity of the Christian marriage. When we consider all this, the mind is seized with astonishment that, in spite of all, the Popes have followed each other in unbroken succession and that in the midst of so many struggles and tribulations, in the midst of the constant changes in the moral and physical order, the Holy See has remained immovable, and the unity of the Catholic faith has been preserved.

This miracle of the omnipotence and promise of God is so stupendous that even an infidel writer calls the history of the Catholic Church a history of miracles. 'Tis the very truth. Nineteen centuries with their burden of portentous events have passed, kingdoms, thrones, emperors and kings, nations and people have gone down to ruin, and Peter alone, the Prince of the Apostles, continues to live in his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, as the center of Catholic unity and as the rock upon which the Church is built. Before our eyes passes the splendid line of Popes, imposing figures, true heroes of the faith, and with

them pass the countless bands of glorious martyrs, the choirs of sainted confessors and virgins, the endless multitude of the Catholic faithful, all the combats and sufferings, all the converted peoples, all the heavenly blessings and benefits—this is the Catholic Church in all her grandeur and sublimity. Wherefore to-day more than at any other time the promise of God and its accomplishment resounds through the world—“Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

The waves of revolutions and the deluge of disloyal politics in league with the godlessness of the secret societies may continue to rage against this rock; the world-moving power of falsehood and calumny may make every effort to overthrow it; but it stands fast and immovable, and the storms will roar around it in vain. The Pope is and remains the visible representative of God on earth, the new Moses of the new law, the high-priest and teacher of the Church, and as she is the mother of all the faithful, so is he also in this kingdom of God the father of all the faithful. In him we honor God the Father who protects him, God the Son whose vicegerent he is, God the Holy Ghost who assists him and directs him in all truth. In him and through him as the supreme teacher of the Church we are one in Catholic faith throughout the world, through him as high-priest we are holy, through him as supreme head of the Church we are Catholic or universal, that is, united with all Catholics in the same communion, and through him

as the successor of the Apostle St. Peter we are Apostolic and are linked to the Apostles. God commands us, "Honor thy father and thy mother." The father of us all is the Pope; the Church is the mother of us all; obedience to them is the condition on which God will grant us grace and mercy on earth and eternal happiness in heaven. Hence let respect and love and obedience toward our Holy Father animate us, so that we may be able to share in the eternal reward which is promised us therefor. Amen.

SERMON XV

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE

“Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”—St. MATTH. XVI, 18.

On July 18, 1870, the Vatican Council, assembled in Rome since the eighth of December, 1869, defined that whenever the Pope, as supreme teacher of the Church, speaks to the universal Church on matters of faith or morals, or condemns erroneous teachings, he is, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, infallible. The Council did not establish a new dogma, as the enemies of the Catholic Church are pleased falsely and foolishly to assert. The Catholic Church has no power to invent new doctrines of faith. If she were to assume such power she would not be the true Church of God on earth, but the kingdom of falsehood. In like manner the promise of God that the Holy Ghost would guide her in all truth and inspire her with everything that Jesus had taught on earth would not be fulfilled. But who, my dearly beloved, would dare make so blasphemous an assertion against God, for we know that God is infinitely faithful and powerful, and can and will fulfill every promise He has made. Nay, the assembly of the bishops merely taught what is clearly and explicitly

contained in Sacred Scripture and in the words of Jesus Christ. They merely confirmed the fact that such was the tradition of the Universal Church and the conviction of all Catholics throughout the ages. Whenever the Pope as supreme teacher spoke to the universal Church, whenever he defined what belonged to the teachings of faith or to the moral law, whenever he condemned error or canonized saintly Christians, that is, placed them among the number of the saints whom the Church honors and invokes as her intercessors, the whole Catholic world submitted to his decrees. The faithful have ever been convinced that the Pope, as vicegerent of Christ and supreme teacher of the Church, assisted by the Holy Ghost, could teach no error nor lead the faithful into false doctrine. The infinite wisdom and power and providence of God for the salvation of souls cannot admit of this, much less His glorious promise—"Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (St. Luke xxii, 32).

I will, therefore, speak to-day of the infallibility of the Pope.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

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The most wonderful mark of the Catholic Church is the mark of unity. Her opponents in their desperation may deny her holiness, they may bring figures to dispute her claim to Catholicity, they may even attempt to deny her apostolicity; there is one thing,

however, they cannot deny, and that is the unity of the Church in her faith, in her worship, and in her sacraments. Her unity shines so wonderfully through the world that, had I no other proof for the truth of the Catholic Church, this one would suffice to convince me. At the Last Supper, our Divine Saviour prays almost exclusively for the unity of His Church as the surest and most forcible proof of her truth. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee—that they may also be one in us—that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (St. John xvii, 21). And, in fact, the Catholic may travel whither he will through the world, and though he be everywhere a stranger, still in a Catholic church he feels he is at home. He finds everywhere the same faith, the same commandments and feasts, the same form of divine services and the same sacraments.

What is the cause of this remarkable fact? Evidently, not the governments, for they antagonize the Church in every conceivable manner. Not the priests and bishops, for they are frequently dependent on the governments; and least of all the faithful. Whence, then, arises this unity that drives her enemies to despair and renders hostile governments powerless against the Church? Where else but from the Pope, who is the supreme teacher of the Church and the infallible sentinel of the faith? If it were possible for the Popes to waver and err in the faith as bishops and priests and numerous of the faithful have done, then indeed would this wonderful unity of the Catholic Church have long since been destroyed by the

frightful persecutions to which she has been subjected and by the countless errors that have arisen against the Catholic faith.

But no! Peter, and in him, his successor, the Pope, is the foundation of the Church. A building may totter and fall, but its foundations do not stir. The Church is destined to last until the end of the world, the gates of hell are never to prevail against her. Such, is the promise of Our Divine Saviour, and therefore, her foundation must be a firm one. But it is only a firm foundation if she cannot err in the faith. Hence, if the Holy Ghost has not endowed the Popes with the gift of infallibility in their decisions concerning faith and morals, it is impossible to explain the promise of Our Divine Saviour that the Pope is the rock on which He has built His Church and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Besides, every Catholic has already learned in the catechism that the Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii, 15). She is under the immediate direction and guidance of the Holy Ghost, whom Christ sent to her in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost to guide her in all truth, so that she can never err in matters that concern her teachings of faith and morals. But she needs a head just as does the family, any association, or any country. This supreme head and center of unity is the Pope. The Church, moreover, is composed of persons, of the faithful, and, therefore, she needs a personal, living foundation. This living foundation is Peter and his successor, the Roman Pontiff. A building, to be per-

fectly solid, must be closely bound to its foundation. Hence the Church, to protect her unity and perpetuity, must be firmly united to Peter and his successor. In this union she is, according to the expression of the Apostle St. Paul, "the pillar and ground of the truth."

2. Peter, and consequently each of his successors, is the visible vicegerent of Christ on earth. As Our Divine Saviour announced to the world the truths of heaven, so must His vicegerent, the Pope, not only have received the power, but also the divine conservation and assistance to announce these heavenly truths in the same manner and to condemn the errors opposed to them. There must, therefore, be no danger of his erring therein. He would indeed be a curious vicegerent who taught and judged differently from his divine Lord and Master.

But Peter and every one of his successors are also the supreme pastors and teachers of all the faithful. They are called upon to lead the flock of Christ in safety, to hold it together in unity, to feed it with the doctrine and the sacraments, and to secure it from the attacks of the enemies of the Catholic faith. Bishops, priests, and people must therefore obey them and listen to their decisions. The reason for this is that the faith of the Church must be one, and therefore there must be one whose decisions in matters of faith and morals are final. This one as supreme pastor and teacher must be incapable of erring, since on earth there is none superior to him as teacher and judge, to whom we might have recourse. Therefore, the Pope is and must be infallible with the assistance

of God, namely, he cannot err in his decisions concerning matters of faith or morals. If such were not the case how could bishops and priests and people be obliged under pain of mortal sin to obey and to submit to the judgments of the Pope? Order and obedience would cease in the Church, and the most frightful confusion would obtain the mastery. The office of supreme pastor would indeed be a strange privilege, if the faithful were not in duty bound to listen to his voice. And yet no obligations could be laid upon the faithful, if the Pope as supreme pastor and teacher were just as fallible as other men are. Therefore, the divine promise and the supreme dignity which Our Divine Saviour conferred upon him demand that the Pope be infallible as teacher of the Church.

3. The infallible ministry of the Pope is therefore a necessary condition for the fulfillment of his apostolic office. It is the true characteristic of the viceroy of Christ and the true consecration of his high dignity. If any believer still harbor doubt, his doubt must vanish at the word of Our Divine Saviour. "But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not—and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." Jesus Christ, eternal Truth and Wisdom itself, gives us the guarantee that neither Peter nor his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, can ever waver or err in the faith, because in the name of Jesus Christ they have the obligation of confirming and preserving their brethren, bishops, priests and people in the faith. The See of Peter, therefore, is destined to be the depository of truth, the strong citadel of faith, the infallible

teaching office of the world, so that one faith may reign in the Church and all errors dash themselves to pieces on this rock.

The infallible ministry of the Pope is a fact that no intelligent man can deny. From the foundation of the Church to the present day, from Peter to Pius X it has been unceasingly exercised—believed and defended. The bishops Ignatius and Polycarp, disciples of the Apostles, spoke of this supreme ministry of the Popes, and declared that all are obliged to submit to it. No period of the Church's long life of nineteen centuries can be pointed out, in which the decisions of the Popes in matters of faith and morals were not a binding law for the whole Church. All differences of faith, all doubts, all errors were reported to Rome by the bishops, were examined at Rome, and pronounced upon. The old maxim "Rome has spoken, the cause is finished," had full value throughout the world. Our modern times are witness to this truth. For when Pius IX declared that the conviction of all Catholics that Mary, the most pure Mother of God, was conceived and born without the stain of original sin, was a revealed truth, the whole Catholic world rejoiced. Not a single Catholic bishop even dreamed of protesting or of asserting that the Pope erred when, as teacher of the Church, he rendered this definition.

We are still in another manner the living witnesses of the infallibility of the Pope. As often as the Pope declares a Catholic, distinguished for the purity and holiness of his life and by miracles, blessed or holy and permits him to be publicly venerated, altars and

churches are erected in his honor and his intercession is implored. Every country, every city is proud to number one of its citizens among that glorious galaxy of saints. But no man would think of asserting that the Pope had erred. God could not permit this. Hence the conviction remains deeply rooted in the hearts of all Catholics that the Pope, as the vicegerent of Christ, as the supreme head of the Church, as the highest teacher of all the people, aided by the Holy Ghost, cannot and must not err. All the centuries have been animated by this truth and by the fulfilment of this divine promise: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

4. The infallibility of the Pope as the supreme teacher of the Church, therefore, puts the crowning story on this wonderful kingdom of truth and of grace. I cannot picture to myself the kingdom of God on earth without the infallibility of its supreme ministry. I cannot imagine the Vicar of Christ, the supreme head of the Church, the representative of God on earth, without combining with his sublime dignity the prerogative of infallibility in his decisions concerning matters of faith and morals. To whom should bishops and priests and faithful turn in doubt, in religious contentions and in ever-recurring heresy? But now when the Pope as supreme teacher speaks to the universal Church, when he solves doubts, when he decides what is revealed truth and what falsehood, the whole Church rests secure. Doubts vanish, because every Catholic knows with certainty what he

must believe, what he must do, what he must avoid in order to please God and save his soul. Calm and majestic the Church rises in her consciousness of the divine promises, above the turbulence of the world and the surging floods of numberless human opinions. Peaceful and secure, like a child resting on the bosom of its mother, the Catholic submits to the judgment and the decision of the Vicar of Christ, and the Catholic faith shines through the world in all its purity and beauty and oneness, which is the sign of its divine truth.

5. Hence, my dearly beloved, rebellion and opposition against the supreme head of the Church, against the Pope, is rebellion and opposition against God and the Saviour Himself, whose Vicar on earth the Pope is. Rebellion and opposition to the decisions of the Pope in matters of faith and morals is the denial of the divine promise that the Holy Ghost would direct the Church in all truth. It is the denial of the Divinity of Christ, for where this faith in Our Divine Saviour is deeply rooted, there is no uncertainty or wavering, no doubt or contradiction possible. Faith tells us that Jesus Christ continues to live in His representatives: "Behold I shall be with you all days until the end of the world." Faith teaches us that the Holy Ghost directs them in all truth and tells them all that Jesus taught. But faith also teaches us that Jesus Christ is the eternal and infinite truth, which can neither deceive nor be deceived; consequently we can never be deceived, we can never be led into error, if we submit to the decisions of the Pope in all matters

of faith and morals and accept them with faith, for the reason that, as God's representative and the teacher of the Church, the Pope is infallible. But we deceive ourselves and we deprive others of the grace of God and of eternal salvation if we refuse to believe and rebel against them.

6. But, my dearly beloved, in order that no one may have erroneous ideas concerning the infallibility of the Pope, or lest he give ear to the foolish talk of others, I must add a few brief explanations. Because the Pope, as supreme teacher of the Church, is infallible in his decisions concerning matters of faith and morals, it does not at all follow that, as man, he cannot sin. The Pope is human and is liable to sin, hence he must go to confession; he has a confessor, like the humblest and the weakest of his children. In this regard the Pope has no greater privileges than bishops and priests. They possess the marvelous power of offering up the holy sacrifice and of administering the sacraments. Who will deny them this power, or who will assert that in consequence of this power bishops and priests cannot sin? The same holds true for the Pope. Even though he possess the gift of infallibility, still he remains but a sinful man, who must fight and struggle as we do.

Neither does it follow that because the Pope is infallible he is also omniscient. If we believe all that God has revealed and that the Church proposes for our belief we cannot indeed err in faith; but in all things human we can make terrible mistakes. So also the Pope. Although he cannot err when, with

the assistance of God, he instructs the Church concerning revealed truth, still in all things human he can err and be deceived, because human affairs do not belong to faith and he has received no mission to teach them to us. His position is analogous to that of a priest. The priest, as man, is and remains subject to temptations and to sin in order that he remain humble; nevertheless, God has bestowed on him a wonderful power, that of offering up the holy sacrifice of the mass as the representative of Christ and, in His name and by His power, of forgiving sins and gaining souls for heaven. We all know from sad experience that there are some unworthy priests who give scandal by their way of living, and yet nobody doubts the power of ordination which they received from God, not for themselves, but for the welfare of the faithful. In like manner the Pope, for his greater humility, remains a sinful man, and still he is the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and the teacher of all the faithful, upon whom God has bestowed the gift of infallibility not for his own personal advantage, but for the welfare of the whole Church, for her unity in faith and for the security of the faithful.

The Council of the Vatican, when it declared that the Pope as supreme teacher of the Church could not err in matters of faith and morals, merely confirmed what the Catholic world had always believed. We, the children of the Church, bow in submission to this decision knowing full well that our eternal safety lies bound up in this article of faith, for in so far as the Pope is unerring in telling us what we must believe

and what we must do and avoid in order to obtain everlasting life, so are we unerring when we submit our minds and wills to his teachings. The Church is the pillar and ground of truth, and what she announces she has received from the Apostles, yea from the very lips of her divine Founder Himself. The jeers and mockeries of impious men can therefore make no impression upon us. They are madmen who dare impeach the purity of the Catholic faith, for they deem themselves wiser than God and His Church. To them may be literally applied the words of St. Paul: "For 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, and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. iv, 3).

There are many who can no longer bear the sound Catholic doctrine, which the glorious providence of God announces for the welfare of His Church, and who turn to the frivolous and rationalistic theories of the day for the truth which they cannot provide. It will remain eternally true that such as these have built on sand, whereas the Catholic stands firm on the rock of truth. It will always remain equally true that he who does not wish to have the Church for his mother, cannot have God for his father. And likewise will it remain forever true that he who does not honor the Vicar of Christ dishonors Christ Himself, and he who will not give credence to the Pope as teacher will also refuse to believe the Saviour of the world Himself. We, however, all wish to be estab-

lished on the rock; we wish to have the Church as our mother, so that God will be our Father in heaven, and we all wish to honor and obey the Vicar of Christ, so that Jesus will be and remain Our Lord and Saviour, and the reward for our faith and our obedience will be that we shall hear Him and see Him forever in the midst of all His saints, whose happiness is the best proof of the words: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." Amen.

SERMON XVI

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE AND THE HOLY EUCCHARIST

“And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”—ST. MATTH. XXVIII, 20.

The two greatest works which Our Divine Saviour performed for the preservation of the unity of faith and of grace, before He shed His blood upon the cross, and ascended into heaven, were the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the selection of the Apostle Peter to be His visible representative on earth.

The truth and splendor of these two works of the almighty hand of God were foretold by the prophets of the Old Law or typified by its symbols. The manna given to the Jews in the desert was, indeed, but a poor and insufficient representation of the Blessed Sacrament; and the Paschal Lamb and the sacrifices offered up in the temple gave but an inadequate idea of the Holy Sacrifice of the mass. However, four hundred years before the coming of Our Divine Saviour the Prophet Malachy foretold it more completely in the following glorious words: “I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hands. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is

sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation" (Malachy i, 10, 11).

This inspired prophecy concerning the most glorious work of the coming Redeemer is being constantly fulfilled before our very eyes. The bloody sacrifices of the Jews and the pagans have disappeared from the face of the earth in a wonderful manner, but everywhere the unbloody sacrifice of the New Law, holy mass, is being offered up as an oblation of praise, of thanksgiving, of atonement and of petition. It binds together the faithful of the entire world into one community, which adores and glorifies God. And everywhere the faithful approach to receive this heavenly manna as food for their souls on their pilgrimage through the desert of earthly life. In this most Blessed Sacrament, they become united to Our Divine Saviour in the closest possible manner, and thus become flesh of His Flesh and blood of His Blood.

That other mighty work, so necessary for the preservation of the Church in the unity of faith, namely, the institution of a supreme teacher, high-priest and guide on the path of salvation, finds an eloquent prototype in the person of Moses. What Moses was in the Old Law, that the Pope now is in the New Law as the visible representative of God on earth. And as the Jews referred all their contentions to Moses, yea even as Our Divine Saviour pointed to Moses as a confirmation of His divine mission, so now the Catholic bishops and the faithful in all questions and doubts concerning matters of faith and morals have recourse to the Pope as to their supreme and infal-

lible teacher, and the entire Church appeals to his decision. As soon as the Pope has spoken as supreme teacher, every question is answered, every doubt is solved, every contention ceases.

I will endeavor to-day to answer the highly important question: in what relationship does the Holy Eucharist stand to the infallibility of the Pope?

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. All those whose blasphemous endeavor it is to rob our Saviour of His divine nature and to make Him appear merely as the wisest of men are deceived and err egregiously. This form of unbelief deprives the human race of its Redeemer and, consequently, of redemption; it robs the soul of hope and happiness; it takes away from the Church the divinity of her institution; it leaves the angels and the saints without their Heavenly King, and strips God of His justice and His mercy. In a word, the man who denies the Redeemer denies everything and fulfills the words of St. John—“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father” (1 John ii, 23). He excludes himself from grace and the kingdom of God.

No less do they deceive themselves and err who deny to the Church her divine institution and the divine character of her mission, and represent her as a purely human institution. They cut themselves off from faith, grace and redemption, and renounce the happiness which the triumphant Church in heaven enjoys with her children, for only “he who believes will be saved.”

The Son of God remains eternally united with His human nature which He received from the Blessed Virgin Mary and which He took with Him when He ascended into heaven. So also Jesus Christ remains inseparably and eternally united with His Church, so that the human and the divine are morally combined in her. It is only in this union that she can be the true kingdom of God for the salvation of men. There is a short but powerful saying of Our Divine Saviour which explains everything in the life and in the nature of the Church; a brief but splendid promise which consoles the Church in all her sufferings and persecutions and fills her children with love and reverence for her. This short saying, this brief promise is the following—"Behold, I am with you all days even unto the consummation of the world."

Jesus Christ is present in His Church until the end of days in a twofold manner and for a twofold purpose. He is personally present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar and present by representation in the Primacy of the Church—the Pope.

2. The life of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is wonderful, marvelously lowly and humble, but of admirable efficiency for the whole Church and for individual souls. In like manner in His visible representative on earth in the Pope in Rome, Jesus Christ is great and powerful in the eyes of the Church and of the world.

His appearance in the form of a child in the crib of Bethlehem,—what was it but a preparation for this holy sacrament, wherein He makes Himself still

smaller and more humble under the appearance of bread? Concealed under these species He offers Himself for our adoration. His hidden life at Nazareth, where He manifested no power of working miracles, no special marks of exceptional wisdom, was a preparation for His still more hidden life in the tabernacle. The promised land where He worked His miracles of love and mercy, is now the universal Catholic Church, where, by means of the Blessed Sacrament, He performs His miracles of grace and mercy in the souls of untold thousands. The cross on Calvary, the glorious altar of His bloody sacrifice for us and our redemption, has not altogether vanished; it continues to stand upon our altars, where Our Divine Saviour perpetuates His sacrifice in an unbloody manner for the continuation of the redemption.

This is why the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the chief of all Catholic devotions, and all the others have the sole purpose of rendering this chief devotion more glorious or of preparing the way for it. There is no feast, no great event, no day of any importance that does not receive its highest consecration and sanctification from the Blessed Sacrament. This mystery satisfies every requirement and every craving of our souls. It gives us the worthiest representation of God, it gives us the Redeemer. It elevates faith, hope and charity to marvelous heights. It binds together all men without distinction of age or sex or condition into one grand communion, which has but one heart and one soul at divine service. The cause thereof is the complete accomplishment of the prom-

ise, "Behold I am with you all days even unto the consummation of the world."

These words, however, find their most glorious and divine accomplishment in the holy and unbloody sacrifice of the altar. Verily, my dearly beloved, Our Divine Saviour here perpetuates His sacrifice upon the cross, and with it continues on earth the effects of the redemption and its grace until the end of the world. Here Jesus Christ is our eternal high-priest, who unites the prayers, the praise, the thanks, the petitions of all His faithful with His sacrifice and offers them at the throne of God. Here Our Divine Saviour unites all the good works of the faithful, their alms, their sufferings, their combats, even their lives and deaths, with His own sacrifice, and thus endows them with the immense value and merit which makes them worthy of grace and salvation. Yea, here it is, that the Saviour unites the praises of the universe with His sacrifice, and raises it to the most wonderful expression of the glorification of God. In fact whatever there is of grace upon earth finds its origin in the Blessed Sacrament. The mercy of God, the forgiveness of sins, the sanctification of souls finds herein its cause. All the holy martyrs, the confessors, the virgins, the loyal faithful, those who suffer patiently, the Christian poor, those who die peacefully in the Lord, they all obtain here their graces, their virtues, their resignation and their eternal salvation.

