

III. God's People

C. Nature of the Church

a. Christ's Church

051.

Sermon, *New York Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*, May 12, 1877

Sermon at the consecration of Rt. Rev. John L. Spalding as first Bishop of Peoria, May 1, 1877, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, New York

The Catholic Church a Kingdom.

Today, the Feast of the Apostles SS. Philip and James, when a new member is added to the hierarchy of that kingdom which exists throughout all time, and embraces under its sway every nation, seems a fitting occasion in which to give a simple explanation of the nature of that kingdom. There are Christians who are scandalized at calling the Church of Christ a kingdom at all. They would have it to be a kind of disjointed society--an aggregation of atoms held together only by the thread of human caprice; in fact, capable of being divided into parts, and still remaining the Church of Christ. But our Lord Himself has called it a kingdom. He has described it under many other similes, and in every one of these there is the idea of a rule, of a government. When He established it--when He commissioned the apostles, as this one is commissioned today--He prefaced that commission by saying, "All power is given thee in heaven and on earth." That is, He gave them power. He did not send them forth to preach, simply, but He sent them forth to preach and explain, to lay down the law, to define the truth, and to govern the world. It is essentially in the nature of a government that it have authority, that it have unity, that it have the power to make laws and the power to sanction laws. Now the Church of Christ has these. She represents Him under one peculiar [particular] aspect, for the reign of Christ, who is called the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, exists over all things. He is the Lord of nature, and He rules all through nature, because He created it, and He created all causes and He shaped all effects and the forces that produced them. He reigns also in glory over the elect, where He manifests His family, and over the reprobate, where His justice is shown forth. The Church represents Him as far as He reigns by grace, for this is the third kind of kingdom that He possesses over what He has created. The Church is His person, in so far as He rules in that kingdom of grace. All that are saved out of the children of men are saved by her ministrations, and all that are lost of the children of men are lost because she has to bear witness against them. I say the Church represents Him not simply as teacher, for the teacher may be neglected; not simply as the author of morality, for the author of morality may be the bearer of another's message; but she

represents Him as the Lawgiver, as the Teacher, as the Redeemer, and in all things accepted as the Judge. This Gospel is to be preached for a testimony, He says, and the Church is the bearer of this testimony. He made the Church a corporate body, an organized system, placing one at the head, and then establishing individual orders of the hierarchy. And this He did, not for the age in which He made St. Peter the Head of the Apostles, and not for the generation--or nation, rather--that understood the language which St. Peter then spoke, but He did it for all nations and for all generations.

He said so in so many words, speaking to the body of the apostles of whom He had already constituted St. Peter the head, and told them to go and teach all nations, "For," said He, "I am with you all days." The idea is plainly expressed there. By saying, "teach all nations," He indicated clearly that it was not to these eleven simply that He was speaking. By saying "all generations," He pointed out how they could increase their band by the sacrament of Holy Orders, and how they could perpetuate it through all times--this race that was to teach all nations and give the law to all men. So He made His Church self-governed, self-sustained, a power within itself and all-sufficient for itself. That is to say, the Church rules in His stead, in His name, in His person. That is what he means when He tells the apostles--for in telling them He told it to all that were to be of their order--"He that hears you hears Me; and he that despises you despises Me." Not as if there was some figure of speech in it by which He would say, "You are such good friends of mine that I will receive any insult offered you as if it were offered to myself, and I will reward any kindness or respect shown to you as if it were shown to Me." He did not mean this. He meant more than this. He meant precisely what He said: "He that hears you hears Me." Because in their teaching capacity and in their law-giving capacity the apostles are Jesus Christ. We can have no scruples, then, in calling the Church a kingdom--that is, a government; and it is the only one that will know no change. But, in order to understand it rightly, we must call to mind the entire doctrine of Christianity--I mean the fundamental doctrine of Christianity--which is expressed very perfectly by St. Paul, that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but "a new creature." See what this means when applied to the Church. In the long line of Roman Pontiffs in the almost endless aggregate of holy bishops and priests and founders of religious orders we read the names and the doctrines of men eminent for their learning, for their saintliness, for their zeal, for their sincerity, for every virtue. But it is not their learning, it is not their zeal, it is not their virtue that have upheld the cause of Jesus Christ in the world. To be sure a society formed among men must be composed of human elements; but in so far as they are men, in so far as their natural capacity, their natural talents, their acquired learning or genius, are concerned they do not constitute the soul of the Church. They are nothing but the outward appearance. But that which gives life to the Church, that which vivifies the whole