The whole life of the Church is based on the Blessed Sacrament. We can say with truth that the history of the Church is the history of the Holy Eu-

charist. The Blessed Sacrament is the food of souls and the nourishment of the Church. As the blood is the cause of our physical life, so the Blessed Sacrament is the cause of the spiritual life of the Church. It contains within itself, grace, enlightenment and nourishment. The Blessed Sacrament alone can adequately explain the wonderful life and preservation of the Church and the holy life of Christians. The cause of this is clear and evident. Our Divine Saviour is personally present here and perpetuates the redemption of souls and the government of His Church in accordance with His promise, "Behold, I am with you all days even unto the consummation of the world." Christ is still the high-priest in the Blessed Sacrament, who offers Himself for His own. He is still as ever the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, the Good Shepherd who seeks His own, the physician of souls, the Redeemer of the world, so that without the Blessed Sacrament we cannot even imagine much less explain the continuation of the redemption, the treasure of grace, or the perpetual duration of the Church until the end of time.

3. Again, my dearly beloved, the same divine Redeemer who is personally present under the appearance of bread and wine in the sacrament and in the sacrifice, is likewise vicariously present on earth as teacher of the world in the person of the visible Head of the Church. Just as in the Blessed Sacrament He nourishes the souls of the faithful, so through the Pope, He instructs them unto eternal life. Grace and faith are the means of salvation. For this reason,

Our Divine Saviour transferred His supreme teaching office in the Church especially to St. Peter and his successors, and promised them, in addition to His own assistance, the Holy Ghost, who was to lead them in all truth and tell them everything that Jesus Himself taught while He was here on earth. Hence Our Divine Saviour spoke with such emphasis to St. Peter. "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." Wherewith shall he feed them if not with the truth, with the preaching of the true faith? Our Divine Saviour reserved to Himself the feeding of His faithful with grace, because He alone knows and can know the condition of souls, but to His visible representative He has confided the feeding with the truth. The reason is plain. Preaching, instruction, is coupled with the outward spoken word. But Our Divine Saviour no longer abides visibly on earth as the Teacher of men in order to announce to them the eternal truths. Therefore, He chose the Apostles in His stead, St. Peter and his successor, the Pope, as the center of the unity of faith, and as the supreme teacher and judge in matters of faith and morals.

The Pope, therefore, as supreme teacher, must be infallible in everything that appertains to faith and morals. He must be so because in him and by him Our Divine Saviour ever instructs the world. Just as He nourishes them personally with His grace, so He instructs them with His pure and unadulterated doctrine. In the Blessed Sacrament He nourishes and sanctifies the world by His grace; by His doctrine he teaches and enlightens it through His visible repre-

sentative, the Pope. Thus, we can readily understand the words which the Redeemer spoke to St. Peter—"I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (St. Luke xxii, 32).

In truth, my dearly beloved, by His presence in the Holy Eucharist, Jesus Christ is the invisible head and pastor, the king and high-priest of His kingdom on earth, the holy Catholic Church. But the visible head of the Church is the Pope, the successor of Peter by his visible vicarship. And just as the same grace of redemption, without which eternal life is impossible, continues to flow from the Blessed Sacrament over the whole Church and every single soul, so the same faith, which the Redeemer announced on earth, and which is a necessary condition for salvation, continues to live in the whole Church by means of the supreme teaching office of the Pope. Hence for the welfare and the consolation of the faithful, the Pope cannot err in matters of faith and morals. He is infallible through the divine Redeemer, Who continues to live personally as the Redeemer in the Blessed Sacrament and, by means of the assistance which He grants, continues to live as the teacher of the world, in and by the Pope.

4. Grace and faith are the source of salvation, grace and faith are the cause of hope, of all Christian virtues, of a holy life of merit. They are the consolation of mankind, the remedy against sin, protection in danger, safety in temptation, balm in despair, strength in suffering and peace in death.

Should not these greatest of man's blessings be adequately protected by the providence of God against the attacks of hell and against the malice of impious men? Should not these noblest of gifts, on which depends the weal or woe of countless millions of souls through the centuries, be so confirmed by the power of God and His mercy that nothing may shake them? They are so, my dearly beloved, these greatest blessings of the world are well protected—grace by the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and faith by the infallibility of the supreme teacher of the Church, the Pope.

Therefore, we behold two wonderful manifestations in the Catholic Church. During the first nine or ten centuries of the Church's history, when grace and faith held such marvelous sway, neither the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament nor the infallibility of the Pope was questioned, much less denied. It was only in the tenth century, when heretics began to attack the Blessed Sacrament, that they also assailed the Primacy of the Pope. From this time on all heresies are particularly directed against the Holy Eucharist and the Pope. The more boldly and impiously the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament was denied, the bolder and the ruder also became the attacks and insults directed against the Pope, until finally Luther and his followers completely abolished the Holy Eucharist for their adherents, and with it rejected the Supreme Head of the Church as the visible representative of Christ.

As soon as Protestants begin to profess a belief in

the presence of Christ in the Sacrifice, in the Blessed Sacrament, they no longer find it difficult to yield obedience to the Pope, and after this the date of their return to the Church is not far distant.

But we, my dearly beloved, wish to preserve grace and, therefore, we must preserve the faith. Grace and faith are the true life of our soul, grace and faith are our peace and good conscience, grace and faith are our hope in death and the cause of our eternal happiness. Jesus Christ gives us His grace, especially when we worthily receive Him in Holy communion. His Faith He teaches us by His vicar on earth, the Pope. Therefore, let us believe with our whole heart in the presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and in His assistance, by virtue of which the Supreme Head of the Church cannot err, but teaches the truth to us and all the faithful. May grace sanctify us, faith strengthen us, so that we may attain our final goal and behold Jesus face to face in all His glory, where He is all in all to His own, life, resurrection and eternal happiness. Amen.

SERMON XVII

THE CATHOLIC DUTY OF LOVE, REVERENCE AND OBEDIENCE TO THE POPE AND THE CHURCH

“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land, which the Lord Thy God will give thee.”—
EXOD. XX, 12.

It is God who gave children the fourth commandment—“Honor thy father and thy mother.” The reason of this commandment is very clear. Children receive three benefits from their parents; life, nourishment and education. A threefold duty towards parents corresponds to this threefold benefit, namely, honor, love and obedience. Honor for life, love for sustenance, obedience for education. God has likewise attached His special promises and blessings to the observance of this commandment, and punishment to its transgression. “The father’s blessing establisheth the houses of the children, but the mother’s curse rooteth up the foundation” (Ecclus. iii, 11). Peace, concord, and the happiness of families depend on the observance of this commandment. On the other hand, wherever this commandment is transgressed, there strife, misery and misfortune are rife.

But, my dearly beloved, this commandment has a much wider significance. We owe our parents the

life of the body, corporal sustenance and temporal education. But we owe much more to the Church, that is, our spiritual life, the life of grace, spiritual nourishment furnished by her sacraments and Christian education given us by her faith and her commandments.

If, therefore, we owe our parents honor in return for the life of the body, love in return for its support and obedience for our education, we are certainly far more obliged to honor the Church, because of the life of grace which she has given us, to love her on account of the spiritual nourishment which she provides for us, and to obey her on account of the education we receive from her in the faith and in the commandments. If God has promised such blessings to those who observe the fourth commandment toward their bodily parents, and visits with such punishments its transgression, how much greater blessings does He not promise those who observe this commandment toward the Church and how much greater must be the punishments for its transgression. Our Divine Saviour tells us briefly and concisely—"If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." The reason is clear. Whatever happens in the family remains concealed or is adjusted, but the scandal which a bad Christian gives to the Church is public and draws others also into perdition. In the case of the Church there is question of the commandments of God, of the doctrine of Christ and of the salvation of souls; consequently obedience or disobedience to the Church has far

greater consequences for eternity than obedience or disobedience to our parents.

I will, therefore, speak to-day of the reverence and obedience which we owe the Pope and the Church.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. What the father is to the family, that the Pope is to Holy Church. The father is the representative of God with regard to his children. He labors, provides, struggles and suffers for the welfare of his family. He represents it before the world, he defends its rights, he must be responsible for it and is answerable to God and human society for it. The same is true of the Pope; hence he is called the Holy Father. He is the representative of God, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the visible Head of the Church. He governs her, he labors, struggles and suffers for her, and for the welfare of the faithful, who are his spiritual children. Twenty-nine Popes died as martyrs for the faith; they laid down their lives for the sacred cause of the Church and for the welfare of the faithful. How many Popes were driven from Rome and wandered about hapless fugitives! They bore chains and endured imprisonment, not because of their own personality, but because of the Church and the faithful, because they defended the faith, the rights and liberties of the Church against the encroachments of impious rulers. Witness, at the end of the eighteenth century, the death of Pius VI in prison—a truly saintly sufferer! And there was Pius VII whom Napoleon I dragged from prison to prison

and who suffered and endured all this abuse, not for his own sake, but for the cause of the Church and of the faithful. And in our own day, Pius X, that glory of Christendom, is practically confined a prisoner in the Vatican. Rebellion and deceit and faithlessness robbed his predecessors of their temporal sovereignty and placed them at the mercy of the Italian government. His freedom of action is curtailed, his liberties are trampled under foot, his most sacred personal rights are disregarded, his confinement is as close as though he were within prison walls, and a godless world looks on approvingly, and raises not a hand, nay utters not a word, in his defense. Like a father who suffers and struggles for his family, Pius suffers and struggles not for himself, but for the rights and the liberties of the Church, for us his children, for our faith, for the salvation of our souls. There he stands, the very counterpart of Our Saviour, bearing the cross and crowned with thorns. There he stands, his venerable figure crowned with the thorns of sorrow and of care which a godless world causes him, nailed to the cross of falsehood and calumny, of violence and of suffering, a spectacle wonderful for heaven and earth to behold, a model and a consolation for his children, and an inspiring picture for all those who suffer persecutions for the sake of their faith.

By such thoughts the commandment of God makes itself mightily heard in our hearts: "Honor thy father that thou mayest be longlived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee." The Pope as the representative of God is our Holy Father.

Love and reverence towards him is the essential mark by which we can recognize all true Catholics, priests and bishops and faithful. He unites us all with the Church, as the father binds his children to the family and to society at large. He unites all the peoples of the earth in one language of faith, in one language of hope for eternal salvation, in one language of love for God and for our neighbor. He assembles all the faithful of the world for the reception of the same sacraments, for assistance at the same holy sacrifice, and for the same form of divine worship. He makes us one with the universal Church, one with the saints, one with the faithful of all ages and one with the Apostles. He incorporates us with Jesus Christ, the invisible Head of the Church, and through Jesus Christ with the Blessed Trinity.

Hence once again the commandment of God resounds in our ears—"Honor thy father that thou mayest be longlived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee." Take away reverence for and obedience to our Holy Father and Catholic sentiment dies out, just as a child that has cast respect for and obedience to its father to the winds, loses every sentiment of filial devotion. There is no lively Catholic faith possible where reverence for and obedience to our Holy Father are lacking. But when faith has lost its vitality it will soon die out; it becomes cold and dead, without strength or merit, and above all without efficiency for eternal salvation. Take away reverence for our Holy Father as the Vicar of Christ, and filial and willing obedience to the Church becomes impossible.

The case is similar to that of a son who has lost his sense of reverence for his father and in consequence refuses obedience to the rules of the family. Wherever such a condition of affairs prevails among Catholics, there is imminent danger that they will suffer shipwreck in the faith, for they are disposed to lend a more attentive ear to the ravings of impious men and the lucubrations of an evil-minded press than to the teachings and the authority of the Pope, to whom alone the promise was given that the gates of hell should not prevail against the rock upon which the Church is built. Reverence for and obedience to the Pope are the characteristic mark of every true Catholic, the measure of his loyal attachment to the Church and of the vitality of his faith. This is luminously indicated in the beautiful maxim: "Where Peter is there is the Church, and where the Church is there is no death but life everlasting." This is the land that God promises us and the long life He assures to us if we honor our Holy Father.

The father, however, deserves still greater respect in his old age. Pope Pius X, aside from his advanced years, is the two hundred and sixty-third successor of St. Peter. Nineteen centuries have passed over the Papacy, and it stands unscathed in undiminished power and splendor, truly the rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. Therefore, "honor thy father." His griefs are our griefs, and our sufferings are also his sufferings, just as with the father and his child. His tears and cares for the weal and the woe of the Church oppressed on all

sides, are also our tears and our cares, his joys are also our joys. We will honor our Holy Father especially by showing our obedience to the mandates of the Church, just as dutiful children best honor their father by their obedience, which delights his heart and increases his love for them. Let us show our love and reverence for our Holy Father, Pope Pius X, by praying for him, by our lively faith, by our Christian life, so that God may also honor us in the land by His mercy and His grace—in the land which He has promised us on earth in His holy Church and in the land of eternal happiness in heaven.

2. But, my dearly beloved, God also commands us to honor our mother: "Honor thy mother that thou mayest be longlived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee." We cannot honor the father without honoring the mother. The Catholic Church is the mother of our souls. What care, what love, what devotion does not a Christian mother lavish upon her children! The Church is truly our spiritual mother. She regenerates us in the waters of holy baptism, she instructs us in the faith from the days of our youth, she gives us her holy sacraments, she forgives us our faults and our sins and she nourishes us for eternal life with the Holy Eucharist. She assists us at the hour of our death, she does not desert us even at the grave, and, when our friends and relatives have long since forgotten us, she does not forget us, for the Church prays unceasingly for the repose of the souls of her departed children. To the Church we owe the life of grace, our Christian

sustenance, our education, and happiness hereafter. "Therefore, honor thy mother."

A mother patiently endures many pains and sorrows for the sake of her children. Who can tell all the sorrows, the pains and the persecutions which the Church has borne to preserve intact the heritage of grace and faith for her faithful children! Cast but one glance on the glorious army of holy martyrs, or consider all that the Church has to suffer in the present age. Jesus Christ appeared on earth as the divine Physician sent to heal the infirm human race. Like a Sister of Charity, the Church stands at the sickbed of mankind to administer to it in love and compassion the saving remedies of her faith and her sacraments. She assuages the pain of the soul, she heals its wounds, she consoles the dying and reconciles the sinner with his God. Can a mother strive and suffer more for her children than the Church endures to keep for us our God-given inheritance of grace and of faith? Can a mother show greater devotion and solicitude in warning us against the perils of sin and infidelity? Can a mother suffer greater vexations and ingratitude than the Catholic Church is obliged to bear? Justly does God command "Honor thy mother," and Our Divine Saviour tells us—"If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."

A mother, my dearly beloved, deserves our respect in her venerable old age. The Catholic Church is already nineteen hundred years old. But for all her years she is ever young, ever beautiful, ever true and

full of vitality. What is it that she has not seen during the long term of her existence? Our parents and ancestors, countless races of men, kings and emperors, entire nations and mighty empires have risen, flourished and disappeared. Nineteen centuries have passed over the Church with their burden of events, their weal and their woe; she alone is left and the others have gone down to their grave. Therefore, "honor thy mother," her venerable age worthily inspires your reverence.

But how shall we honor our holy Mother Church? By giving her our obedience. Obedience is the true honor and love that we can show God and our Saviour. If children truly honor and love their parents they manifest it by their obedience. Without obedience it is impossible for us to show God or our parents true honor and love. We best exhibit our love and veneration for holy Church by obeying her slightest behests, and obedience is the mark whereby we can recognize the true Christian. Our Divine Saviour says: "He who loves me will keep my commandments." The most important commandment that Christ has given us is that we obey His Church! "Who hears you, hears me, but if he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." Heathen and publican do not possess the mark of the true Christian. Obedience to the mandates of the Church is the mark of the Catholic.

And indeed, my dearly beloved, the Church commands nothing but what is holy and just, what, in fact, Our Divine Saviour taught and commanded by

word and example. If, therefore, the Catholic Church bids us observe the days of fast, she commands only what Our Divine Saviour showed us by His own example. If she commands us to sanctify the Lord's Day, she exacts only what Our Divine Saviour has already commanded by precept and example. If she insists that we receive the sacraments during Easter time, she bases her action on the commandment of the Lord and on the example of the Apostles. Our Divine Saviour was obedient unto death, and in union with Him we must endeavor to compensate the justice of God for the disobedience of Adam by our own obedience. They are bad children who do not obey their parents, and all those who do not honor the Church by their obedience are bad Catholics.

3. "Honor thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee." And honor thy father, Pope Pius X. He commands us nothing but what is just and holy. He teaches us nothing that the Redeemer has not already taught. He cannot err, cannot proclaim a falsehood, because he is the representative of God, the Vicar of Christ, and the living mouth-piece of the Holy Ghost. Honor thy father, honor thy mother! Their sorrows are our sorrows, their battles are our battles, their tears our tears. They suffer, they strive, they grieve, they are persecuted for our sake, because of our faith and our salvation. When St. Peter lay in chains, the early Christians prayed to God for him, they consoled him, they brought him their gifts—a Catholic's

glorious privilege. We too pray to God for our Holy Father, for Holy Church oppressed with misfortune; we too console them, refresh them with our love, with our offerings, with our sympathy. God accepts our prayers, our love, our offerings; He will give peace to His Church, and to us grace and mercy.

“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be longlived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee.” This land is the Catholic Church on earth with the plenitude of redemption, with her sacraments that are the inexhaustible source of grace, with her heavenly manna for our strengthening on this our earthly pilgrimage and with her glorious consoling faith. God has promised us this land with all its blessings if we, as good children should, truly honor our father and mother, the Pope and the Church. Moreover he has promised us the eternal land of heavenly bliss in company with all His sainted and loyal faithful, if like them, we joyfully, zealously and lovingly fulfill the commandment: “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be longlived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee.” Amen.

SERMON XVIII

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

“Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called. Which some promising, have erred concerning the faith.”—I TIM. VI, 20.

Our Divine Saviour frequently compares His Church to a field and Himself to the sower who went out to sow good seed. He has indeed cultivated this field in the bloody sweat of His brow and sown the seed of His divine doctrine and of His grace. His labors were well repaid by the splendid harvest which He reaped in the faith of the first Christians, and in the holiness of the martyrs, confessors and virgins. But “his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his way” (St. Matth. xiii, 25).

The cockle is not only sin, but also error. This cockle will remain in the field of God, the Church, until the end of time. It is, therefore, the height of injustice to doubt the truth and sanctity of the Catholic Church because, forsooth, a few of her children, and even some of her priests and bishops, have been guilty of heresy or of crime. For the very reason that the Catholic Church is God’s field, the wheat and the tares must grow side by side, until the time of the harvest, the day of general judgment comes. But

in spite of the fact that the cockle and the wheat grow in the same field, the Church retains her truth and holiness. Her doctrines and sacraments sow only wheat; the enemy sows the cockle.

Our Divine Saviour Himself tells us that the cockle is spared until the time of the harvest only because of the wheat. Because of the good Christian, God spares the sinner; because of the true believer, He spares the infidel and the heretic. God waits patiently until they be converted, or until they die, when He will reward them according to their deeds. The wheat is, therefore, the greatest benefactor of the cockle. It is on account of His faithful followers that God tolerates scoffers, sinners, heretics and infidels. The godless should, therefore, thank God on their knees that there are still so many faithful on earth.

However, still another truth makes itself manifest in this parable of the wheat and the tares in the field of God. Just as the sower cannot tolerate the cockle in his field, so the Church cannot tolerate the cockle, namely sin and falsehood.

Her zeal for the truth and for the salvation of souls compels her to be intolerant of error under what guise soever it may appear, but for the sinner and the erring she is merciful and compassionate, and she prays for them. We must never forget that weeds will always be weeds and wheat always wheat. Weeds can never become wheat, unbelief can never be placed on the same footing with faith, sin and crime can never claim equal rights with Christian virtue, and for all of them the day of the harvest will come,

when the cockle will be cast into the fire and the wheat will be gathered into the granary of heaven.

I will endeavor to show you to-day what is really meant by religious intolerance.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. We frequently hear in our day the mass of unthinking men, especially her enemies, accuse the Catholic Church of intolerance against all those who profess a belief different from her own. What do we mean by intolerance? We can have a true and a false conception of its meaning. Our enemies give it the false interpretation; we will try to explain its true meaning.

In its true conception, my dearly beloved, religious intolerance is the solemn avowal that God alone can give mankind the true religion and reveal those heavenly truths which are absolutely necessary for eternal salvation. Every child can understand this. Hence religious intolerance condemns every religion and doctrine that does not come from God, that has its origin in the vagaries of the human mind, and must by that very fact be false and detrimental to the salvation of souls.

In this meaning God Himself must be intolerant, if we may so express ourselves. He cannot tolerate that man change the eternal truths and precepts to suit his fancy, or that he adore strange gods. God in His infinite love and mercy can never reward eternally those men who willfully transgress His divine law, who mutilate His divine truths, or who completely

throw off the allegiance they owe Him. On the contrary His infinite justice demands that He inflict everlasting punishment on them. If God did not do so, He would thereby admit that He is not the only true God, that His commandments are not necessary and that His truths are not required to obtain eternal life. Who will dare utter such blasphemy? Therefore, even on the part of God, there must be a necessary and essential intolerance.

But even man is intolerant, and he cannot be otherwise without surrendering the rights that belong to him by nature or condition. No ruler can allow his subjects to alter or abrogate his laws at pleasure, nor can he permit them to decide for themselves whether they will obey the laws of the land or not. Whither would such a state of affairs lead us? To the ultimate overthrow of every duly constituted authority, and to boundless license. Public order and the security of life and property demand that all those responsible for the enforcement of the law be intolerant, that is, punish all law-breakers and disturbers of the peace.

No father can allow his children to gainsay his commands, ridicule his admonitions, or repudiate their obligations. He must be intolerant in all these matters. No teacher can permit his pupils to maintain the opposite of what he has taught them, or to uphold their personal opinions as the only correct ones. No good could result from such a method, and so the teacher also is obliged to be intolerant. The same condition prevails between master and ap-

prentice, between employer and servant, between superior and inferior. Human society could not exist if all these were not intolerant, for in that case order, peace, obedience and duty would be things of the past. Even the individual must be intolerant once he has recognized where truth and duty lie, that is, he cannot allow falsehood and wrong to be represented to him as truth and right.