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frame of this vast society, extending as it does in one form, or another, from the first that was saved down to the last when the trumpet shall sound, is the presence of the Holy Ghost, the indwelling of Him who is sent by Jesus Christ to be the soul and life of the Church. In Him nothing is of any worth that is of natural creation, because the whole Church is a supernatural creation. So you see this illustrated in all the sacraments of the Church. When the priest baptizes--that is when he regenerates the soul, cleansing it from the sin in which it was born--he does not pray over the child, "May this soul be cleansed as I wash its body with water," but he says, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." When in the confessional the priest, having heard the penitent accuse himself of all his sins, imparts to him the remission of those sins, he does not pray that those sins may be remitted, but he says, "I absolve thee from thy sins." You see it is not the natural man that speaks, but the new creature. It is the creature of divine grace that says these words. When the priest stands at the altar and performs that most stupendous of all miracles, the changing of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, he does not beseech God that this wine may be changed into His blood, but he says, "This is My body, and this is the chalice of My blood," which would have no meaning unless he really personated Christ--unless in him spoke the living God. And this we believe--that the moment a man is lifted up by the sacrament of holy orders to sacred priesthood that moment, in all the functions that he performs about the altar, in all that he does for the salvation of men, he is no longer a man, but is the minister, the very person of Jesus Christ.

So, when we call the Church of Christ a kingdom it is only to those who are grossly misinformed or who are willfully blind and prejudiced that there is any alarm, as if we spoke of the Church coming into collision with the kingdoms of this world. She is a kingdom--but not of this world. Her power does not originate in this world. It is not as the other kingdoms of the earth are, a power built up on policy, that is built up by war, or the lover of plunder, or the feeling of nationality, or by the astuteness of those men we call statesmen, but it is built up simply by the power of God and upheld by that power. Of all the absurdities that have ever been urged against the Church by those who are determined not to understand what she is, the most absurd seems to me that of those who imagine the Church to rest on the policy, the cunning and the management of the hierarchy throughout the world; for, in the first place, there is no human power, no human wit or shrewdness that could create that hierarchy, that could ever make a body of men so devoted to one interest as is the hierarchy of the Church. And, in the next place, there is no human policy that could maintain her power and her influence throughout the world, since she had no human arms by which to protect herself. Her doctrine now, today, is as hard to the natural heart, is as difficult to the natural reason, as it was when it was first proclaimed by the apostles, and then it was folly to the Gentiles and a stumbling block to the Jews. Her doctrine is as hard now and as

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repulsive to natural feelings as it was in the days when our Lord first said, "Let a man deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." And, though widespread now throughout the world, and including the majority of men calling themselves Christians within her fold, still, so far as human influences are concerned, she is the weakest of all bodies of men--weakest because she never can take up those human arms by which the sects propagate themselves until the time comes when they perish.

But this new creation of God, the Church, can never decay. There is no power in the Church, there is no authority in the Church, there is nothing venerable in the Church which does not belong to this new creation. Of course our Lord accepts the talents of men when they devote themselves to Him; but He does not need them. He accepts the influence of nations when that influence is offered, but He does not need it. He has accepted both extremities--that of the extreme of the prejudice of the people and of the power of governments--I mean He has in His Church; and He has accepted also--experienced, also--days when it was a shame not to be called a Catholic. But in either case the passions and caprices of governments and of men are changing and shifting, quickly passing away, but the Church remains the same now as when the apostles were constituted the body of preachers and lawgivers for the entire world; and so the Church will remain; the Church will never be acknowledged as the head of the temporal power of the earth, because the world will never be worthy of it. She will always be persecuted and always triumphant. The world and its changing opinions and prejudices and governments seem like the ocean in restless moving to and fro, now here and now there; and the Church is like the rock that raises its head above the billows and remains firm forever while the waters are chafing at its base. But it is the nature of the order established by our Lord that St. Peter, the head of the Church, should govern all, and his successor has the same power that he held. He had the control of everything, and he unties all things in himself. Those who were his co-laborers throughout the world, like him, always have guided men when they lacked the power of enforcing the law, and, therefore, let it be no scandal to us to call the Church a kingdom and a government. Let us not be afraid of those who say we must be disloyal to one government if we are loyal to another. We can be loyal to both, and the best and most loyal of citizens is the true Catholic.