2. There is, therefore, an intolerance which is absolutely necessary. This, Holy Writ, as well as human reason, declares. The intolerance of God is made manifest through the whole Bible. Whenever men fell away from God and gave themselves over to a life of unbelief, of idolatry and vice, we see that God sent heavy visitations upon them, not to destroy them, but to save them from a greater evil, eternal damnation. Adam bears eloquent testimony to this fact, for he was driven out of Paradise because of his fall into sin. The deluge which swept away the ancient race of men is another powerful proof. The history of the Jewish people is an unbroken record of visitations and chastisements for their desertion of God and their relapse into idolatry. Reward and punishment are in turn meted out to this people, which God wished to keep for Himself until the coming of the Redeemer, according as they were true or false to their God.

Nothing better shows how God hates and punishes sin, falsehood, and unbelief, than the cross of Christ on Calvary. The cross on which Our Divine Saviour bled for the impiety of man is the strongest protest

which God raises before the world against religious indifference and infidelity. The cross tells us that God abhors every religion which He has not revealed to man, and that the infinite justice of God will punish all those who refuse to accept the grace and the doctrine of the divine Redeemer, or who falsify them according to the caprices and the desires of their hearts. God is obliged to hate and punish sin and religious error, because He is infinite holiness and eternal truth. If God were indifferent to them He would thereby deny His own essence and being. If it be true that it is a matter of little consequence whether we possess the true faith and the true religion or not, why then did God not spare His only begotten Son, but give Him up to the ignominious death of the cross?

Again, who can doubt the infinite love, and mercy of Jesus toward all men, but especially sinners and the erring? And yet how intolerant Our Divine Saviour was of every deliberate error and contradiction in matters of revealed truth. How often and emphatically He pronounced judgment against all those who will not believe. "He who does not believe is already judged." "If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."

St. John, the disciple of love, writes: "Whosoever revolteth and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. . . . If any man come to you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you" (II St.

John i; 9). But he also gives the reason for this. "He that believeth not the Son, maketh him a liar, because he believeth not in the testimony which God hath testified of His Son" (1 St. John v, 10).

3. And in fact, my dearly beloved, what other purpose did the Saviour have in view when He came into the world, than that of raising the human race out of the pit of infidelity and idolatry into which it had fallen, by means of the truths which He brought from heaven, and leading it back to God and salvation? If it were a matter of such complete indifference to what religion or religious error we give allegiance, is it not true that the Incarnation of Christ and His public ministry would be entirely superfluous? But who will dare to make so blasphemous an assertion? Since without Jesus there can be no truth, no eternal life, it follows that Our Divine Saviour was obliged to condemn openly every teaching that did not proceed from Him and, was for that very reason dangerous to the salvation of souls. To-day, as always, He must be intolerant of every false religion that can only lead to perdition. For this alone "is eternal life," says Our Divine Saviour, "that they know Thee the only true God and Him thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." To be indifferent to religious error and to be tolerant of every false doctrine is equivalent to a denial of the veracity of God and of His revelation.

The Church then, cannot permit false teachings to arise; she must be intolerant. Just as God hates and punishes falsehood, so must the Church combat and

condemn heresy, because she is the kingdom of truth. If she did not do so, or was lax in the accomplishment of this plain duty, she could no longer be the kingdom of God and of redemption on earth. She would be untrue to her vocation and fail to attain the purpose for which she was instituted, that is, to be the teacher of the human race, and she would thus accomplish her own annihilation. Indeed, if she also were indifferent, if she also asserted the equality of truth and falsehood, of revelation and heresy, if she also maintained that it mattered little whether one were Catholic or Protestant, Turk or Jew, she would be the first to deny the necessity of Redemption and of the true faith and likewise of the true Church. Can anyone imagine for a moment that the Church could ever subscribe to a doctrine so monstrous and at the same time so suicidal to herself? She is, therefore, obliged by the very nature of things, and in justice to the Redeemer and to herself, to be intolerant of error.

4. There are two further reasons why God Himself, Our Lord and Saviour, and, consequently, the Church must necessarily exercise this true intolerance, namely, the salvation of souls and the removal of temporal disturbance and evils. As a matter of fact, what would become of mankind if proud or unbelieving individuals might with impunity transform the religion of Christ, curtail His doctrines or abolish His commandments? The Church cannot tolerate so reprehensible a course without betraying the sacred trust reposed in her by Jesus Christ. Grace and eternal

life depend on the integrity of the faith, and therefore she could not tolerate any tampering with it without committing the most frightful treason against humanity and the salvation of souls. What would become of the unity of Catholic faith, of the sacraments, of divine worship, whither would Christianity have drifted if the Church had not constantly combated and condemned heresy? Hundreds of heresiarchs have sprung up in the course of nineteen centuries. Each one attacked a different dogma of the Church, each one asserted that his position was the correct one, each one arrogated to himself the right to teach the Church, the pillar and the ground of truth. Is, then, the Church to yield and be tolerant of heresy and thus betray Jesus Christ and the souls she was instituted to save? Any child can see that such a thing is radically impossible. The Church is obliged to be intolerant of error.

Teachers of heresy, at the expense of their fellowmen, seek only to satisfy their pride, ambition, and passions, and to sow divisions, discord and hatred. I do not speak here of those who have been led into error, of those who without any fault of theirs have been born and reared in heresy. They are deserving of our compassion, our love and our prayers. But I speak of those who knowingly and deliberately disseminate false doctrines. Such as these know perfectly well where they obtain the seed that they sow in the field of the Church. They know well that the doctrine which they try to spread by craft and violence is naught else than but the fabric of their own

brain. They know that they are in conflict with the faith of the Catholic Church. They know that they are assailing Our Divine Saviour in His commandment and in His person—in His command to hear the Church, and in His person that has promised to abide forever in His Church.

Do you think, my dearly beloved, that it is proper for the Church to say nothing about these presumptuous practices of the teachers of error? Should she quietly abandon the Catholic faithful to temptation and thereby expose them to the danger of eternal perdition? Who will expect the Church to be so recreant to her duty? In such a case she would cease to be the true Church of Christ, she would no longer be the mother of the faithful, she would degrade herself to the level of her betrayers. In good sooth, the Church can never do this! Hence, as a warning to her children, she must exclude all heretical and godless men from her pale, she must condemn heresy. A father must exclude from the bosom of his family every person, every book that threatens to corrupt the morals of those who are entrusted to his care; the teacher must eradicate every evil influence from the midst of his pupils; a prince, a ruler must banish from among his people every element of disorder. This must be done lest misfortune and ruin overtake the family, the school, or the nation. So must the Church drive out heretics from among her children. She owes it to the Saviour, she owes it to herself, and, most of all, she owes it to the faithful, so that on the one hand they may recognize the false

doctrine and, on the other, they may not lose their souls.

5. There is a still more cogent reason why the Church should excommunicate heretics. The experience of centuries teaches us that heretics have always and everywhere been the cause of terrible discord, of revolt, of persecutions against Catholics and of bloody wars. It has been thus from the time of Arius in the third century down to the days of Luther, who sowed the seeds of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, with all its attendant horror and ruin. No country where heresy has gained a foothold has ever remained at peace; it has either been rent asunder or has gone completely to ruin. Poland, Germany, France, Austria are sad examples of this. Protestant countries in our day furnish an apt illustration of the bitterness with which the Church is hated and of how little justice and fair play a Catholic may expect when his religious convictions come into conflict with the prejudices of his fellow citizens.

Is then, my dearly beloved, the Catholic Church, that has lived through nineteen centuries with all their happenings and knows the heart of man only too well, is she to look quietly on while heresies arise, and extend to them the tolerant hand of welcome? She cannot and must not do so, because of the salvation, the tranquillity, the welfare of the nations. She must be as uncompromising towards error as the father is towards the seducers of his children, or the ruler towards the rebels who incite his people to revolution.

Let the enemies of the Catholic Church accuse her of intolerance as much as they please. This uncompromising attitude of the Church toward the seducers of her children shows a large measure of wisdom, justice and mercy. She thus proves her right to the title of true kingdom of Jesus Christ, for her divine Founder can tolerate no revolt against His teaching and His commandments. The Church cannot give up the most precious heritage of Jesus Christ for the sake of a few proud or vicious men. Love as well as truth, obliges her to proclaim to all that the Catholic faith is the only true faith, and that he who lays a sacrilegious hand upon it attacks eternal truth itself, and that for him there is no hope of salvation unless he do penance and return to the faith. She is the Church of the martyrs, the Church of the holy Fathers, of the confessors and virgins and of all the saints. She has never to the present day hesitated to suffer and to shed her blood for the sake of her faith. She cannot, therefore, hesitate to defend the faith against the teachers of error, and declare them the enemies of her children, yea, even of the human race, and cast them out of her midst.

And we who are anxious to obtain everlasting life must be intolerant of ourselves, of our sins and shortcomings, we must cast them off, weep over them and flee from them. The deposit of faith has been kept intact in the Church until the present day because she has never entered into compromise with error. We too can maintain ourselves in grace, and in the faith by waging a relentless war against sin and

falsehood, and thus we shall live to see the happy day when God Himself will forever separate the cockle from the wheat, and in recompense for our sturdy resistance against error and sin, will receive us into the realms of everlasting bliss. Amen.

SERMON XIX

TRUE AND FALSE TOLERATION

“With modesty admonishing them that resist the truth; if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth.”
—II TIM. II, 25.

We have considered how our Divine Saviour compared His Church to a field in which the enemy sowed cockle among the wheat. This cockle represents, in the kingdom of grace and of truth, not only sin, but especially religious error, unbelief and impiety. Cockle remains cockle, and error or unbelief remains error and unbelief, no matter by what specious names they may be called in order to deceive the unsuspecting. Reformation, enlightenment, and liberalism are splendid names with which to play upon the fancies of the ignorant masses. The father cannot permit his children to be seduced by a fraudulent system of education; the State must not allow its citizens to become infatuated with pernicious principles, and to be instigated and incited to rebellion, any more than it can tolerate the circulation of counterfeit money, because negligence in this matter would be destructive of commerce and industry.¹⁷ The Catholic must not dally with sin and error, lest they seize upon him and imperil the salvation of his soul. In like manner the Church of God must not suffer

her faith and the revelation entrusted to her care to be disfigured and distorted by religious error and by impious principles. *and why?*

She must not and cannot tolerate it on God's account, for He is eternal Truth and Wisdom, and, therefore, hates and punishes the lies and false doctrines of men. She cannot and must not tolerate it on Jesus Christ's account, because He came upon earth to teach mankind the eternal truths of God. Her very existence and her most sacred obligations forbid her to tolerate it, for she has been called by God to keep intact in all their purity and truth the teachings of Christ until the end of time. And for this she has been promised the assistance of the Holy Ghost. The best interests and the eternal welfare of her children depend on the purity of their faith, and, therefore, she cannot hold aught of friendly intercourse with error and falsehood, but, like the mother that she is, must ever be ready to protect and to warn her household against the danger of false principles. Peace and unity demand that her loins be ever girt for battle against the hosts of heresy and schism, for they have ever been the cause of disunion, and of untold misery and devastation.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, the Church is bound to be intolerant of error, because she has been divinely commissioned to secure the eternal salvation of her children. And in this she has a higher duty to perform than falls to the father, to the teacher, to the State or even the individual, who are all bound to be intolerant of error and corruption if they would

serve the welfare and best interests of those who are subject to them and would insure their own continued existence in peace and prosperity. This intolerance is a most sacred duty, for it is the only safeguard against the greatest evil that the world contains, that is, unbelief. It is the true and adequate expression of love and care for the temporal and spiritual welfare of mankind.

Nevertheless there is a true toleration which does not apply to sin, error and seducers, but is exercised in favor of the sinner, the erring and the seduced. Jesus taught and practised this true toleration, and, in imitation of Him, the Church teaches and practises it also.

But there is likewise a false toleration. Seducers and unbelievers teach it for their own ends and to the detriment of the unsuspecting. It is my purpose, therefore, to give you presently the necessary instruction concerning true and false toleration.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. What are we to understand by *true toleration* and what by *false toleration*? I believe the matter is already fairly clear to you. True toleration detests impiety and error under whatever guise they may appear, because they cause endless trouble and corruption, and are a deflection from eternal truth. True toleration has a horror of false doctrine, but is compassionate with persons, with those who err, and have been seduced. False tolerance, however, demands toleration not only for the erring, the sinner

and the unbeliever, but for the false doctrine, the heresy, or schism or vice as well. True tolerance takes its origin from God, and has for its purpose the conversion of the sinner and the unbeliever, whereas false tolerance has Satan for its author, and its aim is to spread the realm of falsehood, unbelief and sin. Its sole object and purpose is the damnation of souls. True tolerance instructs and saves the erring; false tolerance confirms men in their error and makes them more corrupt. True tolerance is compassionate with the erring, loves them and prays for them; whereas false tolerance hates all those who endeavor to bring back the erring to the paths of truth and salvation.

Jesus Christ, indeed, practised the most splendid, the most tender toleration toward sinners, toward the erring and even toward His enemies. It is for the sinner and the unbeliever that He came upon earth, for them He bled upon the cross, and dying, He prayed for His enemies. And yet, who hated sin more, as the greatest offense against God and the surest ruin of souls, than Jesus Christ Himself? Our Divine Saviour pronounced upon sin the punishment of death and eternal perdition, and many a time and oft menaced religious error and unbelief with judgment and damnation. "He who does not believe is already judged." During the days that the Saviour of souls passed upon earth He practised the most wonderful toleration, and He still exercises it to-day toward the erring and the sinner. But, withal, He is most intolerant of sin and falsehood, and con-

sequently most intolerant of those who knowingly and deliberately live in sin and error, for they knowingly and deliberately worship falsehood, and so are knowingly and deliberately the enemies of God and of the true faith.

The example of Our Divine Saviour shows us what true tolerance is. True tolerance is merciful and compassionate toward all those persons for whose conversion there is still hope. False tolerance favors vice and falsehood and religious unbelief. Can the Church, therefore, imitating the example of her Divine Founder, and as the true mother of the souls of men, exercise any other toleration than the one which the Saviour Himself still practises? She abhors and condemns, indeed, every form of vice and error and unbelief, but, like the mother she is, she makes every effort to convert sinners and the erring. You are perfectly aware of the missions which the Church maintains for the salvation of souls. To-day, as in the early days of Christianity, priests go as missionaries into the remotest regions to gain souls to Christ. To-day, as ever, the Church suffers persecution because of her endeavors to convert pagans and heretics, and her priests and countless of her children gladly shed their blood and lay down their lives for the salvation of souls. In Catholic countries Jews and Protestants live in peace and security, in greater peace and security, indeed, than Catholics can enjoy among Jews and Protestants. Who dare accuse the Catholic Church of intolerance? For such a one in truth is a liar and calumniator.

2. And yet all the enemies of the Catholic Church, be they Protestants or infidels, have constantly accused her of intolerance. We might indeed tell a different story if the Church were silent to sin and error and corruption, if she made common cause with the Jew and the sects, if she joined the wild chorus of enlightenment and liberty of conscience, if she closed her eyes to the dechristianization of our youth and our people, if she likewise declared that one religion is as good and as true as another, and that it matters little what you may be, Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Turk or pagan. Then indeed a loud pæan of joy would resound in praise of the liberality and the toleration of the Catholic Church, like the wild cry of rejoicing that is raised by the enemies of the Catholic Church when a bad priest becomes a renegade to his faith.

The Church cannot practise such toleration. She cannot do it without betraying the sublime trust reposed in her by the Saviour when He established her and gave her the mission of preaching His doctrine pure and undefiled under the guidance of the Holy Ghost until the consummation of the ages. She cannot do it without becoming a traitress to her mission of saving souls, since the grace of God and eternal life depend on the true faith. She cannot do it without committing suicide, because she would, thereby, deny the necessity of her own existence as the only true Church of God, and in an incredibly short space of time she would be split up into a countless number of sects. The Catholic Church, loving and merciful

as the Saviour for the erring and the sinner, must be as intolerant as He with sin and error; false tolerance she leaves to her enemies, who in this are like the Pharisees. They loved sin and unbelief, but hated the Saviour.

The Church's maxim, that "outside of the Church there is no salvation" is brought forward as a proof of her intolerance, for, it is asserted, she thereby excludes from the hope of salvation all those who do not belong to her communion. I must first remind you, my dearly beloved, of what I told you in a former sermon about the only saving Church. I then showed you that whoever is saved, is saved only through Jesus Christ and His Church, whether he belongs to the body of the Church or not; "One Lord, one faith, one baptism"; consequently only one true Church. If anybody, therefore, abides in error, and consequently outside of the Catholic Church, without his fault and knowledge, he will be saved by sacramental baptism or by baptism of desire, provided he has committed no mortal sins, or, being guilty of such, has duly repented of them. For this reason all the enemies of the Church, all heretics, all pagans should thank God upon their knees that there is a chance for them to be saved, and that through the Catholic Church to whom alone baptism belongs. Where, then, is the horrible intolerance in the saying that "outside of the Church there is no salvation?" On the contrary these very words give proof of the greatest toleration.

In fact the Catholic Church, in obedience to the mandates of Jesus Christ, not only loves her enemies

and all unbelievers, but she even endures cheerfully the severest persecutions for the welfare of their souls. Because of this maxim that outside of the true Church of God there is no salvation she obliges us Catholics to love all those who do not belong to the Catholic Church, and to pray for their conversion. She forbids us to condemn those who are not of her household and to deny to them the possibility of their souls being saved. She teaches us in the Apostles' Creed that Jesus Christ alone is the Judge of the living and the dead, and that, consequently, the eternal lot of all men is in His hands.

How can the Catholic Church condemn any man, for, like her divine Redeemer, she goes about the world seeking for souls to save and preaching the gospel? The sentence of condemnation she leaves to God, the all-just Judge.

She teaches but one thing, and the world knows and feels that it is true, that deliberate unbelief and heresy, deliberate opposition to the truth, lead as inevitably to eternal damnation as mortal sin for which no penance has been done, or atonement made. It is not she who has pronounced sentence of condemnation on mortal sin, on infidelity and heresy, but God and the Saviour Himself—"He who does not believe is already judged; and if he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." The Catholic Church only proclaims the sentence which the Saviour Himself has passed. Do we call an earthly judge cruel and intolerant because he pronounces sentence in accordance with the law on rioters,

thieves and murderers? Is that father cruel and intolerant who warns his children against sin and its consequences, or punishes them for their misconduct? The Church is not intolerant when she points out the consequences of sin and unbelief, for it is no fault of hers that sin and unbelief exist; these evils must be ascribed to conscienceless renegades.

3. This truth will become entirely clear and evident to us and will appear in a still more beautiful light, when we consider that the countless adherents of the Protestant sects and all the Greek and Russian schismatics who without their will and knowledge live separated from the Catholic Church and have been nurtured in error from the days of their youth and, therefore, have never had an opportunity of learning the truth of the Catholic faith, nay, are even blinded by prejudice in consequence of the instructions they have received so that they hate the Catholic Church, belong nevertheless, by the baptism conferred upon them, to the Church and are united with her in spirit. The Catholic Church displays such wonderful zeal and love because these erring children of hers are in imminent danger of losing their immortal souls. They are lacking in all that wealth of means which the Catholic faith provides for the attainment of eternal salvation. The vast majority have no sacrament of penance whereby to obtain absolution for their grievous sins; they lack the nourishment which the Blessed Sacrament gives to souls; they have no Extreme Unction, no Holy Orders; they sadly miss the

beauty and devotion of Catholic worship which elevates the faithful and reminds them of God and heaven. Therefore, the Catholic Church with her children prays daily for the conversion of sinners and heretics. This is the true toleration which only the Catholic Church as the kingdom of God, exercises, and which she alone can exercise. It is that sort of toleration which drew the Saviour to earth in order to seek for souls, to suffer for them and to redeem them. It is that sublime toleration which regards sin and unbelief as the origin of all evil with holy anger, but which with holy love and patience bears with the sinner and the erring and receives those who are converted with great rejoicing. This is true toleration which only the Catholic Church practises.

4. But there is also a false tolerance, that modern spirit of liberalism, or rather of indifference, which acknowledges no distinction between faith and unbelief, between truth and error, between what is god-fearing and what is godless;—all these are of equal value and importance to it. It is that spirit of toleration which raises the Jew and the pagan, the discords of the Protestant sects and the abominations of Islam to a level with the Catholic Church. It is this sort of toleration which declares it to be a matter of no consequence whether a man be a pagan, Turk, Jew, sectarian, or Catholic; they are all alike. It is that liberalism which tolerates the ridiculing of man's most sacred interests, which connives at blasphemy and impiety, aye, and nurtures and encourages them, which

makes man treat God and His religion with indifference and contempt, and utterly demoralizes and dechristianizes the human race.

This false liberalism hates only the Catholic Church and consequently furthers the interests of everything that is hostile and unjust to the Church. It is the pernicious seed from which springs so much injury to souls. It destroys loyalty to faith, makes Christian life and piety impossible, encourages vice, infidelity and every dishonest thing. It extends a joyous welcome to the impious and apostate and overwhelms the Catholic with scorn and ridicule; it loves what is evil and hates what is good. And what a deluge of spiritual and temporal misery it has poured out over the nations whom it has seduced and dechristianized! Falsehood and deceit, vice and iniquity, harshness and hatred even to the scourge of murder and suicide have all sprung from this source. False toleration betrays God, the Church and mankind. It denies the eternal truths of God, or places them on an equality with the vagaries of man. It denies the truth and divine institution of the Church and degrades the mother of the souls of men to the lowest level of the countless unchristian sects. With its pernicious principles it seduces untold thousands and causes them to lose, with their faith, their immortal souls.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, beware of this cockle which the enemy has sowed broadcast through the world. Call the cockle by the most beautiful of names; it remains cockle still; it can cause naught but mischief and devastation. But the true Catholic

faith is of heaven's sowing, for it delights heart and mind and bears delicious fruit. The Catholic faith is the heavenly seed that teaches all to have mercy and compassion for the fallen. The Catholic Church announces the only true faith and, therefore, she alone, in imitation of her Saviour's example, exercises true love and toleration for all without distinction of person. She is patient and kind with the sinner and the erring and prays for all. Her love and patience should likewise animate us with love and patience for the fallen and teach us to pray for their conversion. We can thus perform a work pleasing to God, and can confidently hope that He will also be gracious and merciful to us on the day of judgment, and will take us into His heavenly kingdom, where the true faith will be glorified in the blessed vision of God, and love will unite us with God and Jesus forever. Amen.

SERMON XX

THE GLORY AND HAPPINESS OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

“Be of good heart, thy faith hath made thee whole.”—ST. MATTH. IX, 22.

When Our Divine Saviour beheld the strong faith of the centurion at Capharnaum, He exclaimed: “Amen I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel.” And the poor woman who said within herself: “If I shall touch only the hem of His garment, I shall be healed,” He restored to health, saying: “Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.” There is something lofty, something sublime about faith. It is a light that illumines every soul receiving it; it is a remedy that cures all who use it; it is the only medicament that can raise the dead to life, that can give peace and strength and consolation in all the vicissitudes of life.

When the Israelites were journeying through the desert, a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night showed them the way to the promised land. The Archangel Raphael assisted the young Tobias and protected him on his journey. The angels showed the shepherds the place where they might find the divine Child in the manger, and the Star of Bethlehem led the three wise men of the East unerringly to the spot

where they might find the new-born King of the Jews. And thus by the infinite mercy of God, Catholic faith goes before us in the desert of life, like a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. It is our protecting angel on our journey into eternity. It points out to us the true way to God, and, like a brilliant star leads us to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and at last to everlasting bliss.

Faith gives us wonderful acuteness of vision. It is the blessing of heaven, the high gift of God, the divine virtue which comes from the realms of Heaven into the human soul and dispenses light and truth to those who erstwhile wandered in darkness and in the shadow of death without the knowledge of God or of the things of God. I will therefore speak to-day of the glory and happiness of the Catholic faith.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. Our Divine Saviour speaks of a seed, which, if it is received into a good and willing heart, will bear fruit a hundredfold both for time and eternity. Catholic faith is this heavenly seed which God plants in the hearts of men. The vivifying rays of the sun of grace joined with our own coöperation will make it ripen to heavenly fruit.

Oh, how truly blessed is the gift of faith! How great and noble a grace of our merciful God, by which He calls us to a knowledge of Himself. True faith is in very deed a blessing come down to us from Heaven. It gives us Jesus as teacher, pastor, high-priest and Saviour. Through Him we participate in

His grace and in His happiness. Faith is that heavenly power which has drawn countless numbers from the altars of false gods and led them to the knowledge of the one true God and of Him whom He hath sent, Jesus Christ. It is that heavenly power which transformed Saul the persecutor of the Christians into Paul the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Faith is that heavenly power which made of the fiercest enemies of the Christian name the most devoted of the Church's children, which changed torturers and executioners into the most patient of martyrs. This divine power of faith called an Augustine from a life of sin and error to become one of the greatest saints and doctors of Christ's Church. In his prayers of thanksgiving for the great grace which he received, he says: "Thou hast called me, oh Lord! Thy word, 'Let there be light,' resounded forcibly in the ear of my heart, and light was made. The dense veil of mist vanished, and the darkness faded away before the eyes of my spirit. I now saw light and recognized Thy voice and said: 'Truly Lord! Thou art my God, who hath led me out of the darkness and the shadow of death. Thou hast called me to Thy wonderful light, and behold, I see! To Thee, my enlightener, I give a thousand thanks!'" Oh, who can describe the greatness of this gift of faith! Who can recount the miracles it has performed, the mysteries that it embraces, the consolations that it bestows, the virtues, the noble deeds that it has inspired, the glorious souls that it has formed

on earth and that it has led to the beatific vision of God in heaven!

God has also called us, my dearly beloved, by baptism to the true faith in the Catholic Church. By the all-merciful bounty of God and the merits of our Divine Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, baptism confers on us the right to inherit as children of God the possessions of our heavenly Father, eternal truth and everlasting happiness. But with this right of inheritance God also has bestowed on us the grace and supernatural strength necessary to acquire these possessions here on earth by faith, hope, and charity. St. Augustine magnificently portrays the happiness and the blessings of faith when he says: "There is no greater wealth, no greater treasure, no greater honor, and no greater possession in the world, than the Catholic faith. It saves the sinner, enlightens the blind, strengthens the weak, justifies the faithful, converts the wicked, increases the number of the just, crowns the martyrs, and preserves the virgins, the widows and the married in the modesty and chastity becoming to their state; it consecrates the priests, and puts us with the angels in possession of our eternal inheritance" (St. Augustine, *term, de Verbo Nom.*). Eusebius likewise says beautifully: "Faith is the light of the soul, the gate of life, the foundation of our eternal salvation. Christ our Lord has hung up faith like a bright lamp, that shows us the way through the labyrinth of life, teaches us to know the unknown God, and once we have recognized Him, to believe in

Him and to find Him" (Euseb. Emiss. hom. de Symb.).

This is the surpassing gift that comes to us from above, as the Apostle assures us: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God" (Ephes. ii, 8). It is the seed which the divine gardener implants in the soul by baptism and nurtures under the care of the Holy Ghost, so that it may bring forth on earth worthy fruit for eternity.

2. Faith is a light given to our intelligence. In Paradise, Satan tempted Adam and Eve by telling them they "would be like to God" (Gen. iii, 5), knowing good and evil, and endowed with all knowledge. These words find their true and wonderful accomplishment in faith. Faith makes us participate in the knowledge of God. Faith makes us penetrate into the plans of God's providence, mercy and justice. We possess the science of the angels, we have sure information of life in heaven, of time and eternity. As the astronomer needs the telescope for his researches among the stars, as the sunlight is indispensable to the eye, so is faith indispensable to our reason. It is the telescope through which we can view our soul and heaven, yea, the very throne of God. It discloses to us all the mysteries of creation, of redemption and sanctification. It shows us the providence and the justice of God in His conduct toward nations and individuals. It shows us the cause of our joys and our sorrows, and gives us the best explanation of

ourselves, of our vocation, and of our last end. In a word, faith enlightens our intelligence.

What is man without faith? A blind man without sight, a dark room without light, a man without speech, an ignoramus without knowledge of any kind. His mind is cold and blank. He knows neither God nor the Redeemer, neither time nor eternity, not even his true self. A man without faith lives on from day to day like the veriest beast of the field. The unbeliever is the most terrible and the most unhappy of men. And why? Faith is not only the light of the intellect but also the supreme consolation of the heart.

No matter how many pleasures this life may offer us, they are outweighed a thousandfold by the countless miseries that greet man at his birth and accompany him to his death. No condition, no age, no sex can escape this inexorable law. Even the king seated on his throne in all his glory and majesty cannot banish worry and sorrow. On the contrary, they increase with the increase of his power and its attendant obligations. Who can count the tears that are shed here below? Who has numbered the cares and the anguish that burden the heart of man? Who can enumerate the sorrows and miseries and misfortunes in their myriad forms, poverty with its terrors, sickness with its pains, injustice with its oppressions, and all the anxieties of life and property?

But behold, in the midst of suffering humanity there appears a dove of peace, a heavenly consoler in

the form of holy faith. It points to sin as the cause of all evil, it makes known to us the Saviour, Divine Providence, and, especially, a better life in the world to come, where God will dry our tears, and where there will be neither sorrow nor care. Faith makes us see in this earthly life a short time of probation, the way of the cross that leads to eternal salvation. Faith has a healing balm for every pain and adds a drop of heavenly comfort to our chalice of suffering.

Who can describe the peace and comfort which ✓ faith alone can offer to the stricken soul, to the sinner who is tormented by remorse of conscience? It is then that faith brings to us the knowledge of the Saviour, of the infinite mercy of God, of the words, divine in their grandeur and their beauty: "Be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace."

But it is especially when man is lying on his death-bed, and the supreme moment is come when he must ✓ leave everything, and the world deserts him, that faith appears at his side as a saving angel and whispers sweet words into the soul of the dying Christian. And when the angel of death is about to summon us before the dread judgment-seat of God, faith, and her sister hope, are the only anchor that will save us from the black waters of despair. Faith and hope are our last consolation and the only means powerful enough to soothe the terrors of death, yea, to sweeten our last moments and make our departure from this life a joyous one.

But faith is also the most constant and the surest guide of the will and of the understanding. It points

out to us the right way that leads to God, warns us against the by-paths of sin, reveals to us the unending reward that will crown a Christian life, and the everlasting punishment that will be meted out to vice and wickedness. Faith protects us against intellectual follies, against error, falsehood and superstition. It places before us God and the Saviour in all Their majestic grandeur, and shows us the Catholic Church in all the beauty of her sacraments and her doctrines. It reveals to us the secrets of heaven and gives the soul a foretaste of the sublime happiness that awaits it in eternity. We can thus readily see why faith is the greatest blessing that man has received on earth, the greatest joy, the sweetest consolation, the safest guide that has been vouchsafed him. This explains also the words of St. Paul: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Yea, in very truth, without faith it is impossible for man here below to be good, steadfast and just or to obtain consolation and strength.

3. And if all this, my dearly beloved, will not suffice to convince you of the sublimity of this gracious gift of Catholic faith which has so freely been bestowed on you, or of its heavenly value, and its power to console and soothe behold the Catholic Church! Nineteen centuries have passed by and still she stands, forever young, forever old, in all the pristine splendor of her beauty and vitality. Nineteen hundred years have hurried by, one persecution has followed another in rapid succession, each more bloody, more malignant than the other, and all have been shattered to pieces on this rock, which stands as ever, solid and impreg-

nable. Nineteen hundred years have vanished down the vista of time, and heresy after heresy has assailed this pillar of the truth. They have all fallen into irretrievable decay, and the Catholic Church alone has preserved the same faith, the same sacraments, the self-same sacrifice from one end of the world to the other, and she unites the nations and all the world into one great family. Consider the beautiful flowers of virtue which the Catholic faith alone can produce—virginity, modesty, mercy, obedience, love of enemies, and all the others. Pass in review the magnificent institutions of charity, the world-renowned cathedrals and churches which the Catholic Church alone possesses, because her faith alone could build them.

Should this not suffice, then turn your eyes upon the glorious band of the Apostles, our progenitors in the faith, upon the hosts of heroic martyrs who laid down earthly wealth and life itself in defense of their holy faith, upon the serried phalanx of sturdy confessors, who in imitation of our Divine Saviour propagated the Catholic faith by word and example. Let your heart rejoice at the sight of the lovely choirs of consecrated virgins, those lilies and roses in the garden of God. Let your eye exult in the multitudes of founders of religious orders and of all the saints, and remember that they have been produced by the Catholic Church alone, and that they have become what they are by the same faith and the same sacraments that we possess. Verily they are the glory of Christ, the admiration of the angels, the splendor of the Catholic Church and the honor of the human race.

And now pass in review the countless generations of Christians who were forced here below to struggle against privation, hardship and poverty, against sorrow and anxiety, and who found in the Catholic Church alone and in her faith consolation and strength, patience and endurance. Sad and dreary as was their life, so sweet and consoling was their death. They rejoice now in heaven because God hath wiped away their tears. Moreover, there is balm incomparable for the aching heart in the thought of the innumerable great sinners, and criminals, who have repented sincerely, and whose conversion brought them a happiness so great that for no joy or pleasure the world could offer would they exchange the calm and peace of heart God's pardon gave them.

Come with me to God's acre, where mounds and monuments indicate the last earthly resting-places of our beloved departed. Does not a mysterious awe fill your soul and bring sensibly to your notice the great consolation in the Catholic faith? Soft whisperings seem to come from the silent graves; they are the voices of the dead who have fallen asleep in the Lord. These whispers—your soul hears though they be not expressed in words—these whispers tell you: "Blessed are they who die in the Lord; blessed are they who believe and have not seen."

And thus be it with us, my dearly beloved! May our holy faith show us Jesus in all his goodness and mercy as our Lord and Saviour, and His holy Church in all her truth and beauty. May it be for us in joy as well as in sorrow, the light of our intellect, the

consolation of our hearts, the guide of our will. All this will it be for us until the end of our lives, if we often pray the Holy Ghost to strengthen us in the faith, if we foster our faith by frequent reception of the sacraments, if we confirm it by a Christian life, if we give no ear to the blasphemies of godless men or infidel writings. Then the sweet words of Christ will find in us their accomplishment: "Be of good heart, thy faith has saved thee." In life and in death we can repeat with truth, with heartfelt joy and with perfect confidence: "Lord, I believe in Thee! Lord, I hope in Thee! Lord, I love Thee with my whole heart!" Amen.

SERMON XXI

UNBELIEF IN WORD AND DEED

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.”
—I ST. JOHN II, 23.

Our Lord and Saviour once said to His Apostles: “I am the way, the truth and the life; whosoever believeth in me will be saved.” Many are the ways that men pursue here on earth, many the avocations they follow, hoping to attain happiness; but there is only one way that leads to salvation, to the one true everlasting happiness, to God, and Christ has shown us this way. Man has discovered many dogmas, many sciences, many truths, but there is only one truth that shows him the power and goodness of God and his own destiny, and Christ has brought him this truth. The life of man is varied. The life that children lead is different from that of their parents. The rich man lives differently from the poor man, the prince from his subjects, the farmer from the denizen of cities. But only one life is pleasing to God and leads to eternal life, and Christ has opened the way to this life.

You wish to lead a holy life: “I am the way”; you wish to believe: “I am the truth”; you wish to be saved: “I am the life.” You wish to be without sin: My law points out the way for you. You wish to be without error: My truth makes you free. You

wish not to die: My example is your life. You wish to go to the Father, you yearn for unending bliss: "I am the way, the truth and the life." Whosoever, therefore, travels another road than the one pointed out by Christ, believes another truth than the truth revealed by Christ, and leads another life than the life indicated by His commandments, is following the wrong path, is in error, is without true life, and will not come to the Father. To choose another way, another truth, another life than the one Christ has revealed to us, is equivalent to denying Christ Himself. Some do this principally by rejecting His truth in thought and word, others show by their deeds that they condemn His way. None of these can attain unto true life. It is my purpose, therefore, to speak to you to-day of unbelief in word and deed, and of the misery it entails.

May the all-merciful God inspire my words that you, at least, who are assembled here, may be strengthened in faith and encouraged to persevere in the practice of Christian life. We have indeed fallen upon evil days, for the eternal Son of the living GOD who sacrificed Himself that all men might know the truth and be saved, is being constantly blasphemed by word and deed in the most dreadful manner.

1. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." These words of St. John, the Apostle of Love, reveal to us the full extent of the misfortune that befalls all those, who either wholly deny Christ, or partially reject the truths which He has revealed.

How many there are in our days who no longer believe in the Incarnate Son of God, our Divine Saviour, and yet fancy that they know God and possess Him? They deceive themselves with the appearance of religion, with a phantom of piety and of the fear of the Lord. In reality they are without God, impious. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."

The words of eternal truth tell us that those who deny Christ cherish an empty dream in imagining that they know God, and a vain hope in the thought that they honor God. They are but pitiable dupes, who allow themselves to be deprived of their faith in the divine Redeemer by the writings and teachings of infidels! They have lost God and have become pagans, because apostasy from Christ is apostasy from God and from eternal life: "Now this is eternal life; that they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, who Thou hast sent" (St. John xvii, 3).

Unless we acknowledge the divinity of Jesus Christ, it is impossible to know God and to attain eternal life. We, therefore, can readily perceive how necessary it is for us to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of the eternal God, one in nature and essence with the Father. Our belief in God depends upon it, as does eternal life. How great an evil unbelief must therefore be! The infidel lives in the world without God, without hope of salvation, deprived of all the means of grace, whose foundation is Jesus Christ. The unbeliever may imagine that he is enlightened, but he wanders in darkness, because he has turned away from

the true light, from Him Who could say: "I am the light of the world." He flatters himself that he is in possession of truth, but he is fallen a prey to falsehood, because he denies Jesus Christ Who has said: "I am the truth." His prospects of possessing God are deceptive, for "No man cometh to the Father but by me." His ways are false, because he does not follow the Saviour who has said: "I am the way." His soul is dead, because it is an enemy to Him Who is "The way, the truth and the life." My dearly beloved, without Jesus Christ there is no faith in God, and "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." He is truly impious—without God.

And how can it well be otherwise? There is but one true God, and this only true God is the Holy Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. How, then, can presumptuous man have the Father when he denies the Son? He knows nothing of the first divine person of the Blessed Trinity, Who, from all eternity, is the Father of the only-begotten Son. Such a one knows no more about God than those enlightened pagans who by the power of their intellects raised themselves to a belief in a Supreme Being, but had not reached the true and perfect knowledge of God. The infidel, however, is less excusable than the pagan, because seeing he does not see, and hearing he does not hear, and he deliberately closes his eyes to the effulgent radiance of divine revelation. How can one who denies the only-begotten Son of God, our Divine Redeemer, have as Father, the God who says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;

hear ye him." Can he have the Holy Ghost as the sanctifier of his soul, when Christ has promised to send Him only to those who believe in Him and love Him? The infidel therefore destroys the belief in the Blessed Trinity by his denial of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The evil of unbelief, however, extends farther still. With infidelity is usually combined hatred against Jesus Christ. The Satanic hatred of Jesus Christ in our day has its origin in infidelity. It is then from that source that many of the much lauded and much read authors draw their inspiration for the bitter invectives with which their books, their speeches, their verses teem against Christianity, against the Catholic Church, her priesthood, her adherents, her doctrines and her practices. They hate God Himself—as our Divine Saviour says: "He that hateth me, hateth my Father also" (St. John xv, 23). The denial of the eternal Son implies and expresses the denial of God and His Church. Here is matter for most serious meditation for all those so-called scholars who have grown presumptuous because of some slight smattering of knowledge; for all men of so-called enlightenment, who get all their information from writings filled with hatred and contempt for Christianity. These poor enlightened minds abide in impenetrable gloom! These poor men of learning find themselves without a way, without truth and without life. What can such a life be, and whither will it finally lead? Holy Writ asks them in a tone of horror: "Where is thy God?" The infidel has no God, not in his heart,

nor in his mind, nor in heaven, nor on earth. "Where is thy God?"

2. Moreover, my dearly beloved, there are innumerable others, who, if they do not go to the extent of denying the divinity of Christ, reject one or other of His doctrines. One cannot reconcile faith in that most consoling and wonderful of sacraments, the Holy Eucharist, with his reason; another finds fault with the Sacrament of Penance; another cannot reconcile the resurrection of the body with existing phenomena; still another finds the doctrine of purgatory repugnant, whilst his neighbor cannot understand how a merciful God can condemn a soul to everlasting hell, and so on indefinitely. What! Are all these things in contradiction with reason? Does not St. Paul exclaim: "O the depths of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor?" (Rom. xi, 33, 34). And here comes poor weak man and refuses to believe what his limited intelligence cannot understand! Is eternal truth to be denied the possession of mysteries, or Divine Omnipotence restrained from creating them, when so many earthly things are inexplicable to us? Again St. Paul says: "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix, 20). Who art thou that thou shouldst teach God what is agreeable to thy reason and what is not! He who rejects any of the truths which Christ has announced to us, denies Christ Himself, and "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."

The Apostle St. James further tells us: "And whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all" (James ii, 10); because the whole law is based on the love of God, and, if anyone transgresses a single point, he thereby sins against the love of God. In like manner, if anyone denies a single truth he thereby denies the whole truth, because Christ is the truth: "I am the truth." If Christ could possibly err in any one truth, He could likewise err in all the others. He would in that case not be the truth. Hence St. John exclaims: "He that believeth not the Son, maketh him a liar" (1 St. John v, 10). There can be no haggling over even the least of His doctrines, for he who rejects the least of them, denies Christ Himself, denies that in Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii, 3), denies that He is "the light of the world which the darkness did not comprehend," and that He came into the world "to enlighten every man" (St. John i, 9).

3. But the unbeliever will object: I do not deny the truth of what Jesus taught, I merely assert that many things which the Catholic Church proposes for my belief were never taught by Christ. To this St. John very aptly answers: "He that believeth not the Son, maketh him a liar" (1 St. John v, 10). Did not the Son of God say: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations;—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world?" (St. Matt. xxviii, 20). Is it conceivable that Christ

would promise His assistance to a Church which was to preach, not His truth, but error and falsehood? Or is His omnipotence so limited that He cannot fulfill His promise: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her"? But the gates of hell would long since have prevailed against His Church if she had fallen into error and falsehood, for Satan is the father of lies and error. Wherefore our Divine Saviour says: "Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass" (St. Matt. xxiv, 35). His words, however, would have long since passed amid the turmoil of man's views and opinions, if His Church, the pillar and ground of the truth, had not preserved them intact. She has preserved them: "for I will give you another Paraclete, the spirit of truth, who will bring all things to your mind whatsoever I have taught you, and he shall abide with you" (St. John xiv, 16-26).

It is futile for a man to say: "I believe what Christ has taught, but not what His Church teaches," for he does not believe in the promises of Christ and thus makes Him a liar. "O man, who art thou, that repliest to God?" Who art thou, indeed, that thou shouldst endeavor to deny, now the truth of Christ's doctrine, now the truth of His promises, now the omnipotence of His assistance, and now the wisdom of the providence with which He rules His Church so that through her instrumentality all men may know God and be saved? His work as God-man and Redeemer would indeed be inexplicable, if, after having assumed the form of a servant and suffered the death of the cross in order to reconcile man with God and

lead him to a knowledge of the truth and to eternal life, He should allow His Church to fall a prey to falsehood, notwithstanding that she had triumphed over paganism amidst persecution and tortures of every kind. God would indeed furnish us with a curious specimen of His government and His providence if, after having been so unsparing of His only-begotten Son as to give Him up for the redemption of all men until the end of time, He were to allow these self-same men to be led into error, ignorance, and godlessness by the very Church which the Son of God had founded! Such is not the way of *our* God! Hence the Scriptures repeatedly ask the unbeliever: "Where is thy God?" The God of whom he has so unworthy a conception, cannot be the all-wise, the omnipresent God; he cannot be the omnipotent Father whose loving providence preserves His children from error and falsehood, rescues them from the slavery of the devil and the yoke of sin, and guides them safely through the dangers of this fleeting life within the hallowed precincts of the Church which He has sanctified and purified, as once He led Noah and his sons in the ark through the floods of the deluge, as once He led Israel dry-shod through the waves of the Red Sea and through the perils of the desert. Where is thy God? For "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."