In conclusion, let me say to the young chosen one who today has received the episcopal consecration, who goes forth on the same mission and with about the same resources as that undertaken by the apostles, that henceforth he must be alone in the world. His duties, his position, will necessarily make him without any one to lean upon; but all will expect to lean upon him. I congratulate both the Church and him on his accession to the episcopacy, but in how different a sense! The Church--that is, our brethren of the episcopacy and of the clergy--have one in him, coming, as he does, from *gens a sacerdotas*--a family of priests--who have supported the fabric of our religion in

this country and will maintain its honor, not only among Catholics, but will defend it also among those who are not Catholics. We look, therefore, upon him as a gem, literally, in the crown of the Church in America. Our Lord invites him by this consecration* to a closer relationship in His holy family; for truly, when the gold cross is hung around his neck, then the heavy cross of sorrow, disappointment and responsibility will also be hung on his heart. He is to wear the crown of thorns, and it will press more sharply around his brows than if he had never been promoted to this high dignity. Still, as I stand here, and the memories of his boyhood, and of my fresh manhood in the priestly life cluster around me, I can see, better than I could then, reason why we should both feel consoled; for the time is so short it seems but yesterday when we were together at the college--and yet years and years have flown away. So it will be years hence; and when at our dying day we shall look back again and remember where we met, the time then also will seem as if it were but a day--and it is but a day. Oh, my brethren, let us so conduct ourselves that, in looking back upon this dream of our lives, we may never have occasion to regret, but, on the contrary, have occasion to look forward with hope and confidence to Him who is the reward of all good.

* "conversation" as printed in the *Journal*

052.

The Divinity of Christ, Part II, Chapter IV

**THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN, GIVEN AMONG MEN
WHEREBY WE MAY BE SAVED, BUT ONLY THE NAME OF JESUS. ACTS, IV: 12**

This is our fourth plain inference from the demonstrated truth, Jesus Christ is God.

The very fact of God undertaking a work in person is emphatic proof that no other is to do it. In fact, it is very hard to see how any other could do it; for the work of our salvation was not a trifling work. We had declared ourselves enemies of God, and defied Him; we had forfeited innocence and grace and eternal life, and given ourselves over slaves to the enemy of God and of our souls. We had, therefore, to be bought with a price, our sin had to be atoned for, our lost innocence re-purchased. But no creature could atone for sin: first, because no creature could offer to God any thing not His already; and second, because sin being, in some sort, infinite in malice, needs an infinite expiation. Jesus Christ, who in His Humanity had something to offer to which His Divine Person gave infinite excellence, was alone the worthy Expiator; and as He alone could expiate, so He alone could reconcile us, restore our lost graces, and put us in the way of regaining our forfeited beatitude; therefore He became the "One Mediator," through whom alone we have access to God, and hope of Heaven. For aught we know,

He may have effected many other ends by means of His Incarnation. But as the sunlight is all the light to us, though it illuminate other worlds beside ours, so He is the sole light of our souls, though He may be the same to innumerable others. Salvation does not come from nature. The soul does not gravitate toward Heaven as a body to its center. True, the soul desires God with exceeding eagerness; but naturally it is held down by the flesh, to confound its desire for God with its appetite for present satisfaction.

A man may do no violence to himself, may never forfeit his own self-respect, and yet go straight to destruction. If he would be saved he must turn away from what is present and visible, and set his heart on what is future and unseen. But he can not do this without the gift of God through Jesus Christ. Without Jesus Christ he can have no faith in the future and unseen. He may dream dreams about it, and even recommend it to others; but he can not have earnest, undoubting, practical faith in it without the grace of Christ. And even had he faith, he could not without grace, lift his thoughts and aims and affections practically up to the level of his convictions. As the vine gives life to the branches, so Jesus Christ gives His life to every operation of virtue, and without Him we can not even as much as think a thought toward salvation.

"If I be lifted up from the earth," said He, "I will draw all things unto Me." That is, on the Cross I will become the standard and measure of all excellence, so that what is like Me will be approved, and what is unlike Me shall be condemned. Hence, St. Paul, who was honorably born, well educated, very wise, very eloquent, much beloved of the people, and a favorite of God, found nothing to glory in but the Cross of Christ. His wisdom was to know Christ crucified; his honor was to share the Redeemer's contumely; his joy to bear always the mortifications of Jesus in his body.