4. If there are at the present day, my dearly beloved, many who under one pretext or another, reject one or even several of the truths which the Saviour has taught us, there are still more who deny Jesus

Christ by their lives and their conduct. The words, "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father," also apply to them. Did not Christ say to His Apostles: "Whosoever loveth me, the same will also keep my word"? In confirmation of this the Father gave a solemn testimonial from Heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye Him" (St. Matt. xvii, 5).

But what are the words we should hear, and the commandments that we should observe, in order to prove that we really know the Son of God? The Son of God Himself gives us the answer when He says to the young man who asked Him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?" "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (St. Matt. xix, 16, 17). And yet how do many Christians hear His words and keep his commandments? They lightly transgress one commandment after another, they gaily heap sin upon sin, as though there were no truth in His promise of eternal retribution, and He would never carry out His threats. For this reason St. Paul says: "They profess that they know God; but in their works they deny him" (Tit. i, 16).

Unbelievers, in word and deed, practically say: "We know who Thou art, Jesus Christ! We know what Thou hast taught, promised and threatened; we know that all thy teachings shed abroad unmerited grace, indescribable love and mercy; we know thy ardent desire, thy constant yearning to make us happy—we know all this—but sin, the satisfaction of our

passions is more to us than all." "They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny Him."

And in truth, who is that Crucified One, Whom men condemn and Whom His Heavenly Father has forsaken, Who suffers, bleeds and dies between two malefactors? Is it not Jesus, our Lord and our God? How dreadful a state He is in! That mouth, from which flowed only words of love and mercy, is parched and pants for a cooling draught—and gall and vinegar are offered Him. His hands, His feet, which He used only to do good to others, are pierced by cruel nails; His body trembles and quivers in the agony of death, and His soul cries from the abyss of His desolation: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" And yet regardless of His complete self-surrender, the unbelievers in word and in deed offer Him no thanks; careless of His sufferings, "they crucify again to themselves the Son of God, and make Him a mockery" (Hebr. vi, 6). In other words: "They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny Him."

5. My dearly beloved: St. John, the Apostle writes to the faithful: "Whosoever confesses the Son, the same hath also the Father." And verily, how great a Son! The Son of God! Can we ask for more? He is our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Pastor, our Teacher, our All! Human lips cannot utter all that the Son of God has become for us. His love and desire to make us happy on earth and blessed in Heaven is incomprehensible. Who can portray the meekness and the mercy with which He

receives all into His grace, who, sorrowing confess their sins and confidently throw themselves into His arms. And since the Son is so prodigal of favors, how bountiful must not the Heavenly Father be! Did He not love us to such an extent that He spared not His Only-Begotten Son, but sacrificed Him for our sakes! How incalculably great are the results of this His goodness on earth and in heaven! Peace, joy, and justice are given to all this on earth who obey and love Him. His sweet providence watches over us, and He has bidden His angels to protect and direct us. Sufferings and tribulations may visit us, but as a loving Father He turns all things to good for those who love Him.

Temptation may assail us and do its utmost to make us sin, but Christ is there to give our soul food, strength and courage, and no soul under His protection will be lost. And if perchance we have sinned, Christ is our physician and will heal us. From the cradle to the grave He sustains us with His grace and His aid. He strives, He suffers and He rejoices with us, and wherever we are He is with us. And finally in eternity He dries every tear, calms every anxiety, allows us to enter into His glory, and what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into man's heart, He prepares for those who love Him.

Therefore do not listen to those who would rob you of your faith or would corrupt your morals. What compensation do they offer you? What happiness do they give you here on earth, and what bliss in the eternal beyond? We read in the Book of Wisdom

what the unbelievers have to say (v, 4). "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 has not shined unto us; and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us!" Holy Scripture adds that this is the language of the sinners in hell. Yea, verily unbelief in word and deed is folly, but there is wisdom and blessing and happiness in child-like faith and Christian life. May both of these animate and gladden us, so that faith may console us, our deeds fill us with hope, and both crown us with blessed joy in heaven throughout eternity. Amen.

SERMON XXII

NOMINAL-CATHOLICS ARE THE MOST PERNICIOUS ENEMIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

“They profess that they know God; but in their works they deny him.”—TIM. I, 16.

One of the noblest and most sacred obligations of the Catholic is the duty of openly professing and defending his faith. “Everyone therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father that is in Heaven. But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in Heaven” (St. Matt. x, 32, 33). Grace and eternal life, therefore, depend upon the open profession of faith. And as great as is the misfortune and misery of unbelief, so great and serious are the consequences when we fail to defend our holy faith openly, or go so far as to deny it by our bearing or by mockery.

Our Divine Saviour, my dearly beloved, Himself confessed God and the truth of His teachings. This He did before the great council of the Jews, before Pilate and Herod, and before all the world on the cross. The Apostles gave fearless testimony to our Divine Saviour before the pagan tribunals, and gladly suffered the torments of a cruel death for their faith. Behold the sublime spectacle of the martyrs. — Men

and women, some in the flower of life, others in the decrepitude of old age and still others in the innocence of childhood, joyously bore every torture, and accepted death itself when there was question of confessing and defending their faith. The cross was the standard of the Christians. Their blood sanctified the world, the courage of their faith converted the heathen.

All ages afford the opportunity of steadfastly professing the faith. It is always a sublime and a holy duty to defend one's faith. This is especially the case in our day, when our holy faith is being traduced in books and periodicals, in the open street and in public places. We Catholics are the natural champions of God, bound to take His part against the impious; we are the soldiers of Christ Jesus, obliged to combat for His honor and for His glory. We are the faithful who are obliged to confess emphatically and to preserve intact the truth of the Catholic Church against the assaults of a mocking world, just as our forefathers, the Apostles and the martyrs defended it against the Jews and the pagans. This is our vocation, our duty, our honor, it is even the condition of our salvation. I have not the slightest doubt that all those who are listening to me are imbued and animated with a sense of this duty, and sincerely endeavor to fulfill it in word and in deed as far as lies in their power.

It is my purpose now to speak to you of pseudo- or nominal-Catholics, who do not fulfill their sacred obligations, but shirk them, to the great detriment

of their holy faith and of their eternal happiness, placing themselves on the same footing with the unbelievers: "They say they know God, but by their works they deny Him."

Oh Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

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I. Who are the nominal-Catholics, and what is their purpose? Nominal-Catholics are those who have a certificate of baptism at home in some secure place but not in their hearts. They do not seem to be Catholics either in Church or in their homes on Sundays or at Easter, in regard for the commandments of God or those of His Church. But whenever an assault or attack is planned against the Catholic Church, religious institutions, priests, the doctrines of faith, or Church festivals, they suddenly remember their certificate of baptism, not that it influences them to defend the Church or to profess the faith, nor to sanctify Sunday or to receive the sacraments or to observe the commandments—but to join the mob. On such occasions they boast of the fact that they are also Catholics, and even maintain that they are good Catholics, and thus, like the wolf, they hide themselves in sheep's clothing in order to deceive true, faithful Catholics, and lead them astray.

These so-called-Catholics are the plague of the Catholic Church and her most pernicious enemies, more harmful than infidels and pagans. They are the seducers of the faithful and more dangerous than heretics or infidels. You can find them everywhere

and in every walk of life; in the country and in the city, in the army and the navy, among public officials and teachers, in the workshop, in the family, in city councils and legislatures, in books and periodicals, in the saloon and in all public places.

There are two kinds of nominal-Catholics. To the first kind belong those who have laid aside everything that is Catholic in belief and life, in sentiment and mode of thought. Such persons have become completely estranged from the Catholic Church. They no longer recognize the obligation of submitting to the decisions of the Church as the supreme Teacher in all matters of faith. They know no reverence toward the Pope as the Supreme Head of the Church and Vice-gerent of Jesus Christ. They know no obedience to the commandments of the Church, they revile or jeer at the dogmas of faith, at the sacraments, at confession, at the feasts of the Church, the observance of the Lord's day, at priests and bishops, and even at the Pope. In a word, they sit in judgment on everything that bears the name Catholic and scoff at everything that does not suit their narrow minds or their passions. To them we owe a terrible state of affairs which only they could bring about. This is their diabolical hostility, their hatred and bitterness against the Catholic Church. These pseudo-Catholics easily surpass Jews, Protestants and pagans in hatred, insults and lies, and persecution against the Church. Whenever a storm of bigotry breaks loose against the Church and her institutions, her children, her priests and the Pope, you

will find bad Catholics leading the vanguard of the assailants.

The heart of Our Divine Saviour was deeply wounded in His bitter Passion, but it was not the Jews nor the pagans who made Him suffer most—it was Judas the Apostle, Judas, the traitor. If sorrow or trouble break the heart of father or mother, it is not servants or neighbors who have caused it, but their children. When Cæsar, the great Roman General, was attacked and wounded by conspirators, he yielded only when he beheld his adopted son, Brutus, among the murderers, and fell with the mournful cry on his lips: “And thou too, Brutus!”

And in like manner the Catholic Church is overwhelmed with pain and sorrow when she is forced to see that her fiercest enemies and greatest maligners are neither Jews nor pagans nor Protestants, but her own undutiful children. It is the bad Catholics, who under the mask of friendship and in sheep’s clothing of their Catholic sentiments, imprint the traitor’s kiss upon the Church and betray her into the hands of her enemies.

Oh, what a sight for the heavens to behold, when the Church, the mother of our souls, who, in pain, regenerates us in the life of grace, instructs us in the faith, nourishes us with the sacraments, assists us in death, and reconciles us with God, is abused most by her misguided children! Oh what a sight it must be for the Divine Redeemer to behold His spotless Bride crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross of sorrow and misery by the nominal-Catholics!

Oh, what a sight for the Eternal Father to see in so-called-Catholics the greatest traitors and persecutors of His kingdom of grace on earth!

Oh, just God! Now I understand the terrible saying of Holy Writ: "The curse of the mother overturneth the houses of the children." And though the Church curses not her misguided children, but rather mercifully prays for them, yet does the curse of their unnatural deeds rest upon the children, and an all-just God will requite in time and eternity.

Consider the awful end of the traitor Judas! Jews and pagans have turned to God, a Judas went down to perdition. Contemplate the terrible death of all those who have hated and persecuted the Church! The avenging justice of God places as a warning example before our eyes the dreadful end of many bad Catholics. Consider the lives and the morals of those nominal-Catholics, prominent as well as obscure, who have made it their execrable purpose to divide the Catholic faith and to lay hands on the Church in word and in writing, by example and deed. Who can recount the ravages that such God-forsaken ex-Catholics have caused in families, among the youth of the land, in schools, among domestics and artisans, in fact among all classes of society. Morality and fidelity, honesty and property, religion, obedience and every Christian virtue—they destroy all by word and example. The countless embezzlers and criminals are the offspring of these wolves in sheep's clothing who, under pretence of enlightening and educating mankind, rob the world of faith in the immortality

of the soul and in the just judgments of God. The ever-increasing number of suicides, in whose livid features can be read the mischief unbelief has wrought, fills the soul with horror at the fruits these nominal-Catholics and their hostility to the Church have produced. Can a man, who has corrupted others by word and example, or who has despoiled them of their faith, still hope to obtain mercy? Hardly! For it is said: "Woe to the man through whom scandal cometh, it were better for him had he never been born." Soul for soul—such will be the dreadful sentence passed upon the murderer of souls—upon those who seduce others.

2. The second class of nominal-Catholics do not, indeed, appear so wicked outwardly as the former. Nevertheless for them, too, the word of the Divine Saviour was spoken: "He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father, who is in heaven." They are those pseudo-Catholics who neither hate the Church, nor deride her dogmas, nor openly contradict her. But, weak-kneed and cowardly, they dare not profess their faith when occasion demands, and thus, by their example exercise a baneful influence upon others and do incalculable harm to Catholic life. They have no sympathy for the sufferings of the Church; they show no interest in the propagation of the Catholic faith; they manifest no concern about the personality of the Holy Father and the conditions that surround him. The injustices and insults heaped upon the Church leave them impassive, the dechristianization of our youth

and the desecration of the Lord's day arouse no righteous indignation in their breasts. With their own money they support a godless press that daily pours out torrents of abuse and calumny against the Church and her institutions, that vilifies what must ever be most sacred to the heart of man. They throw away with disgust every Catholic periodical; in Church they try to impress others with their piety, and in the evening they applaud with gusto the most lascivious and degrading spectacles that the stage can present.

They are eternally tortured with the fear that the world at large will consider them good and loyal Catholics. Hence they will carefully absent themselves from everything that would indicate Catholic activity, and refuse to join acknowledged Catholic societies. At the elections they will give their votes to men who are notorious for their bigotry against the Church, for their dishonesty in public life, for the indecency and immorality of their private lives, and all because, forsooth, they might lose their reputation of being broad-minded, intelligent Catholics. On account of this fear, this vanity, and the influence they enjoy, these so-called-Catholics constitute a more pernicious and insidious danger to the Church in the circles in which they move than even the declared enemies of Catholicity. For by their cowardice they prevent the accomplishment of much good, and by their fears they give evil a new impetus. Their conduct cannot fail to encourage the enemies of the Church and diminish the number of loyal

Catholics or at least discourage them. Not only the soldiers who desert to the enemy are traitors, but also those who from craven fear hide themselves, and by their cowardly conduct infect the others with discouragement. Storms are less injurious to the tree than the multitude of insects that devour its leaves, its blossoms and its fruits.

3. The Catholic must belong wholly to his Saviour and to the Church, because Jesus is wholly ours and His Church was and ever will be wholly our own. The sight of almost universal unbelief is discouraging and depressing to be sure, but should we therefore swim with the stream, only to drown in it with the countless multitude? Or should we howl with the wolves in sheep's clothing because such is the fashion, and go with them to perdition? No, forever, no! Let us remember the glorious destiny to which we have been called. Let us not forget that we are the champions of God, the confessors of Jesus Christ. "You will give testimony of me," Our Divine Saviour once said, but you will not have to do so without receiving for it a recompense exceeding great. The reward is great, the hardship insignificant. Our forefathers in the faith, the martyrs, were crowned with glory because they fearlessly defended the faith, and so must we defend the interests of the Church and of our holy faith with equal fortitude and courage in word and deed. Let none dare blaspheme or scoff in our presence without receiving a well-merited rebuke. The consciousness of having defended a just cause inspires us with peace and consolation. He

who sincerely lives for Jesus, who is thankful to Him for His bitter Passion and Death, who honors the Church and humbly believes her teachings will never find it difficult to profess his faith openly, to silence scoffers, or openly to manifest his disapproval of ribald speech.

Such Christians gladden the heart of the Saviour, and in return He will gladden them in life with His grace and His mercy, with His consolation at the hour of death and with His eternal bliss in heaven. And it is my earnest hope that you will receive this grace in life, these consolations in death, and finally eternal bliss with the martyrs and the confessors of the faith in heaven. Amen.

SERMON XXIII

MODERN FABRICATORS OF RELIGIOUS CREEDS

“They will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables.”—II TIM. IV, 4.

The gospel words comparing the Church to a field in which the wheat and the cockle grow together, teach us an important truth, namely, that wheat will remain wheat, and cockle will remain cockle, no matter what unbelievers may do to put the wheat of the true doctrine of Christ on the same footing with the cockle of error, or how they may strive to give falsehood the halo of truth and enlightenment. The parable of the wheat and the cockle teaches us also the duty of being intolerant of sin and of error, but merciful and compassionate with the sinner and the erring.

And this parable calls to our attention another great error. The ideas concerning the necessity of revealed religion are so confused in our day that I feel myself obliged to place before you this error in its right light. This error becomes the more apparent when we consider that the true Church, the field of God, the kingdom of heaven on earth, safeguards unto the end of time, for the consolation and the salvation of man, the wheat of grace and of celestial truth which the Saviour Himself has planted. It is for this pur-

pose and in consequence of God's omnipotence and promises that the Church is infallible in her teachings of faith and of morals. So, in the midst of the turmoil and confusion of human opinions and judgment, amid all the wretchedness and unreasonableness of doubt, of religious scoffing and infidelity, we behold, for the period of two thousand years, the magnificent spectacle of Catholic faith in its unity and harmony exercising its God-given power of quieting the unrest of the soul, reconciling turbulent spirits, satisfying the higher cravings of man, uniting the peoples of the earth, and solving every doubt, every problem of time and eternity. Just as Almighty God in His loving providence uses the visible creation to provide for the temporal welfare of His creatures, so in His mercy and love He uses His Church to guide the lives of men to their supernatural welfare, to make them know the truth and bring them to eternal salvation. And, just as the sun, unswerving in its course, sheds light and warmth, beauty and fullness of life over the earth, so does the Catholic Church in the unity and heavenly power of Catholic faith pour forth supernatural light and warmth, beauty and fullness of life into the hearts of men.

We should account them fools who endeavored to prescribe for the sun a different kind of light and of warmth, or who tried to dispense with this light, this warmth and life—they would only destroy themselves. But they are greater fools who deprive themselves of the supernatural light, warmth, beauty and grace of Catholic faith and make for themselves their own re-

ligion, formulate their own petty creeds. This is done by the modern fabricators of religious creeds and by all those who give ear to them. St. Paul says of them: "For 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, and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables" (II Tim. iv, 3, 4).

I spoke the last time of nominal-Catholics; to-day I wish to speak of the manufacturers of religious creeds. Of these there are a multitude in our days. Every apprentice aspires to be a manufacturer. Why should not there be manufacturers of religions? Is it not a business entirely in keeping with liberalism and so-called enlightenment? Let us therefore consider this business a little more closely. Then each of you can decide for himself whether he is willing to lose his soul by entering upon it.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

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1. We often hear these and similar speeches: "I want to be free in all matters of religion. I harmonize my religion with my convictions. God sees into the heart, therefore I do not need any outward signs like the sacraments, fasting, sermons, divine service. Besides, it is enough if a man be honest. Man may therefore make his own religion." God has nothing to say in the matter! He must be satisfied with what man offers Him! Formerly it was said that God made man according to His own image and like-

ness, but now man makes God according to his own fancy, in other words, he makes his own God. But if religion is the relation of man to God, it is indeed strange that man should wish to determine this relation and its conditions and that God should have to wait and see what each one is pleased to do with Him. Under such circumstances we would have as many religions as there are heads, and one more absurd than the other. We would then have as many creeds and ways of adoring God as there are men, and one would be more confused and contradictory than the other. Why did man become so degraded that he adored trees, and animals, and stones as his gods, and even offered to them in bloody sacrifice other men, and even his own children? Why did he sink into the nameless horrors of barbarity and viciousness, into the abysses of ignorance and superstition? Why else, if not because he tried to make his own religion, to determine for himself his relation to God and so depart from God? Where were thou, O maker of religion, before God created thee? Where wert thou when God did not spare His only-begotten Son, but sent Him upon earth to teach men, to give them His commandments, and to show them the way wherein they should walk in order they were again to reach God, obtain reconciliation and eternal salvation? Where wert thou then? And now that God has created thee and endowed thee with an immortal soul so that thou too mayst be able to return to God and find again thy lost salvation through Jesus Christ, His Son, and our Redeemer, through His doctrine

and commandments, through His Church and His sacraments, now thou dost dictate to God in what way it will please thee to serve Him, to obtain grace and redemption and salvation! Thou imaginest that God, in whose hand lies thy entrance into the world, and thy exit from it, thy life and death, thy whole eternity—thou imaginest that God must feel Himself highly honored and overjoyed because of thy gracious condescension to serve Him according to thy caprice. In truth, this is no longer religion, but the morbid phantasm of a presumptuous man who has already fallen away from God! Tell me, were not the eternal truths on earth long before the makers of religion, firm as the throne of God itself, holy as His word? Did they wait for us until we appeared in this world?

And religion, this relation of man to God, did not God Himself establish it at the creation of the world and renew and perfect it through Jesus Christ after man had destroyed it to his own nameless woe and sorrow? Must parents wait until it please the caprice of their child to establish and regulate their mutual relations? Has not nature, yea, God Himself, from the very beginning of the world determined the bounds of this relationship, so that the child enters upon this relation from the moment of its birth and is obliged to accept it as it has existed from the beginning of the world? Woe to parents if the whim of their children were to determine when, where, and how they were to obey, love and cherish their parents. Such a condition of affairs would result in sorrow and misery, ingratitude and the disruption of the most

sacred ties on earth. The curse of God and of their parents, temporal and eternal malediction, would come down upon the children, who would willfully and capriciously destroy a bond that God and nature have sanctified.

So also with religion. Man does not and cannot make it. It exists, and man by his birth and baptism enters into it and must accept it entire and unchanged if he wishes to participate in its blessings and promises, if he wishes to possess grace and attain salvation, if he wishes to avoid the temporal and eternal curse of God that comes down upon those who willfully destroy religion.

2. The Christian religion therefore, does not wait for us to enter into the world—it was already there. For centuries it has dispensed grace, peace, reconciliation, and heavenly bliss to millions of souls who knew, believed and practised it. Jesus Christ suffered and bled upon the cross in order to bring it into the world. The Apostles did not hesitate to give their lives in order to spread it through the world and to enable men to share in its marvelous blessings. The martyrs joyfully bore the greatest tortures for it; virgins and children offered their innocent lives in sacrifice for it; strengthened by it, countless sufferers have persevered, and found peace and consolation in their very sufferings. Who in the course of centuries can count the thousands, the millions of poor, sick, sorrow-laden souls, who, comforted by religion alone have, in the course of the ages, suffered like heroes and persevered with perfect resignation to God's holy will? Religion

is indeed the precious monument of God's unending love, the sacred gift of heaven to earth. The Saviour Himself has built a house for her upon the rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, so that she may be preserved to men until the end of time. It is the Spirit of God who preserves her truths, pure and untainted and ever living, so that man in his paltry wisdom may not change even so much as an iota. Yes, as the soul animates the body and gives it life, so the Holy Ghost is the soul of the Christian religion, of the true Church of God, the Catholic, that animates and moves her, leads her in all truth and perpetuates the work of redemption, so that everyone who will be led and guided by her may attain the life of grace, of faith, of hope and charity.

Now if the divine truths are so infinitely above us, if they have existed so long before us as holy and unalterable truths, and we have received them from the eternal Word of God, Jesus Christ Himself, what can be the purpose of a man who wishes to arrange a religion to suit himself, who believes or does not believe, practises or does not practise, as best suits his fancy? What other purpose can he have than to destroy and to devastate,—not indeed the Christian religion itself, its truths, its sacraments and its commandments, for they stand too high above him, too holy and too eternal as the word and work of God, under the omnipotent protection of God,—but religion in his own soul? What else can he wish to destroy but the plant which God put in his soul in holy baptism, which the Holy Ghost enriched with His grace

in confirmation, which was cleansed of weeds in the sacrament of penance and was wonderfully nourished in Holy Communion by the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ? What other purpose can he have than to annihilate utterly in his own soul religion, that best gift of heaven?

The fabricator of religion cuts away one thing, rejects another, destroys another, in fact expunges everything that opposes his pride, or fails to satisfy his lusts, his slothfulness or his impenitence. That is the lengths to which the makers of religion go. They abandon prayer, devout practices, sermons, fasting, the reception of the sacraments, divine service, and go so far as to deny the justice of God and the eternity of hell for an unbelieving life of vice. Indeed it is by a supreme act of condescension that they still allow God His attribute of mercy, in accordance with which He must, may or will save them. In the opinion of many even purgatory is irksome and too repellent. The communion and veneration of the saints and especially indulgences, they count as useless rubbish. It is in such a manner that modern manufacturers of creeds treat religion, and what remains of its sad ruins, they call their *religion*. At last they bedeck themselves with the ragged mantle of natural honesty, which Jews, Turks and pagans frequently practise better than they. Hugging to themselves this travesty of religion, they believe that they are exceedingly reverent, albeit they care very little for the commandments of God or of His Church.

3. This assuredly is not that sublime Christian reli-

gion which came to earth as the only daughter of heaven in order to lead man back to intimate relationship with God. This cannot be that religion which dispenses reconciliation, blessing and grace to believing souls, whereat the astonished choirs of angels burst forth into the joyous hymn: "Glory to God in the highest!" Glory to God our heavenly Father, who so loved man that He spared not His only-begotten Son; Glory to God the Son who effected our redemption by His precious Blood and brought back truth and grace to earth; and glory to God the Holy Ghost who vivifies the true Church with His divine breath, who guides her in all truth, and sanctifies souls in her and through her. Peace on earth to all men who are of good will! This precious treasure, this wondrous gift of God bestowed on pious and believing Christians whom it fills with peace and joy and justice in the Holy Ghost is not of men's making. Nay, the makers of these personal religions have simply accomplished what legendary lore says Satan has done. Filled with envy at the omnipotence of God, displayed in the creation of man, he also wished to make himself a man. He made something to his own image, and behold it was an ape.

Verily to such a point have those arrived who rashly meddle with the true and unalterable religion. God and religion have not changed, despite the efforts of thousands and millions of men and periodicals and books but those who, imitating Satan in his activity, have made a caricature of God and of religion, their God and their religion have indeed changed. In con-

sequence they possess absolutely nothing, they are without God and without religion, godless and unbelieving alike. And if such makers of creeds dare with brazen effrontery from amidst the ruins of religion that they have caused in their own hearts, still console themselves and others with the saying that "God sees the heart," we can answer them, "Yes, God sees your heart!" But what will He find written there? The words of the great Apostle St. Paul, who struck with horror at such wanton disregard of true religion, cries out to them, "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. ix, 20). And the Christian who in baptism came forth from the hand of God glorified by the blood of Christ and wonderfully adorned with grace, holy as the child of God and heir of heaven, shall he now sit in judgment and tell God what he will believe and what he will not believe, what he will practise and what he will not practise? He reproves God for giving us religion with its teachings and commandments in one form and not in another, for wishing to save us in His own way and not in another! Yes, God looks upon the heart, but such a heart can be naught else than an object of horror to God. Holy Writ cries out to them: "Where is your God?" The god that you have made for yourself is not the holy, the just Father, who had pity on man and redeemed him through Jesus Christ. The god that you have made is not the only-begotten Son of God, who came upon earth and gave His life for the heavenly truths that

He taught us; Who shed His heart's blood for the sacraments that He instituted for the salvation of our souls; Who established His Church as the kingdom of grace and of truth and in which He perpetuates His redemption and His doctrine until the end of the world and therefore spoke the words: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." The god whom you have made is not the Holy Ghost who lives in the Church, who directs her in all truth and who sanctifies and trains millions of souls for heaven. Where is your God?

4. The manufacturers of creeds have gone so far as to discard God and religion. They eat and drink and enjoy themselves and console themselves with the fatal belief that they are safe in the possession of a few shreds of natural honor, until the fatal moment comes when they must render an account to Him who will not allow Himself to be mocked. It must come to this, my dearly beloved, if with sinful heart we tamper with faith, this holiest and most necessary gift of God; if we tear it away from that rock, the teaching Church on which the Lord has founded it, dilute it with the weakness of our human intellect and leave it a prey to the wantonness of human passion. It must come to this, if, instead of planting ourselves upon the eternal, unfailing promises of God, we give eager ear to impious books and idle demagogues; if, instead of trying to increase our faith by prayer, by the frequentation of the sacraments and of divine service, we try to still the hunger of our clamoring soul by seeing indecent plays, and reading of still more

objectionable novels, thus imitating the prodigal son who yearned to satisfy his hunger with the swill that was given to the swine. Yes, it must come to this, if instead of listening to our priests we turn to the shameless, godless press of to-day for information concerning the Catholic Church and the Pope, Christian teaching and practice, and if we more readily believe their ridicule and mockery of the most sacred things than even the word of the Saviour Himself. It is in the word of God and in His holy Church alone that man can find firm footing, where he can neither err nor fall; here alone he can find the proper atmosphere for his soul's health and perseverance in the grace of God, where he can find peace and comfort in every vicissitude of life. Never leave this splendid soil of the Church; never desert this lovely atmosphere of grace, the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith, so God will not desert you in the hour of death, but a strong and living faith will lead you before the face of God and into the circle of believing and happy Christians. Amen.

SERMON XXIV

MODERN IGNORANCE IN MATTERS OF FAITH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

“He that is of God, heareth the words of God.”—ST. JOHN
VIII, 47.

Truly consoling are the words of the Divine Saviour: “He that is of God, heareth the words of God.” The Christian who truly believes, hopes and loves, may indeed tremble and be anxious about his soul’s salvation when he thinks of death, judgment and eternity. But then the words of Jesus will comfort him: “He that is of God, heareth the words of God.” Zeal for, and joy in, the word of God, the mysteries of the Catholic faith, and love of divine worship are all eloquent testimonials that we are of God, that we possess the grace and spirit of God and that we shall return to God. And though a Catholic may fall into grievous sin because of human weakness, he still hears the word of God and the voice of his conscience. His yearning for the word and for the grace of God will not permit him to remain in his unfortunate condition. He throws off the yoke of sin, reconciles himself with God, and fulfills the consoling word of Christ: “He that is of God, heareth the word of God,”—“for blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.”

The reason is plain. Whoever, among men, has

a vocation, or profession, or fills an office, is bound to acquire all the knowledge, qualities and fitness that are necessary to follow such vocation or profession honorably and conscientiously. Thus an officer, a physician, a lawyer, an artisan, a merchant, a farmer, a cook, a governess, a housewife must all possess the knowledge necessary to the fulfillment of their vocation or profession. They must continue to keep what they already know fresh in their minds and strive to acquire new knowledge. It is absolutely necessary for them to do this if they do not wish to be lacking in conscience, if they do not wish to bring untold misery upon themselves and others, or to appear as useless members of society, deserving the contempt, the poverty, the wretchedness to which their laziness has reduced them.

Now the holiest and most honorable profession and vocation is that of the Catholic. Hence it comes about that the Catholic incurs the responsibility before God and man of acquiring an exact knowledge of the duties and obligations that belong to his first and holiest vocation, for on this vocation depends not merely his temporal welfare, but, what is infinitely more important, the eternal salvation of his soul. He must of necessity therefore, constantly strive to learn more and more completely and exactly all the truths of his holy faith and the commandments of God and of the Church, for, "he that is of God, heareth the words of God."

The reason of this will become more clear to us if we consider that it is a child's most sacred duty

to pay attention to the words and teachings of its parents—that it is a sacred duty for the pupil, the servant, the citizen, to give a willing ear to the admonition and commands of the teacher, the master, and the authorities. Peace and order, harmony and prosperity depend on this. But the duty of the Catholic to listen to the word of God is far more sacred and important than the duty of the child, the pupil, the servant and the citizen. As far as the heavens are above the earth so does the word of God, faith, surpass all human knowledge and learning. Time and eternity, peace and joy depend upon it. Faith is the wonderful light that enlightens us; it is our guide on earth, our staff in life, our comfort in misfortune, the remedy of our souls, the well-spring of all virtues and the dispenser of eternal happiness.

And yet, my dearly beloved, sacred as is the duty of the Catholic to be thoroughly instructed in his holy faith, that sublime treasure and marvelous gift of grace that has come to us from an all-merciful God, there are nevertheless many Catholics in our day who are willing and anxious to learn and to know everything else but what concerns the truths and mysteries of the Catholic faith. What is the cause of this sad state of affairs? It originates in the deliberate ignorance of indifferentism concerning matters of faith. It is, therefore, my purpose to speak to you of this ignorance and its consequence.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

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We encounter everywhere the most astounding

ignorance concerning holy things, matters of faith, the commandments, the sacraments, the practices, and life of the Catholic Church. Whence does this come? It can originate only in the deliberate determination to remain in ignorance of all these things by staying away from instructions and sermons, by contemptuously throwing aside all Catholic literature and periodicals as unworthy of serious attention. And this ignorance concerning matters of faith, the like of which the world has never seen in all the ages past, is dignified with the boastful name of *Enlightenment*, *Liberalism*, and *Culture*. We encounter it rampant in every state of society, in every phase of human life, in the classroom, the courts, the halls of the legislative bodies, the public places and the public press. Our separated brethren themselves are obliged to acknowledge this impoverishment of the mind. All the world stands aghast at the recrudescence of crime, the flourishing immorality and practical infidelity and the abject materialism among all classes of men in this boasted Christian nation of ours.

And if only this were all! But this ignorance is fraught with direst consequences. Only ignorance leads to ridicule of the faith. The devil himself does not mock for he knows better. The world has never heard such cynical scoffing at all things holy and pure, and especially at all things Catholic, as in our day. It has come to such a pass that the child tries to outdo the parent, the pupil the teacher, the poor the wealthy.

Ignorance leads to unbelief and to hatred of the

Catholic Church. Only ignorant people are unbelievers and haters. That is why the Jews hated the Redeemer: "He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God" (St. John viii, 47). Why did the ancient pagans hate Christianity? Why do pagans, Turks and Jews hate Christianity even in our day? Because they know nothing about it, because they do not wish to know anything about it, because they are ignorant of its truths. However, the worst of them all in mockery and hatred are the ignorant and bad Catholics. They are ignorant because they are bad, and they are bad because they are ignorant, and therefore they hate their own faith. No Jew, no Turk, no heathen derides his own religion. Only ignorant Catholics are capable of such a thing. They conduct themselves very much like the young man who led a most immoral life and openly boasted of his infidelity as proof of his enlightenment. A kind friend had pity on him and lent him a book in which the beauties of the Catholic faith were portrayed. The young infidel read the book with a great deal of interest. His doubts were being solved one by one, the scales fell from his eyes, the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith grew more and more evident to his soul,—when, seized by an uncontrollable whim he dashed the book aside and exclaimed: "The wretch, he almost convinces me with his book." And he ended his life in vice and infidelity.

All those ignorant people who wish to be considered cultured and broad-minded, act in the same way.

They hate and reject every Catholic instruction, every sermon, book and paper, that would help them to acquire a more thorough knowledge of Catholic belief and life. They do not wish to be disturbed; they are not disposed to hear the word of God, because they are not of God, but have long since fallen away from the Catholic Church.

But ignorance leads to something more; it leads to superstition. And we find the most superstition in the ranks of those who claim that they are guided by the light of reason only. We find them attaching undue importance to occurrences in every-day life. We frequently see them in earnest consultation with spiritualistic mediums and assiduous attendants at their séances; they dread to meet funeral processions; Friday and the number thirteen strike them dumb with horror. They are, however, particularly superstitious, or rather, over-credulous in regard to newspapers. These ignoramuses swear by their papers and accept as undeniably true every lie that is forged against the Catholic Church, no matter how stupid or how devoid of every vestige of probability it may be. They are convinced to the point of evidence that the Church is the cause of all the trouble in France and in Portugal and, in fact, of all the troubles that have ever existed in the Christian world. They are still prepared to swear to the truth of the statement that nuns have been and are still being walled up alive. Nothing can persuade them that the infallibility of the Pope does not consist in his inability to commit sin. They know—no matter what proof you may offer to

the contrary—that the clergy are immensely wealthy. For them it is a fact beyond all possibility of doubt that the Catholic Church of set purpose keeps her ministers and followers ignorant, that she is an enemy of the people, that she has laid her curse upon the world and condemns it to the abyss of hell. They swear by their gospel, the newspaper. What other proof of anything does he need? And yet, did not the rationalistic Pharisees of old say of Our Divine Saviour: “He hath blasphemed God, what further need of proof have we?”

But ignorance in matters of faith goes one step farther, just as the Jews proceeded against Our Divine Saviour. They were ready to stone Him, and finally nailed Him to the cross. In like manner the whole tribe of so-called liberals, and, by the same token, ignorant, bad Catholics as well as non-Catholics, take up the stone of calumny, of false accusation against the Catholic Church, against their own mother, who regenerated them, and who, in order to preserve to them grace and faith and salvation whole and intact, has suffered and bled from the first days of her existence. They take up the stones of malediction against their own mother, who in the days of their youth instructed them in matters of faith, administered to them the sacraments and who alone will and can stand by them in the hour of death. Aye, even after death when the world and their families have forgotten them, she will not forget her erring children in the holy sacrifice of the mass. But all this does not deter our liberal Catholics, for in

their ignorance they no longer remember the best of mothers, or, if they do, it is only to heap insults and obloquy upon her. But if you question these so-called broad-minded Catholics concerning the simplest truths of holy faith, concerning the nature and number of the sacraments, the commandments of God and of the Church, in fine, anything that a Catholic must know if he would save his soul, they are dumb as the culprit before his judge. They have unlearned, forgotten everything, but because of this very fact they like to pose as liberal-minded men and forthwith proceed to scoff and blaspheme.

Holy Scripture tells us that when the Jews took up stones to kill Our Divine Saviour, He quietly went His way. In like manner the Catholic Church, the religious orders and we Catholics quietly proceed on our way and pay no attention to the missiles that are hurled at us from the rationalistic camp. The Catholic Church has looked upon the world for centuries; she has overcome other and greater enemies by her patience, and she has heard the rejoicings of nations who were converted. She will in turn come forth glorious from the storm of rationalistic and modernistic ideas.

Has, perchance, the Catholic faith, so wonderful as the most splendid gift of God's grace, deteriorated in our day? Or has the heavenly seed, which the divine sower planted in our hearts at holy baptism that it might bring forth fruit for heaven, decayed, that so many bad Catholics should scoff and jeer at it? No, the gift of God's grace remains the same in its

heavenly power, in the splendor of its truth and in the fullness of its light and comfort. The heavenly seed has not rotted away, for in this our day, it still grows and flourishes and brings forth magnificent fruit of Christian life and eternal happiness. What therefore has deteriorated and rotted? Only the hearts of many Catholics, who have allowed themselves to be carried away by the whirlwind of intellectual license.

History relates that when Alexander the Great came to the river Cydmus he bathed in its icy waters and in consequence contracted a mortal disease. His physician Philip prepared for him a healing draught. But at the moment when Alexander was about to take the remedy from his physician's hand a missive was brought to him that said: "Do not trust your physician Philip, for, bribed by Persian gold, he is giving you poison to drink." Alexander read the letter and with one hand giving it to the physician with the other he seized the cup that held the remedy and unhesitatingly emptied it to the very dregs. Why does history tell us of this incident in the life of Alexander the Great, and express admiration for it? Because trusting the assurance of his physician Alexander apparently braved death by taking the draught.

Jesus Christ is the physician; we and all mankind are the sick man, and the health-giving draught which Jesus has prepared for us are the heavenly truths, faith, grace, the sacraments, in a word, redemption. And, indeed, what wonderful results has not this life-giving draught produced in suffering humanity? It has

made the Apostles, the martyrs, the saints, it has converted nations, dispelled superstition, vice and madness; it has restored health to souls, consolation and strength in life and in death and has peopled the kingdom of heaven.

The assistant of our Divine Physician, the Catholic Church, still offers the self-same healing draught to sick and languishing humanity. Why is it despised and wasted? The godless, the unbelievers, the infidel press cry out even to Catholics: "Do not trust her, it is poison she is giving you!" Instead of trusting the Divine Physician, His Church, and the experience of centuries, many Catholics believe implicitly what the godless tell them, and dash away the divine draught, simply because they wish to be considered broad-minded at any cost.

But see how greedily they devour what the yellow press doles out to them. Every item of filth, of scandal, of untruth, of calumny, is eagerly absorbed and believed. They do not even give themselves time to think. There is no doubt in their minds but that all they have read is absolutely true, in fact they have come to such a pass that for them there is no longer a doubt possible. And thus they lose their faith, grace and eternal salvation and become the enemies of God and of His Church. These are the fruits of stupid liberalism.

In proportion as the remedy of the Divine Physician, faith and grace are dissipated, the elements of Christianity are destroyed in the hearts of individuals and of the family, the more the Christian spirit is

banished from the school, the community and the state, the greater will grow the sickness, the lust for pleasure, vice and confusion. There is a cry for light, and impenetrable darkness seizes upon despairing hearts. Everybody clamors for liberty, and the slavery of vice and of wealth grows greater. On all sides we hear of the prosperity and the well-being of the people, and taxes are multiplied and poverty becomes ever greater. The people are daily sinking deeper into despair, misery and crime. The principles of ruin and disintegration are hourly gaining ground. The soil is become a morass, the good seed is rejected, the life-giving draught is being spilled, and instead our people have become rationalistic.

The greatest anguish of soul our Divine Saviour had to bear was the foreknowledge of the ingratitude of Christians. And in fact we can imagine no greater madness, no more revolting audacity than to see man, upon whom such love has been lavished, for whom such tortures, such humiliation and ignominy, such sufferings on the cross were borne, grow bitter against his Saviour and revile His Church and His doctrine. Man is not satisfied with rejecting Jesus, His teachings and His commandments, he must also rage against Him and blaspheme Him. The Saviour bore fatigue and the cross for us, but many Christians are too slothful to take a few steps to Church for the love of Jesus and for the sake of their immortal souls. God gives us life and health and six days in which to do our work, and many of us have become incapable of giving Him a short half-hour on Sundays by

assisting at holy mass. God has done everything for our immortal souls, and most men do everything for the body, but nothing for their souls—the cares and riches and pleasures of life destroy every germ of grace. It is indeed true that the judgments of God are terrible, but the majority of Christians do all that lies in their power to justify this severity. Whosoever hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And yet, my dearly beloved, nothing more gladdening, more consoling and uplifting has been given us than the knowledge of Jesus, and love for Him. Nothing enlightens us so much as faith, nothing ennobles us like grace, nothing awakens such hope in life and in death as Catholic faith, the source of all blessing and peace. Let us at least not be numbered among those who throw away the draught of life, who trample under foot the divine seed, the word of God, or strangle it in its young growth. Rather let our splendid faith fall on good soil in our souls and bring forth fruit a thousandfold for time and for eternity, so that the Divine Sower in the day of harvest—of judgment—may gather us into His barn and our living faith may bring us unto eternal happiness before the face of God, for “he that is of God, heareth the word of God.” Amen.

SERMON XXV

THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD AND THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT; WORLDLY AND CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE

“For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.”—ST. LUKE XVI, 18.

In my previous instructions, I spoke of true and false toleration, the glory and the happiness of the Catholic faith and the misery and misfortune of unbelief. It was my purpose on the one hand to place luminously before your minds the beauty and truth of the Catholic Church, and on the other hand to fill your soul with horror for the folly of unbelief and of hatred against the Catholic Church. To serve as a warning I portrayed for you both the secret and the avowed enemies of Catholic life and faith. I called your attention to the pseudo-Catholics who, under the mask of specious sentiments, seduce innumerable souls, and, by word and example, restrain many from making an open profession of faith by frequenting the sacraments and attending divine service. We have seen that the fabricators of religious creeds are all the more dangerous to the faith and salvation of careless Catholics, because of the disguise which they assume. They labor under the delusion that man can make his own religion, or at least arrange the Christian truths

to suit himself. By their activity they infect countless others with the self-same delusion.

A third formidable enemy of Christian faith, of man's eternal salvation, is rationalistic ignorance concerning matters of faith. Sloth and vanity, or the craze for being reputed men of culture, induces many to despise instruction and neglect the acquisition of a fuller knowledge of the noblest and most necessary science on earth, the faith. The resultant ignorance and stupidity in religious matters are enough to make one shudder. This deliberate ignorance can be compared to paganism which had but a faint glimmer of all things eternal and heavenly. Hence the utter moral degradation into which it fell. It may be compared to the sombre pall of night, that overtakes the uncertain traveler of dangerous paths and leads him to the precipice or into the swamp. The beneficent light of faith does not cast its radiance on life's pathway for those who deliberately remain in ignorance of the truths of religion. The sunbeam of grace does not penetrate into their souls to glorify it. Faith is not their friendly guide, their consolation in misfortune, their balm in despair, their light in perplexity and the ground of their hope. Cold and dreary as a winter's night are their hearts, and the sad remnant of their waning faith is like the dying lamp that flickers once and again and then leaves all in deathlike gloom. God save us from so terrible a state of soul.

But whence comes it, my dearly beloved, that these enemies of the true welfare of the faithful can cause such widespread devastation; and whence comes it

that even true and steadfast Catholics offer them such feeble resistance? It comes from this, that the children of the world, the godless, are wiser in their generation than the children of light, the faithful. It is my purpose to speak to you to-day of the children of this world, and to point out to you precisely in what their worldly wisdom consists. We will then better understand who the children of light are, and what Christian prudence prompts us to do.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

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In the Gospel for the eighth Sunday after Pentecost, Our Divine Saviour calls attention to the unjust steward who provided for his old age at the expense of his master. On this occasion He pronounced words that remain eternally true: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (St. Luke xvi, 8). Now to what does Our Divine Saviour refer under the designation "of this world"? He refers to the unbelieving godless world, which has become a prey to vice and to the deeds of darkness, which denies or hates God and the Redeemer, which persecutes the Church and ridicules and insults all those who remain true to their Catholic faith and observe the commandments.