In this spirit the Church knows only Christ crucified in her Offices and Liturgy. Every favor that she asks from God she asks in His name. Public worship is always opened and closed with the sign of the Cross. No Sacrament is administered, no rite performed without it. It is fastened on the tops of spires, carved on chalices, painted on walls, worked into sacred vestments and altar linen. She directs her children to guard themselves with it at the beginning of every undertaking, and with it to give thanks at its close. They must make it when they eat, when they sleep, when they go out, when they come in, when they work, when they play; in "whatever they do; by word, or work, they must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Coloss. iii. 17.) He has "drawn all things unto Himself." He is the sole Saviour. Out of Him there is no knowledge that enlightens, no love that is lasting, no hope that is not vain. Men are born aliens from the grace of God, and they make themselves still stranger to Him by their actual sins. Without a Reconciler they would remain forever alien from Him, and from happiness, enveloped forever in measureless evil.

If the lakes, and rivers, and springs, and wells on earth were, all but one, dried

up, what a stream of travel, from every point of the compass, would be seen hurrying up hill and down dale, over mountain and over moor; on towards that one fountain! Spiritually, the earth is a parched desert that has no water for the soul. Jesus Christ is the sole Fountain of Life dropped down like dew from Heaven. Science, art, what genius can achieve in ruling men, fame, power, pleasure--these are "broken cisterns that can not hold water," and leave the soul that has searched through them wearied and unrefreshed at the threshold of Eternity. Jesus Christ is the sole Saviour. "There is no other name among men whereby we may be saved." The *Name* of Jesus Christ means His *Power*. There is no power that can save us but His. Where is His power exerted? Where shall we seek, to have it applied to us? Evidently where He was pleased it should be exercised. That is to say, we can not make a religion of our own, and say, God must save us thus; but we must seek the Religion that He made, and be saved on His terms. There is no use in calling this plain inference from the divinity of Jesus Christ, this emphatic declaration of the Apostle (Acts vi), bigotry and narrow-mindedness. It is not bigotry, for it is truth. It is not narrow-mindedness, for it is common sense. There is no way of salvation but Christ's way. There may be other ways of making a seat, of leading followers, of causing sensations, of making a fortune; but there is no other way of salvation.

There is no use in getting angry with one who states this truth; for he merely states it--he did not make it. Do not ask him to be more liberal in his views; because he has a right to be liberal only with what is his own. There is no liberality in lying about the teaching of religion and common sense. If Christ's way of salvation is the only way there is no liberality in saying that it is not the only way; it is mere lying, from which no good can come.

But what is Christ's way of salvation?

It must be still upon the earth; for it could not fail or grow obsolete. Reader, did you ever try to find it? Do you love your salvation well enough to accept it, no matter where you find it? Are you willing to be taught of God, let Him teach what He will? Will you listen, and say "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," though He should convict you of ignorance, and error, and sin? If so, you will not be long in finding the Teacher that represents Christ on earth. It can not be any of the Protestant churches; for they were never heard of until fourteen hundred years after Jesus Christ had ascended to Heaven. Whoever heard of Lutherans before Luther, or Calvinists before Calvin, or of Anglicans before Henry VIII.? Therefore they are not Christ's way.

It can not be any of the Rationalistic sects; for they expressly repudiate every teacher, and spin their theory of salvation out of their own caprice and fancy.

It is the Catholic Church. The Pope of Rome and those subject to him are the body to which Christ gave the commission, "Preach the Gospel to every creature." That body has been a living organization ever since those words were uttered, doing the

same office, exercising the same authority, encountering the same opposition. Read history, and see if it is not the society founded by Jesus Christ?

What society was warred upon by pagan Rome for three long centuries? Was it not the society founded by THE GALILLEAN? and, in the same breath, was it not the society of which the Bishop of Rome was the head?

What society fled to the Catacombs, and from thence struggled patiently till idolatry was overthrown; then preserved the Empire; then subdued the barbarians, checked the power of Mahometanism, and prepared the way for all that is healthy in modern civilization? Was it not the Christian; and was not the Pope of Rome its head?

What body gathered the books of Scripture, determined which were inspired, and which not, as early as the fourth century? Was it not the Christian Church; and did it not own for chief, the Roman Pontiff'?

What are the countless sects over Germany, England, and America, but decaying branches cut off from the true vine, out of which there is no sap of life? They do not pretend to have been founded by Christ. The most they pretend is that they found out His doctrine fifteen hundred years after He had commissioned the Church to teach it--a pretension too absurd to merit discussion.

It is an historical fact, that Christianity and Catholicity are identical. The Catholic Church, therefore, is the way of salvation appointed by Jesus Christ--the only way of salvation.