Our Divine Saviour told His Apostles that as the world had hated Him so also would it hate them. In His prayer at the Last Supper, shortly before His bitter Passion and Death, He pronounced words that must arouse fear and dread in our souls: "I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me—

because they are thine" (St. John xvii, 9). St. John the Apostle plainly states the reason why this world was excluded from the sacerdotal prayer of Christ: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 St. John ii, 15, 16).

This world, therefore, is the kingdom of sin, the realm of unbelief, of the hatred of God and of eternal warfare against the Redeemer and His kingdom, His Church and His faithful. In a word, it is the kingdom of Satan on earth, that kingdom which Our Divine Saviour excluded from His last prayer, because it does not wish to be redeemed and therefore rejects the Redeemer, just as the Jewish people rejected Him.

"And the world knew Him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (St. John i, 10, 11). Children of this world are, therefore, all those who have adopted the hostility, the unbelief, the hatred and rebellion against God and the Saviour, the evil maxims of this world, and regulate their lives according to them, be they pagans, Jews, or men baptized in the Catholic faith, in a word, they are the whole vast multitude of impious men.

Now what is meant by the light, and who are the children of light? The light is our Divine Saviour who enlightens all men that believe in Him: "Now this is eternal life—that they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent"

(St. John xvii, 3). Children of the light are, therefore, the true faithful, those for whom our Divine Saviour pleaded: "I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me—because they are thine—Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom thou hast given me—that they may be one, as we also are" (St. John xvii, 9–11). Children of light are they who believe in that Saviour and observe His commandments, and for this they are hated by the world. "If the world hate you, know you that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you,—The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; but all these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also" (St. John xv, 18–23).

But the children of light, of grace, of salvation, in a word, the true faithful compose the only true, Catholic Church, the kingdom of God on earth is not of this world. The Catholic Church is the antithesis of the world. Therefore, the uncompromising hatred of this world falls solely on the Catholic Church, because she everywhere announces the Divine Redeemer, spreads His faith everywhere, and has preserved it until this present hour. This hatred has caused all the sad manifestations of our time. So the world is pointed out as a warning to all who have eyes that

they may see and who have ears that they may hear. All the persecutions, lies and calumnies, maledictions, spoliations and unjust laws, spring from one source, this world. Now Our Divine Saviour tells us that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." We will now proceed to characterize this wisdom, not indeed for our edification, but for our warning and instruction, for it is not only the priest's duty and office to edify his people, but also to warn them against the enemies of their salvation. It would, indeed, be easier and less disturbing to remain silent, but this would be cowardice and even prevarication. Things would never have come to their present pass in the Christian world, had men dared to speak and act at the proper time.

To act with prudence requires union. Note how united the enemies of the Catholic faith are! Disagreements they may have among themselves, but in the heat of battle against the Catholic Church they forget all about them. They stand together as one man, and this explains how a handful of godless men can actually carry out the program they have outlined in their secret conclaves. In contrast to this, observe how disunited the mass of Catholics are even on questions that concern their most sacred possessions, faith, grace, the Christian education of their children, the sanctity of matrimony, and future security! Each one thinks only of himself and probably says: "What is that to me? Let others fight it out!" In fact, a large proportion of the faithful are under the im-

pression that the bishops and priests are the only ones concerned in the struggle for morality and faith, and that the laity need not bother their heads about it. And still, there is question of their weal or woe! If soldiers in battle were to say: "What's that to us? Let the generals and the officers fight it out," they would not only lose the battle, but in the end would themselves have the hardest lot to bear, for the enemy usually defeats the generals and officers more easily than the common soldiers. Because of their union the children of this world are wiser than the children of light who do not unite their forces in defense of their most sacred possessions, those involving their temporal and eternal welfare, thus adopting the most effective means of repelling the assaults of their enemies and who even refuse to join Catholic societies intended to concentrate the Catholic strength.

Obedience and order belong to prudence. How wise are the children of this world united by obedience and order in the carrying out of their projects. A secret committee lays out the whole plan of action, and when everything is in readiness the word is given, and simultaneously in the press and in public meetings the agitation is begun. At first they demand equal rights for all, toleration and liberalism, then gradually everything that is calculated to dechristianize society. Our papers are supposed to express public opinion, but this public opinion is made to order, in assorted quantities and handsomely paid for. If such order and obedience prevailed among Catholics; if Catholics listened with attention and confidence to the voice of

their pastors, we should soon see a regenerated people arise for whom God and the things of God would have an immediate personal interest. Yet there are many who consider themselves devout Catholics, although they fail to observe the commandments of the Church. Do not think that the matter merely concerns your priests. No, it concerns yourselves, your children, your peace and welfare, the salvation of your souls. Christian prudence demands that Catholics preserve order and harmony among themselves.

Prudence also demands courage. How courageous, how regardless of self are the children of this world, the enemies of the Catholic faith! Every step, fiercely contested, brings them nearer to the goal; they constantly gain ground, strength, more adherents. They are in command everywhere, and everything must bow to their pleasure. Lack of courage, negligence and carelessness on the part of Catholics have cleared the way for them. Many, indeed, secretly bewail the sad conditions of affairs, but none dares openly express his conviction in speech or action; nay, the sinews of war—money—are lavishly provided for those who hate the very name of Catholic. And Catholics themselves are afraid to read, much less subscribe for, a Catholic paper, lest they be decried as religiously inclined. Courage is the Catholic's badge of honor. Jesus showed heavenly courage in His passion for us. The Apostles, the martyrs, nay, even children and maidens displayed heroic courage. A Catholic must be a man of courage especially in our day. Courage is his best weapon. With courage we

can overcome our enemies and gain a glorious victory. Courage is an essential requisite of Christian prudence.

Prudence requires fine strategy. How accomplished are the children of the world in this respect! "Divide et impera, Divide and rule," is an old proverb. These are the tactics of the enemies of Catholic life. At first they bring their attacks to bear on the Jesuits and poor nuns, next they turn their attention to the priests and missionaries, and then they assault the bishops and the Pope. The hierarchy and the ministry of the Church are held up to the gaze of the world as blood-sucking tyrants whose only aim is to terrorize consciences and press the last hard-earned penny from the poor man. And our Catholics are gullible enough to believe all this, and before they know it the enemy is at their own throats, despoiling them of all they hold most sacred in life. Let us not be deceived by our enemies. We can readily learn from their lives and their speech who they are, and what they wish to accomplish by their shrewdness.

To this wisdom of the children of the world we owe all the lies and the calumnies, all the derision and the insults that are daily poured out upon the Catholic Church. Worldly strategy also inspires the sedulous ignoring of all that is favorable to the Church, all that is meritorious and pleasing to God. Credulous Catholics respond to these ingenious tactics by believing every lie they read in the papers; they swear by the journal they take and imbibe its poison like mother's milk, so that finally they become animated, perambulating newspapers. The indifference,

the cowardice, the disobedience, the discord, the tactlessness of Catholics are responsible for the surrender of the immediate future to the children of the world. And when the time is ripe they will not fail to lay a galling yoke upon the necks of our milk and water Catholics.

My dearly beloved, be warned! Do not give ear to every whisper of so-called public opinion which has been manufactured and paid for. Believe our Divine Saviour who has bled for you upon the cross. Believe the Catholic Church, our mother on earth, who, imitating the example of her divine Founder, has suffered nineteen centuries for the faith, for the truth, for the salvation of souls. She will gladly continue to suffer if only she can save souls, and preserve until the end of time the heritage of the nations, namely, redemption. Believe your priests, who openly and fearlessly defend the faith and lay bare the malice of the enemy. This is true Christian prudence, the prudence of the children of light, who believe God and His Church and stand armed against every attack of the world.

It is thus that the holy martyrs behaved. Theirs was indeed true wisdom! They did not surrender the precious pearl of faith and of grace because of ridicule. By their courage, their harmony, their prudence, their defense of a sacred cause, they have won undying fame and eternal happiness, and to-day the Catholic Church exalts them. Do you, like them, be warned that you may preserve the faith and grace intact and that on the day of judgment you may re-

ceive mercy and life eternal for your steadfast profession of the faith, and not be numbered among the children of this world and share with them their sad lot in eternity. May God strengthen us all, and grant us His grace so that, as children of light we may persevere unto death in the faith and in the love of Jesus the Saviour of our souls, and obtain the palm of victory for all eternity in recompense of our Christian warfare. Amen.

SERMON XXVI

SENSATIONAL JOURNALS ARE THE FALSE PROPHETS OF OUR DAY

“Beware of False Prophets.”—ST. MATTH. VII, 15.

Our Divine Saviour was not content with revealing to us His heavenly truths, instituting the sacraments and dying for us upon the cross; He also wished to warn us against the enemies of our salvation. A good father and a kind mother will not be satisfied with raising their children well, giving them a good education and providing for them in such a manner that they will be in a position to make their way when left to themselves; they will also warn them of the dangers and temptations they are about to encounter in the world. If children disregard these well-meant admonitions and plunge themselves into misery and misfortune, it is their own fault. If a Catholic, therefore, disregards the warnings of his Divine Saviour who bled for him upon the cross, if he disregard the admonitions of the faithful mother of his soul, the Catholic Church, who likewise has suffered and been persecuted for nineteen centuries for the sake of her faith, if he permits himself to be despoiled of his faith and of the grace of God and filled with prejudice against the Catholic Church and if in conse-

quence he loses his immortal soul, he has only himself to blame for it.

But in order to put us on our guard and to make us prudent and circumspect in all our doings, our Divine Saviour points out to us the marks by which we may recognize the enemies of our faith and our salvation: "By their fruits you shall know them; a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (St. Matth. vii, 15-18).

I shall, therefore, speak to you of the false prophets of our own times.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. Bad newspapers are conspicuous among these false prophets.

Satan was the first false prophet who came in sheep's clothing; and thus became the father of all succeeding false prophets. Under the hypocritical mask of enlightenment and of concern for the welfare of man he led our first parents to their fall in paradise. The fruits thereof have been bitter enough for Adam and his descendants. Idolaters were false prophets; the fruits they offered to mankind were bitter indeed, slavery, human sacrifice and all the misery that followed in the train of ancient paganism. Heresiarchs were false prophets, for under pretense of inaugurating reform, freedom to read and interpret the Bible and liberty of conscience they tore away

whole nations from the Catholic faith. Their fruits were also bitter and evil. The daily papers are with very few exceptions false prophets of our time. They have assumed the outward garb of virtue and hypocritically pretend to stand for what is best and noblest in mankind,—virtue, the public good, civil and religious liberty, the advancement of learning, toleration, liberalism.

Who can number all the crimes committed against God and society, all the havoc caused in the mind and in the heart of the individual citizen under this cloak of hypocrisy? Nothing is any longer sacred. The holiest mysteries of religion are made the object of attack and ridicule, the Divinity of Christ is denied, news of murder, of suicide, of incest, of adultery, of disloyalty to the marriage vow, is spread broadcast, and the principles of morality are covertly, aye, and openly, sneered at. The Catholic Church in particular receives far more than her share of attack and vilification. If the Holy Father, the vice-gerent of Christ on earth, raises his voice to warn his people against the enemies of their faith, if bishops stand up to vindicate the sanctity of the marriage bond, insist upon the Christian education of children, defend the faith and morals of the flock confided to their care, if priests endeavor to fulfill their sacred duty and denounce indecency and profligacy, a torrent of abuse, of lies and calumnies is poured out against them by the public press. And with what unholy glee any scandal, or mistake, or act of disobedience, disrespect, or discontent that occurs in the bosom of the Church, is

seized upon and amplified and embellished and spread broadcast over the world.

I put it to anyone whose head and heart are still in a normal position: Who instructed the nations, who conquered heathenism? Who carries to the utmost bounds of the earth faith, grace, redemption, morality, aye, and material prosperity, and preserved them jealously for nineteen hundred years? Who in defense of the heritage of the nations, of faith and salvation, shed her own blood in torrents and suffered the fiercest persecutions? Who other than the Catholic Church? Not these false prophets, the evil press of our day, but the Catholic Church has patiently suffered and bled for the welfare of mankind. Who first established and put in operation hospitals, asylums for the poor, sanitariums, orphan asylums, schools, colleges and universities? These false prophets in sheep's clothing and under the hypocritical pretext of serving the public good and advancing science have not done it; the Catholic Church alone has accomplished all these things of which our present day civilization is so proud. To-day we still have numerous religious orders and associations, who self-sacrificingly devote themselves to the care of the sick, the education of poor children, the support of poor families. On what soil did they grow and flourish? On the soil of the Catholic Church. It is not the false prophets, the agitators who take care of the poor, but the Catholic Church. I will go further. True Catholics do not fill our prisons, commit no crimes, are not guilty of murders, robberies, do not cheat and

steal and plunge the poor into still deeper misery. The Catholic Church, the kingdom of God and the Bride of Christ, does not rear criminals, but she does rear Christians, children of God and heirs of heaven. Yet there is no lie, no calumny, no insult and vilification, too low, too vile, too stupid, for this corrupt press to daily vomit forth against the Catholic Church.

2. A murderer is certainly a great criminal, but in most cases he commits murder in a fit of anger or to avenge an insult, or he is driven to it by hunger and misery. But the murderer knows and feels the enormity of his crime. He frequently regrets it from the depth of his heart, is converted and is, moreover, punished by death or life-long imprisonment. But the real scourge, the real misfortune of a people are the murderers of souls, these false prophets, who with malice prepense, with deliberate lies and calumnies, with well-calculated sneer and insult, poison, not one, two, not hundreds, but thousands of souls; despoil whole peoples of their faith and morality and fill them with hatred against the Catholic Church, destroy the quiet and peace of families and nations, agitate the world and form untold numbers of godless men—and all this in the name of public good, prosperity, liberty, enlightenment and toleration. Yea, this slaughter of souls is the most horrible of all occupations, the curse of nations and of governments.

When Voltaire lay on his deathbed, his ravings betokened a terrible despair. With his own teeth he tore the flesh from his arms. Voltaire had written volumes filled with hatred of Christian faith and

morals. And now there appeared before the eyes of the dying man the souls whom by his writings he had poisoned, murdered, despoiled of faith and cast into unending misery. Despair made Voltaire a raving maniac, and in this despair he died. And yet in comparison with these false prophets and ravening wolves of the present, Voltaire was almost a saint. He never accomplished the results they obtain so successfully by their ruthless methods. Such murderers of souls are never converted; a terrible curse rests upon them. "Woe to the man through whom scandals come; it were better for him had he never been born." The wrath of God knows no bounds on this point, for to rob thousands of souls, for whom the Saviour bled, of their faith and morality and salvation, and to pervert them by deliberate lies and calumnies, is a display of unutterable malice.

And in fact what do these false prophets, these newspaper-writers care if you lose grace and everything else? They want your money for their paper. What do they care if you lose your immortal soul, your eternal salvation? They wish to interest you for their own purposes. The workingmen, the people are to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. And these false prophets and agitators take good care that not a single advantage will accrue to the people.

"By their fruits you shall know them." These fruits are apparent to all: The loosening of every legitimate tie, robberies and murders in appalling numbers, unbelief, blasphemy, curses and maledictions, and a state of immorality that no longer seeks to

hide its head, but flaunts itself on the street, on the stage, in society and puts every virtue to flight. The Catholic Church brings forth no such fruits. She can only produce good fruits; that is why she has existed for nineteen hundred years and will continue to exist as the good tree until the end of all time. But the evil tree, the false prophets in the person of vicious and irresponsible newspaper-men will be cut down and thrown into everlasting fire.

3. Evil times will surely come. They already stand at our very doors. They are the fruit of impiety and of hatred against the Catholic Church. These evil times will come upon all, because with hardly an exception all are culpable, not excluding the better of the faithful. There are Catholics who subscribe for and advertise in these newspapers and thus furnish the money necessary to continue and propagate the evil work. They are accessories to the crime. A multitude of others are silent when they should speak and declare themselves, and so they give the enemy a free field. They are accessories to the crime. Our Catholic men join every society but a Catholic one, and the Catholic societies in turn are afraid to use the power for good that lies in their hands. They are accessories to the crime. We are afraid of antagonizing people, ashamed to assert ourselves and our principles, grateful that we are tolerated, and so we prevent the development of Catholic life, and encourage our enemies to continue their nefarious work. We are all accessories to the ruin and devastation they cause.

Let us, therefore, manifest our Catholic faith in word and deed, for "not everyone who saith to me, Lord, Lord! will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father, who is in heaven." Let us not cringe before the idol of so-called public opinion, for it is manufactured and paid for. Let us be loyal to the Catholic Church, and let us heed the warning of Our Divine Saviour, and hearken to the voice of our Holy Father and of the bishops. They alone have our true interests at heart, they labor for and with us, they suffer for and with us. They are the successors of the Apostles and, therefore, the true prophets whom Our Divine Saviour has commissioned to lead all those who believe in Him, hope in Him and love Him with their whole heart on the right path to salvation.

I have fulfilled my duty as a Catholic priest by issuing this note of warning to you. It is now your duty to take heed of the warning so that on the day of judgment you will not be found guilty of having betrayed your glorious Catholic faith, that you be not other Judases to the Catholic Church, the mother of your souls. May God guard you against such a sin, and may He grant you all the grace of steadfastly preserving, professing and defending your faith against the machinations of false prophets. May the recompense of the glorious confessors be yours in the eternal happiness of Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer. May His Holy Name be loved and praised through all eternity. Amen.

SERMON XXVII

THE FAMINE OF SOULS AND HOW ILL THE READING OF BAD NEWSPAPERS SATISFIES IT

“I have compassion on the multitude.”—ST. MARK. VIII, 2.

With what tenderness Our Divine Saviour spoke the words:—“I have compassion on the multitude.” It was this multitude of the poor that rejoiced the heart of Jesus! It was the poor people who came from far and near to Jesus in the desert, who hung upon His lips, who sought comfort and instruction and never wearied in listening to the divine teachings of Jesus. For three days they tarried with Him and forgot even necessary food. It was not the rich, the noble and the Pharisees of Jerusalem who sought out Jesus, but it was the poor people who followed Him and were made happy by His teachings. The gospel is preached to the poor; and among the poor we still find the greatest faith, the purest religious spirit, and the highest state of morality.

Our Divine Saviour rewarded their zeal. He spoke those beautiful words: “I have compassion on the multitude,” and as human aid would not suffice, He had recourse to His omnipotence. Yes, verily, all eyes were turned upon Him, and the heavenly Purveyor opened His beneficent hand, fed them all

with seven loaves. All were filled, and refreshed and returned joyously to their homes.

This gospel is only an inadequate figure of what Our Divine Saviour has already done and still does for Christian people. And still, especially in our day, souls suffer from a veritable famine. I shall speak to-day of this craving of souls for food, for the heavenly food of grace and of truth. I shall at the same time show you how countless Catholics try to satisfy this hunger of their souls by the reading of bad papers.

O Jesus, assist us with Thy grace!

1. Our Divine Saviour came from heaven into the desert of this world for the purpose of announcing His heavenly doctrine so that those who hang upon His words, who believe in Him and are strengthened, comforted and enlightened by Him, may not become a prey to error, to doubt, or be plunged into darkness. Faith is the surest beacon light for the human reason. This light illumines all that is heavenly and eternal. Faith is the best consoler of the human heart. It shows us this mortal life in its true light, as a time of probation, of journeying towards an eternity of bliss. Faith has a healing balm for every sorrow, for every anguish of the soul. It consoles the sinner, it comforts the despairing, and all the unfortunate. Faith, with her sister hope, appears like a heavenly dove at the bedside of the dying, bringing them the olive-branch of peace, the token of eternal life to come. In the vicissitudes of life, faith is our

truest guide, for it unwaveringly points to our eternal goal, and saves us from straying and falling into the abyss. Yes, faith is more necessary to the soul than light is to dispel the gloom of a sombre cave. It is the light of heaven that envelops man and shows him the way in all difficulties.

Again Our Divine Saviour opens His generous hand and stills the hunger of souls with seven loaves so that, on their way to their heavenly home, they may not starve in the desert of this life and succumb to the enemy and to sin. These seven loaves are the seven sacraments. Whosoever approaches them worthily is sated, but the grace of the sacraments is never exhausted. The Blessed Sacrament, the Holy Eucharist is constantly renewed at the blessing of our heavenly Breadgiver. All who partake of this divine banquet worthily are strengthened and receive grace and life. Jesus suffered and died on the cross in atonement for our guilt and for the redemption of the world, but in the sacraments and especially in the Holy Eucharist, this life of grace and of redemption is preserved and strengthened in us. This is why Our Divine Saviour so persistently urges us to receive it often and worthily. "Amen, amen, I say unto you—except you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (St. John vi, 54-56.)

Nevertheless, in spite of all this bounty, Our Di-

vine Saviour may still say "I have compassion on the multitude!" A famine is a terrible affliction. Men at such a time seize upon the most unnatural things with which to appease their hunger—grass, carrion and even human corpses. How inexpressibly wretched the famished figures appear with their sunken eyes, with every lineament expressive of dull despair. Ties of blood, of relationship and friendship, sentiments of mercy and charity, all are ruthlessly crushed out to make room for the wildest self-love. Who can portray the terror of the scourge of famine that depopulates cities and hamlets and whole countries and heaps up mountains of corpses!

And yet what is physical famine compared with the famine that afflicts individual souls, and even the souls of whole nations that were formerly Christian? The doctrine of Christ, Christian faith, the eternal truths are despised and trampled under foot, and untold thousands appease the cravings of their soul for knowledge, for truth with the disgusting filth and drivel of godless journals, or with errors, lies and calumnies against the Catholic Church, with scorn and ridicule of everything that is holy. In our times impiety has gone so far that every form of the most abject superstition usurps the place of religion. Every ranter is looked upon as a prophet, every apostate Christian or priest hailed as a reformer, and the monkey is proclaimed as the progenitor of the human race.

The unappeased craving of the soul for spiritual food is far more dreadful in its consequences for

time and eternity than physical starvation. The sacraments, Penance and especially the Holy Eucharist, are rejected with disdain, but in their stead the most nauseating food is eagerly seized upon to satisfy the hunger of the soul. Vice of every kind, impurity, the most shocking indecency of conduct, debauchery, luxury, avarice, covetousness all are, as it were, greedily devoured. Who can count the millions that have therein found their ruin? The soul imperatively demands nourishment, and if we do not give it the food of heaven, it will turn to the food of hell, sin and vice, for satisfaction.