Many, now-a-days, waive the question of eternal salvation, and devote their energies to seeking material prosperity, national wealth, liberty outside of Christ; and even rulers professing themselves Catholic have affected to discover that, in promoting the temporal welfare of society Christianity must be disregarded. Suppose we concede that Religion must be treated as a fable to secure temporal prosperity; then the question naturally arises, is temporal prosperity worth such a price? Can one afford to lose his soul to save his body? Or is it worthwhile to save his body to-day and have it cast into hell to-morrow? If you must prohibit the public worship of God, the observance of festivals, the teaching of' catechism, the inculcation of piety, in order to make your people hardy and enterprising, would it not be better to let them remain inactive and be behind the age?

But it is not true that there is any real prosperity, or desirable wealth, or true liberty that the Church keeps from her obedient children. Jesus Christ is the sole Saviour in the temporal order also.

For, what is Salvation in the temporal order but liberty, equality, fraternity?

Liberty, untrammled, yet never becoming license; equality, that says, "My neighbor is as good as I, and therefore I will treat him tenderly;" fraternity, that recognizes the true brotherhood of our race--never seeking to domineer, but rather to minister.

These you can not have out of Christ.

It is vain to hope for progress to evolve them, or for forms of government to secure them. What is born of the flesh is flesh, in whatever age or under whatever form of government it spring up. Conscience alone can secure the rich, justice, or the poor, mercy.

In our country, lately, we have secured the manumission of five million slaves. This is a grand event, a mighty blessing. But have we forthwith found, therein, our temporal salvation? Alas, no. There are still wrongs and miseries in society, even under the shadow of the starry banner.

The penitentiaries are crowded; the jails are full; gambling houses and drinking shops are flourishing; the hovels and garrets are thronged; beggars meet you on the highway; thousands are growing richer; but millions are growing poorer. Do you call that salvation? You can not legislate people into prosperity; nor, finding them prosperous, can you legislate them into honesty.

Oh! but the schools--when every body can read and write. Education is good; even the barren knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic is better than no knowledge at all; but education will but give edge and power to passion, unless it furnish a motive for controlling it. But there is no motive for controlling passion outside of faith. If to eat and drink, and accumulate and domineer is all men need; if death is the end of existence, and there is no judgment beyond, why should I restrain any lust, or anger, or ambition, or avarice? Why should I not eat, drink, and be merry; why should I not rob and steal and cheat; why should I not domineer and tyrannize where I have the power? If you want me to practice self-restraint you must show me a motive for it. Tell me I am accountable to God for all I do and say and think, and then I can see a reason for watchfulness and self-control.

So it is with the masses. Teach them to look forward to the Judgment, and you make them moderate and self-restrained. Teach them to expect their happiness beyond the grave, and you make them think lightly of the ills and advantages of life. And so alone, can you give any stability to society; any security to wealth; any alleviation to the pangs of poverty. But Jesus Christ is the only one to teach and enforce this. Therefore Jesus Christ is the sole Saviour in the temporal order also.

Let no Catholic, then, be deceived by any good coming to his country outside of religion. There can be none worth striving for. Let the heathen have it, whatever it is, and solace themselves as best they can against the time when their separation from Christ shall become final and eternal.

053.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, May 3, 1856

How can the Church Exist?

Nothing more frequently leads empirical reasoners astray than mistaking an effect for a cause. When one begins to imagine that the morning dawn makes the sun rise, or that it is the wealth of a government that makes its citizens prosperous, there is no limit to the absurdities to which his premises may lead him.

A recurrence to this reflection is often necessary to understand the absurd ideas of somewhat intelligent non-Catholics in regard to the Church. They enter upon study and life, holding as fundamental truths, learned in the nursery--as something they no more think of denying than their own existence--that the Catholic Church is a mere human institution, to be propagated in the world, and supported through the ages by human learning, energy, and craft. The existence of that Church encounters them thus preoccupied, and demands explanation as a gigantic fact of the past, and a stupendous phenomenon of the present. In the past they see a polity that has filled the world with its influence for eighteen centuries--that has been in contact with innumerable dynasties unscathed by their vicissitudes, a body of teachers who in all varieties of public taste, of general intelligence, of prevalent morality, have presented the same system of dogmatic teachings and moral precepts; and they are called upon to interpret this fact without conceding the Church's divine character.

Hence the grotesque representation of particular epochs of history, their caricatures of great popes and saints of the Church, their disjointed ideas of human nature and human affairs in times gone by, and their worship of so-called progress. Thus they imagine there was some age between the present and the time of Christ in which the mass of men were prepared to receive without examining them, the "absurd doctrines of Romanism," to undertake, willingly and without motive, lives of mortification and poverty, to bow down, unsolicited, before the Roman Pontiff. It was a peculiarity of the age (what age, they do not know) that men should go counter to their natural inclinations, without hope of gain, and, though imbued with the widely varying ideas of the different nations of the world, should all *go wrong in the same direction!* So we find them representing St. Leo the Great, SS. Gregory I. and VII., as ambitious schemers whose far reaching statesmanship has so contrived the Church that she should stand, at the fall of the Roman Empire, during the opposition of the Germanic tyrants, the revolt of the Wittenberg friar, the defection of England, and the predominance of the blood-thirsty French atheists of the last century! Let them "contrive" something of the kind! In the present, they behold an institution spread over the entire world, united in one belief, having the same public worship, acknowledging the same spiritual head. This body, old though it be, exhibits, as its enemies delight to

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say, no signs of decrepitude. It is as full of vigor as though its life were young. It holds honorable place in the most polished courts of Europe, and it is planting the cross in the loneliest wilds of America and the islands of the ocean. Its missionaries are pressing its conquests in the face of torments and death in China. Wherever it is (if its enemies are to be believed) it is prosperous, flourishing, rushing on in the full tide of success to complete triumph, unopposed supremacy. How are non-Catholics to explain this phenomenon in accordance with their views?

It is no wonder that even the most learned invent theories concerning it, which excite the laughter of our catechism children.--They say the priests hold the vast machinery of this gigantic institution together--forgetting that the most singular part of the problem is the question, what holds the priests together and perpetuates their order? They say that it is the wealth of the hierarchy which gives it influence--forgetting that the hierarchy has no wealth which is not a *consequence*, not a *cause* of its influence.

They say that it is the ceremonial of the Church which awes into submission the multitudes--forgetting that the ceremonial of the Church furnishes them their strongest ground of objection and ridicule against her divinity and truth. In a word, in their attempts to explain what, in their theory, is inexplicable, they are continually putting effects for causes. The union, devotion, disinterestedness, zeal of the clergy, the piety and charity of the people, the splendor of our ceremonies, and so forth, are not causes but effects of the Church's undecayed vigor. That vigor springs from the fount of life and strength, Jesus Christ. The supernatural life communicated to her by her divine founder circulates through all her vast arteries, knits together and renders firm all her colossal joints. From Christ comes the devotion of the priest, the charity of the layman, the fascination of solemn ceremonies, the efficacy of the sacraments, and the faith of the people. This is the most natural explanation of a most preternatural phenomenon; let our non-Catholic friends travel no farther seeking to understand it. The Church is Christ's and Christ is God; and God [is] the disposer of events, the ruler of hearts, the arbiter of destinies, Who "hath done all things He willed."

054.

The Divinity of Christ, Part II, Chapter III

The Authority He set up Binds all Men.

Jesus Christ came from Heaven with a message of good to all peoples. He came to set up a kingdom in this world. He came to fulfill, and at the same time abolish, the Jewish Law, to set up a new Priesthood instead of that of Aaron; to subject to Himself every principality and power; to rule from shore to shore and to remotest time. The history of His life tells how He founded His kingdom. He made Peter its chief, and the

other Apostles princes under him. He told them that their organization was to last till the end of time, and to rule over every nation. "Go into all the world," He said, giving them their commission, "and preach the Gospel to every creature;" (Luke xvi. 15.) and before they could ask, "With what authority?" He added, "He that believeth not shall be condemned." And that they might understand how such authority was given to men, He added still further, "Lo! I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." The apostolate, therefore, was to represent the person and carry with it the authority of Jesus Christ. Through it He was to teach, and through it reign over, the world. Therefore, its authority was to bind all men' therefore its authority binds the consciences of all men now.

Is not Jesus Christ possessed of "all power in heaven and on earth?" Is He not "king of kings and lord of lords?" Then His authority is absolute, no matter where it is lodged. But He has lodged it in His Church; therefore His Church has a right to the obedience of every understanding and of every will.