Starvation of the soul, even more than famine for the body, gradually casts aside every bond of human society. When faith and Christian charity no longer reign, and the Catholic Church and her form of worship have lost their hold on the minds and hearts of men—there also will the government, parents and superiors gradually lose every vestige of authority. There, loyalty and confidence, honesty and honor will disappear. There, crime and vice will soon gain the upper hand and ere long terror will reign supreme. A people without faith is a people to be dreaded, for, like a savage beast, it can no longer be held in leash, but in frenzied rage will give unbridled sway to its thirst for blood and destruction. In His omniscience foreseeing all this, our Divine Saviour pronounced the merciful words: "I have compassion on the multitude." I have compassion on the countless souls on their way to pitiable ruin. May God have mercy on them, that they may seek life and nourish-

ment, consolation and peace, grace and joy where alone they may be found, where Our Divine Saviour dispenses them, namely in the faith and in the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

2. The gospel, in the parable of the prodigal son, gives us the truest picture of the starving condition of those souls who desert the teachings of the Catholic Church, and turn to the evil press of the day for their instruction. The prodigal son scorned the teachings and admonitions of his kind father. Wearied by the oft-repeated but well-meant advice, he left his father's house, associated himself with evil companions and in their company wasted his inheritance. And what were the consequences of this mode of life? A terrible disenchantment and a full realization of the folly of his course. There he was, poor, deserted and in rags, desiring to appease his hunger with the husks that were given to the swine. This disenchantment was not indeed very meritorious, but it remains true that he was thoroughly enlightened as to his former follies.

What happened to the prodigal son happens to all who despise the teachings, the warnings and advice of the Catholic Church and who, wearied of her, leave her to seek for instruction in a godless press. These renegade Catholics do, in truth, squander the inheritance which they have received from God the Father in holy baptism. They squander redemption, they waste the grace of the Holy Ghost, they dissipate their maternal inheritance, the faith and the sacraments of the Catholic Church. And what are the

consequences? There they stand, poor in grace, forsaken by God, and divested of their Catholic faith, barely covered, at best, with a few tatters of its doctrine. Yet their soul hungers and thirsts and they seek to satisfy its cravings by the reading of bad periodicals. There they find all that their corrupted heart desires—the recital of man's wickedness, tales of debauchery and lewdness, stupid railleries against the doctrines, practices and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. There they can find every foul calumny against the clergy, from the Pope down to the humblest priest. There they can find all the obscenities, all the sneers at holy things, that a corrupt and degraded heart can desire. Oh with what delight they wallow in the mire of impiety and immorality, how like swine in their filth are they content with their utter indecency.

See how the enlightened deride and ridicule the poor heathens who in their mistaken belief crawl in the dust before a serpent or a white bull, before idols of stone and of wood, adore them and accept all sorts of folly and superstition as the purest truth. But, my dearly beloved, these poor pagans have never heard a word about the only true God, and about Him whom He has sent—Jesus Christ. They have heard nothing of redemption, of the only true Church of God, of the truths of heaven, of the sacraments, of the martyrs and the saints. They have never beheld the solemnity of Catholic feasts or of Catholic worship. They have never known the Catholic Church in her beauty and truth as the king-

dom of God on earth, as the second ark in the deluge of sin, and as the mother of all the living. No missionaries, no priests have come to them to announce the gospel of peace and of salvation. If they had heard the message, if they had learned to know Jesus Christ and His Church; if they had seen our churches, our altars, our feasts and our solemn worship, they would, like other heathen nations, have gladly accepted the faith and become Christian.

But our pseudo-Catholics have seen and heard all this, they were happy, at least in the days of their youth, they were blessed in the consciousness that they possessed the grace of a pure conscience, of faith and of love for Jesus. What, then, is the cause of the terrible change that takes place in so many Catholics? Whence comes it that, like to the prodigal son, they leave the house of God, the Church, and squander their inheritance of grace, redemption and faith? It is because they try to satisfy the craving of their souls for truth and heavenly enlightenment, for grace and peace, with the lewd jests and sneers, with the drivel and lies, with the blasphemies and godlessness of wretched newspapers. Like famished beggars they snap up every filthy morsel that these murderers fling to them, and devour it as greedily as though it were the most delicious food.

3. They have indeed made great progress, these renegade Catholics! They are true sons and successors of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve also grasped at the enlightenment that Satan promised them. And they were enlightened, indeed, but in a

manner far different from what they had expected. There they were, clothed in fig-leaves,—they who had once stood arrayed in innocence and grace. There they were in all their misery, reduced to wretchedness,—they who were once the kings of creation. They were deprived of paradise, of the heavenly peace and joy that once was theirs. They were in fear and dread of the judgment of God, of the God, who but lately was the object of their delight and adoration. And so enlightened had they become, that they imagined they could hide themselves from God. The new knowledge they had gained robbed them even of the splendid knowledge they had of God and of heavenly things.

Adam and Eve are indeed a true but sad picture of all those pseudo-Catholics who imitate the example of their progenitors. Like them countless pseudo-Catholics reject the true light from heaven which the Church in the name of God offers us in the splendid teachings of her faith. They disdain the luscious fruit, which the new tree of life, the Blessed Sacrament offers to souls as their heavenly nourishment. But instead they seize all the more greedily upon the deceitful knowledge which bad papers promise them. They are indeed enlightened, but in such a manner that on the day of judgment they will have reason to weep bitter tears. The majority of such poor Catholics, who take their instructions from the daily press, usually abandon their faith, grace, Christian life and become the enemies of God and of His Church, especially of the clergy. And what a

sad exchange they make! For the pearl and gift of heaven which Our Divine Saviour brought on earth to be our happiness, our joy and consolation, they receive nothing but drivel and poison. So here they stand beggared of grace and of faith, they who were once Christian, children of God and heirs of heaven! Here they are, deprived of the new paradise on earth, outside the pale of the Catholic Church, without peace of soul, without the consolation of a good conscience. They have indeed learned much,—not to know Christ and His teachings, but to blaspheme Him and otherwise to give expression to their godlessness.

These are the sad but inevitable consequences which are brought about when Catholics once begin to despise the heavenly food which God so admirably offers us through His Church. When they begin to try to satisfy the craving of their souls for light and grace with the stupid vagaries of the daily press. When, rather than listen to the Church, they turn to her enemies to learn her doctrines, her history, her practices.

4. "I have compassion on the multitude," said Our Divine Saviour when the sight of the famishing people in the desert touched His heart with pity and mercy. And yet their hunger was merely a material one. Oh how much more worthy of compassion are all those Catholics who in the desert of this life do not satisfy the craving of their souls with heavenly truth, with the worthy reception of the sacraments, with the Bread of Heaven in Holy Communion, do

not comfort their souls with the practice of prayer or with the sweet bliss of a pure conscience, but instead seek food and consolation in the reading of bad books and papers! Oh, how worthy of compassion are those Christians who no longer give heed to the heavenly love of their Divine Saviour, or to the voice of the mother of their souls, the Church, but like the prodigal son go away from their home and give ear to the tempters and destroyers of souls! Oh, how worthy of compassion are all those pseudo-Catholics, who disdainfully cast aside all ministrations and remedies that assure them eternal life, and who with rude jeer and mockery reject the Catholic Church which, as the kindly nurse of ailing human kind, would heal their souls, as the teacher of the world will enlighten them also with the light of faith.

What has become of their Catholic faith that holds as true all that God has revealed and that the Catholic Church proposes for our belief? The faith of these nominal-Catholics is no longer the Catholic faith, but the faith of one who implicitly believes as true all that his newspaper tells him. What becomes of their hope in the promises of God and in the constant assistance of Our Divine Saviour and of the Holy Ghost, who directs the Church in all truth? What becomes of their love of God and the Redeemer, when they depart from the teachings and the commandments of the Church, and lend willing ears to the godless press? The pseudo-Catholics who accept the teachings and the guidance of a wicked press, are like Adam in paradise after he had received the en-

lightenment of Satan, or the prodigal son after he had left his father's house, finds himself in the end, destitute and in rags at the swine's trough. Paradise is foolishly lost, grace squandered, the paternal inheritance wasted. So Catholic faith, is lost, redemption wasted, grace and the sacraments squandered, and all is ruin! Yea, verily, I have compassion on the multitude.

The Jews in their captivity sat by the rivers of Babylon and remembered in sorrow the magnificent feasts of Zion and the splendors that had vanished. And so now countless multitudes sit by the rivers of Babylon, by the torrents of vice and unbelief, led thither by godless literature. And if only they remembered in sorrow the days of grace and of faith! But though these deluded souls may be lost to every sense of decency and honor, we at least shall remain truly Christian, accepting only the teachings of the Church, confessing and defending her truth and sanctity. The very stones of this church, the monuments over the graves of our dear departed proclaim the truth, the grandeur and the consolation of Catholic faith. We ourselves have often witnessed this in the past and shall experience it throughout eternity if we remain true to the faith in life and in death. And if we persevere unto the end, we shall attain that beatific vision which is promised to those who allow themselves to be led by the light of that divine faith. Amen.

SERMON XXVIII

THE STABILITY OF THE PAPACY

“First I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for you all; because your faith is spoken of in the whole world.”—
ROMANS I, 8.

The great Apostle of the Gentiles thus praised the people of Rome before he had visited the imperial city of the Cæsars. The foundations of the Church there had been laid by other hands than his. Who built up that flourishing church, so famous from its very infancy? Whence its importance in all subsequent ages of Christian history? And why do we now, after the lapse of nineteen centuries, still look up to it, and speak of it with the reverence, and in the terms of praise with which it was looked up to and spoken of by the whole world in the days of St. Paul?

I will tell you. One day in far off Palestine a Man was walking attended by twelve other men in that mountain region in the neighborhood of Cæsarea-Philippi. The men were the disciples of One who called himself by the mysterious title, “Son of Man”; and He asked them, “Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?” They answered: “Some say that He is John the Baptist, others that He is Elias, others that He is Jeremias or one of the prophets.” Then

the Man said to His disciples: "But whom do you say that I am?" And one of His disciples thereupon answering said: "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Then the Man, turning to him who had answered His question, said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and flood have 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 shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven."

A year had passed away, and the same Man was sitting at table with these same twelve men. The time of His Passion was at hand, and in view of it, He had instituted the rite in which He had created the chiefs of His kingdom, and He spoke to them of the kingdom He was disposing to them, described the nature of its government, and indicated the character of the person who was to exercise it. And then, singling out from among the twelve that same disciple, whom He had distinguished in the instance just mentioned, He said to him: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee* that thy faith fail not, and thou being converted confirm thy brethren."

On the same night, the Man who had thus twice conferred a special charge on the same disciple was

taken by the chief priests of His nation, delivered to the secular power, and put to death by the procurator of the Roman Emperor, as one who claimed to be king of the Jews. After dying on the cross, He was buried, but His disciples said that He arose again and appeared to them. And in one of the appearances, as seven of them were fishing in the Lake of Galilee, they saw Him standing on the shore. And He called to them, and invited them to dine with Him. And after the dinner, He said to the same disciples whom he had twice before distinguished in the company of twelve by giving him a singular charge: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" He said to Him: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." He said to him: "Feed my lambs." He said to him again: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" He said to Him: "Yea Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." He said to him: "Be shepherd over my sheep." He said to him the third time: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, "lovest thou me?" And he said to Him: "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said to him: "Feed my sheep." Some years later a stranger from the East entered Rome by the Appian Way and said to himself: "Here will I remain; from here will I feed my Master's lambs, and my Master's sheep." The stranger in Rome was Peter, to whom Christ had spoken in Palestine. Peter brought to Rome her greatest glory. He made her the seat of a universal

and never-ending empire—the empire of the Church of the living God. It was because Rome was the great city of the Cæsars, towards whose forum converged the highways of the world, that Peter chose her to be the chief city of Christ's empire. Here he fixed his See, and now for nearly nineteen hundred years his successors, the bishops of Rome, have ruled the Church of Christ.

In history there is nothing like the Papacy. The record of its life is the proof of its divine origin. It has lived nearly nineteen hundred years. It carries us back to the time of the early Cæsars. Its hands were uplifted to bless the martyrs given over to the wild beasts of the Coliseum. It worshiped in the sacred recesses of the Catacombs. The Papacy welcomed Constantine to Rome after his great victory over the tyrant Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge before the gates of the city, and listened to his proclamation of freedom for Christ and His followers. It crowned Charlemagne, when a new world had risen upon the ruins of the old Roman empire.

But the Papacy did not pass down the centuries without struggles against fierce and powerful enemies. Strength of arm and power of mind, such as would have dealt destruction to the most mighty kingdoms, assailed it in every age. "And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon the house, and it fell not; for it was founded on a rock." "And Jesus said to them: why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up, He com-

manded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm."

These two quotations from the Gospel of St. Matthew present under two different figures, a forcible illustration of what has often happened to the Papacy at various epochs in its long and eventful history. A house strongly and securely built upon a firm foundation by an all-wise and all-powerful Architect, it has been at all times the object of the fiercest and most obstinate attacks. The armies of the world and the hosts of Satan have been successively marshalled against it in formidable array; dark and threatening storms have often broken over it; erring men, and the powers of darkness have over and over again conspired to destroy it; but "it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."

Launched like a bark on the boisterous sea of this world, the Papacy has been at all times assailed by the most terrible tempests; the winds have howled fiercely around it; the waves, lashed into fury, have threatened to swallow it up; everything pointed to a speedy and fatal shipwreck, and its stoutest-hearted mariners quailed and trembled with fear. But, the good old ship has braved all storms and out-lived all dangers. It could not suffer shipwreck, for it was freighted with the riches of redemption and the hopes of mankind, and Jesus was constantly on board, watching over its destiny and shielding it from impending danger. Sometimes, indeed, He seemed to slumber; but even then His Divine Heart was wake-

ful; and in the hour of the greatest gloom and of the most imminent peril to His trembling disciples, He listened favorably to their earnest supplication, "Lord, save us, we perish." He rebuked their want of faith, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" "And rising up He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm."

It has ever been so in the history of the Holy See. It has come victorious out of every struggle, sometimes, indeed, bearing on its body the mark of cruel wounds, and with its garments dripping with blood, but always with the principle of life as strong in it as ever. The Papacy has survived revolutions which have swept away the most mighty states and empires; it has weathered storms in which the stoutest barks have suffered shipwreck; it has come unscathed out of fiery ordeals which have consumed all other institutions, creations of merely human wisdom and power. Empires have fallen around it, dynasties have disappeared, thrones have tottered and sunk to the dust, scepters have been broken in pieces, laurels which have decked the brows of conquerors have faded, and regal crowns have dropped to the earth; yet the Papacy has survived every change and revolution and has stood forth a pillar of strength, solitary and alone in its wonderful stability amidst the ruins everywhere strewn in around it. And now, after all its conflicts, the Papacy is still as vigorous, as full of health and life, as buoyant with hope, as when it first entered the great battle-field of this world, almost nineteen hundred years ago.

The greatest trial that the Papacy had to sustain in modern times was when Pius VII was dragged into exile by the imperial despot who rode the storm of the French revolution and controlled its destinies. Napoleon I was determined to chain the Papacy to his chariot. He sent General Radet to Rome, who forced his way into the private apartments of the Pope in the Quirinal Palace, on the 9th day of June, 1809, and seizing the aged Pontiff, carried him off a prisoner to France. We all know how shamefully the Holy Pontiff was treated, and to what indignities and humiliations he was subjected by his imperial jailer, in the royal palace of Fontainebleau, near Paris. But did the aged Pontiff quail? Did his purpose falter? Did he lose faith or hope? Did he fear the result? And was his hope groundless? Calm, mild, dignified, strong in faith and hope, Pius VII was not appalled by the dreadful storm that raged around the vessel of which he held the helm. He knew and felt that the tempest would soon subside, and that the bark of Peter would once again pursue its prosperous course over the placid waters. And he was not left long in suspense. Soon the scene shifts. The long persecuted Pontiff is borne back in triumph to Rome. His victory and that of the Church is glorious and complete. But what of Napoleon, the great all-conquering Emperor, who had put forth his hands against the Lord's anointed; had sarcastically boasted, when the Pope excommunicated him, that this should not cause the arms to fall from the hands of his brave soldiers, and had flattered himself with the vision

of an universal empire over Europe, of which Rome and Paris would be the two great centers? What was the fate of this towering genius and proudly boasting conqueror of Europe? Everyone knows what it was. In the very room at Fontainebleau where he maltreated Pius VII, by a strange irony of fate, he was forced to sign his abdication. And, confined upon a barren rock in the ocean, he languished out the last years of his feverish existence, with full leisure to reflect on the evils he had done to the people of God and on the blind ambition and sacrilegious invasion of the Church which had marred his destiny; and with time enough, too, to repent of his misdeeds, to lament his false steps, and to return to a more sober and more Christian frame of mind. Forgetful of all past injuries, the noble Pontiff exerted his influence with the European powers and in particular with the British Government, and succeeded in obtaining permission to send him the spiritual guide for whom he had earnestly asked.

One of the most remarkable incidents in this drama, is the circumstance that Napoleon was overthrown, the Pontiff restored to his See and the Church to its rights, chiefly by the agency of three great powers, England, Russia and Prussia, all distinguished for their firm, constant and relentless opposition to the Church, and to the Papacy. Who does not see the finger of God in all this? Who will not conclude that both the Church and the Papacy bear a charmed life; that God Himself stands pledged for their defense and protection, and that man, therefore, cannot destroy them?

The Papacy has always exercised a civilizing influence on the world. From the Rome of Peter, Christianity and civilization went abroad over the earth. Blot out from history the influence of the Papacy—what remains to the world of Christian truth, spiritual life, and moral culture? The Apostle of Christianity was ever the apostle of civilization; the missionary was the explorer of new countries, while preaching the Gospel to the inhabitants of unknown and untraveled regions, and it was at Rome's bidding and under Rome's guidance that Christianity was preached in every nation of the known world. As early as the second century Irenæus of Gaul wrote: "To Rome because of its supremacy must believers from everywhere turn." From Rome Augustine went to England and Patrick was sent to Ireland. Rome sent Boniface to Germany, and Ansgar to the tribes living near the North Sea. And what Rome sowed in the souls of men she protected and nurtured. The Papacy was at all times the great promoter of education, the valiant defender of the weak, the vigilant guardian of liberty. When feudal lords and kings sacrificed womanly virtue, and the sacredness of the marriage bond, a Pope quickly excommunicated the guilty ones, and the haughtiest and mightiest men of earth were compelled to do homage to justice and good morals. When tyrants smote liberty and trampled on the sacred rights of the people, a Pope called them to Canossa and curbed their pride and ambitions. The famed universities of the so-called Dark Ages, were blessed and encouraged by the Popes, and often

founded directly by them. The ceaseless efforts of the Papacy rid Europe of slavery and diminished the number and repressed the savagery of feudal wars. It has been well said that he knows but little of history—but little of the battles waged for truth, virtue, liberty and civilization, who does not reverence the Papacy. Who, visiting Rome, does not pass from one basilica to another in love and gratitude, to kneel before the tombs of some of the giants amongst the Popes, and thank heaven that the Papacy was given to humanity to defend the poor and the weak, to protect woman, to preserve on earth purity of morals, and liberty of soul, when pride and passion conspired to hurl the world back into paganism.

The Papacy stands out in history the most sublime and constant evidence that God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. To the minds of many the crucial period in the life of the Papacy had come when the pontificate of Pius IX was drawing to its close. The Papal States had fallen, and the spoliation of the temporal power of the Holy See was complete. Prophets of evil were not wanting who foretold the speedy extinction of the Papacy. But God never abandons His Church. Providential Popes have always been seated in the chair of Peter at every crucial period of her history. And so, twenty-six years ago, when the hour seemed the darkest for the Papacy, Leo XIII was proclaimed Supreme Pontiff. For over a quarter of a century Leo did his work thoroughly and well, and when death claimed him in July, 1903, he left the Papacy recog-

nized by all intelligent men as the first and greatest moral power in the world. Leo has passed to his reward, but the Papacy lives on in his successor Pius X.

A few weeks ago, through the kindness of Cardinal Satolli, I had the happiness of being received in private audience by the Holy Father. A few days after my ordination, I had the honor of representing the old imperial university of Innsbruck at the Vatican, and enjoyed the distinction of a private audience with Leo XIII, then happily reigning. Leo was all intellect; Pius is all heart. Leo was the scholar, the philosopher, the statesman, the diplomat, the nobleman. Pius is the mild, the gentle, the humble, the benevolent commoner. He is a man of charming personality, and graceful, dignified bearing. He is a fine, large, handsome, manly man, with snow-white hair, a healthy, ruddy complexion, and a kind, sympathetic face. He meets you with a kindly smile and a gracious cordiality that puts you at once at ease. He has dispensed with a good deal of the etiquette of the Papal court, for he is a very democratic Pope. I at once felt at home in his presence.

I have visited Rome, the city of the Popes, the metropolis of religion; I have seen Peter, in his successor Pius X, the living link in the Apostolic chain, the first ring of which is riveted to the shrine of the Apostle St. Peter. I am grateful for the encouragement and inspiration I received from the hands of the successor of Peter. I now realize better and appreciate more the power and majesty of the Holy

See, and I understand more clearly the vastness of its influence.

The Papacy, like the sturdy oak shaken by the storm, has taken deeper root, and become more firmly established in the soil of the earth by each successive tempest that has swept by it in the long lapse of ages. Persecution has not only not impaired, but it has rather served to extend its empire, even as the wind scatters the seed of the plant, and sows it broadcast upon the earth. The Papacy cannot be destroyed, it cannot perish, because God is its light and its strength, Jesus Christ is its head, and the Holy Ghost is its Teacher and Comforter. The Papacy cannot fall, unless the Saviour God fail in His word; and He said: "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

"Strong as the rock of the ocean that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore,"

it has survived every tempest, and withstood every storm and assault. Its triumphs are strewn over the history of the past; other triumphs await it in the future.

Who does not admire, if he will not love, this glorious Spouse of Christ, "pure as a virgin, and as a virgin meek," this heroine of a thousand triumphs, this imperishable mother of Christians! Who is not proud to rise up among her millions of children and to call her blessed!



JONES, Edward.

Beauty and truth of the
Catholic Church, sermons.

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