The theory, "Every one has a right to believe what he pleases," which is true when it means, "No man has the right to dictate his belief to another," is widely accepted in the sense that no man is responsible for what he believes, or that there is no connection between belief and practice. But in this latter sense it is very far from being true. No one has the right to believe what is false, any more than he has the right to do what is wrong. Nor can it be said that no one can help his convictions, and there can be no responsibility where there is no freedom; for though it is true that no one can say, to his understanding, "believe," at will, yet every one can regulate his understanding as to what subjects it shall reflect upon and attend to, and thus indirectly dictate what it shall believe. Therefore is every one accountable to God for his belief. Hence no one is free, in conscience, to be of what religion he chooses. The Son of God came down from Heaven to be our teacher; therefore we must listen to what He says. If one does not know where to hear Him he must seek in singleness and sincerity of heart until he finds. For this, understanding was bestowed upon us that we might think upon our ways, and direct our steps in the law of the Lord.

Moreover, this responsibility is the most important and far-reaching of all that rest upon us. As the light of the body is the eye, so the intention is what guides all the thoughts, words, and deeds of life. But the intention depends upon the belief. We will always aim at what we believe is going to satisfy our desires. Therefore our belief guides our aims and rules our life, and is of as much consequence as our eternal happiness or misery.

Let no one say, then, "It matters not what a man believes, so that his life be good;" for his life can not be wholly good unless his faith be wholly right. He may live so as to escape moral censure; he may do many acts of virtue; but he can not be blameless in the sight of God.

54 - The Authority He set up Binds all Men

You have not a right to be Methodist, or Baptist, or Episcopalian, or Universalist as you please; although no merely human tribunal can prevent you. There is a teacher set up on the earth, whom you are bound to seek and to submit to. The apostolate established by Jesus Christ still lives upon the earth; and you must learn the truth from it if you wish to do what is right. And in learning from it you must have a docile, tractable, humble spirit. You are not to conceive, beforehand, what ought to be taught. You are not to divide the truth and say so much I will receive and so much reject. You are not to cavil at the teacher, and pretend to understand the message better than the messenger. Outside of that teacher you have no knowledge whatever--neither Scripture, nor tradition, nor reason in the mysteries to be revealed. You do not know how many, or what are the Sacraments; whether there is a Purgatory or no; whether Mary should be honored or prayed to or not; whether there are three persons or one in God. You do not know how to pray, how to pay worship to God, how to honor the Angels and Saints, how to fast or feast, without her intervention. You must become as a little child, waiting to learn and ready to obey. "He that believeth shall be saved."

Sometimes Catholics are asked, Why does your Church teach so and so? Why? We do not know or control what she is going to teach. She had been teaching for eighteen hundred years before we were born, and never consulted us about what she should teach; and we came to her--we came, not to modify her teaching or shake her policy, but only to learn, obey, and to save our souls. She is to us what we present her to others, the representative of Christ, the infallible teacher of truth, the final judge on earth of all religious controversies.

There are some, again, who pronounce her claims absurd, on the ground that the hierarchy is but a body of men and can not be infallible. But this difficulty is not to the point. What the instrument that Jesus Christ chose as His means of teaching was, before He chose it, is neither here nor there; the only question is, "Did He choose it?" After the choice was made, though the instrument were a "tinkling cymbal," the infallibility is secure.

The Catholic Church living, through her organization, an imperishable life, claims to possess authority to teach and legislate in the name of Jesus Christ. On what ground will you dispute her claims? From Scripture? You have no Scripture that you do not get from her. Reason? Reason is to be instructed, and therefore can not be judge. There are no logical grounds on which any one, admitting the Divinity of Jesus Christ, can escape submitting to the teaching of His Church. Her authority is binding on all.

And as the understanding is obliged to submit to her teaching of dogma, so must the will yield obedience to her legislation in what belongs to morality. "So the Church decrees" as a principle is final for action, as "So the Church teaches" is for belief. Her laws always aim at spiritual good, and can not be resisted without sin, whether regulating public worship, the administration of the Sacraments, the observance of

55 - Dedication of St. Francis de Sales Church, Boston

fasts, the education of the youth, or whatever else in the spiritual order.

Do you say that Catholic rulers have disregarded them and do disregard them? Well, Catholic rulers may do wrong and perish. A moral obligation is not proved to have no existence by being disregarded. The tower of Siloam does not fall upon every one that does evil; but the justice of God will track and overtake them at last. Careless Catholics may neglect the abstinences and fasts of the Church; but in so doing they add sin to sin against the Day of Wrath.

How grievous are the sins of heresy and schism appears from this, that they are both direct rebellion against God. "He that hears you hears Me," said the Redeemer to His Apostles, "and he that despises you despises Me." (Luke x. 16.) Every crime is an implied rebellion, in which the wrong-doer prefers his own satisfaction to the service of God. But heresy, a direct refusal to believe Jesus Christ, and schism, an open defiance of His authority; are direct and formal rebellion, and therefore sins of the most heinous nature.

I do not mean that all born in heresy or schism have, on their souls, all the guilt which these names imply; but those lapsing, of their own free will, into them, or those remaining in them, contrary to light and knowledge, are undoubtedly to be ranked among the most grievous offenders.

It has become the fashion, of late years, to speak of the Church as decaying, and of her laws as not being regarded among enlightened men. A school of politicians has got the upper hand in modern society, whose highest aim is utility. These speak and legislate as though the ruler of a nation ought to recognize no distinction between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, justice and injustice. The Church has lately spoken and condemned their errors, denying the right of king or people to do wrong. The politicians disregard her condemnation, not because they have the right to do so, but because they have the power. Time will show whether the authority of the Church can be slighted with impunity by either princes or people.

055.

Sermon, *The Boston Pilot*, June 28, 1862 and *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, July 2, 1862

Dedication of St. Francis de Sales Church, Boston.

(synopsis)

The following is rather an imperfect synopsis of the Right Rev. Dr. Rosecrans' sermon [when he blessed the new church of St. Francis de Sales at Bunker Hill, Mass.]--

He said they had reason to thank God for the privilege of witnessing such a ceremonial on a day sacred in national history. It was a stirring thought that upon that height, with all the pomp of Catholic ceremonies, a church had been dedicated to the

service of God. It might be asked by some to what end was all this pomp and ceremony. The answer was, we use this ceremony simply because it has been handed down to us--because it is prescribed by the Church. We may, by examining the different parts of the ceremonial, see its fitness, its adaptation to the object in view, which is the consecration of this building exclusively to the service of God. But its fitness is not the reason; it is the practice of the Church, and that is sufficient for us. For generations it has been practiced, before the great schism in the Church, out of which have grown the monstrous religions, so called, of the present day. It will be practiced long after our ashes shall have been mouldering in the grave. If this were not a good reason, there would be no good reason for administering the Sacraments, and no good reason for any form of worship. The Catholic doctrine is simple and easily understood. The Church is the representative of Christ on earth. It is not because of the great learning of the head of the Church, but because the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The exercise of private judgment in things spiritual was not sanctioned by Christ or by the early Church. Christ went about teaching and preaching always orally; and He commissioned the Apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. The Church, our Lord declared, had the right to submission on the part of individuals. No man can refuse what the Church teaches, unless at the peril of eternal damnation. The majority of mankind require teaching, and it is for this that Christ established the Church and her infallible authority. Without admitting the authority of the Catholic Church, there can be no such thing as a logical belief in the inspiration of Holy Writ. We are told sometimes that the Catholic Church is intolerant for declaring that what is true is true, that what is white is white, that the Church of Christ is the Church of Christ. In saying that there is no salvation outside of the Church, we do not say that Christ will condemn any man unjustly. At the judgment day no one will be condemned who had not sinned willfully. No one will ever be condemned by fatality. It is not intolerant to say that we must be saved through Jesus Christ; and if we must be saved through Him, it must be by the means He has appointed. It is not enough to simply believe what the Church teaches, but we must also practice what she commands. The piety that erected this church, the justice and charity that makes us good neighbors and good citizens, are all commanded by the Church. We must then submit to her not merely through faith but through obedience. The Bishop closed by commending the spirit which caused the erection of such a noble building, and expressed a hope that the present members of this congregation, assembling to worship in this church of St. Francis of Sales, will not allow this great work to pass into the possession of their children encumbered with debt.

056.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, December 16, 1876

[The Voice of Christ in Daily Life.]

The Church speaks the voice of Jesus Christ to us in our daily life. It is not as Protestants think, and as some unreflecting Catholics act, as if they thought that our Lord teaches us way off, long ago, or in the general councils and solemn declarations of the Holy Father; but he speaks to us through our pastor or our confessor, and guides us through them in the spiritual concerns of our daily occupation. In this sense He said to the Apostles, "He that hears you, hears Me, and he that despises you, despises Me." He does [not] shape our works in their temporal bearing--with which conscience has naught to do--but in their motives and moral tendency. The Church does not tell us what to eat, what to drink, and what clothes to wear--but she tells us that these things must be honestly got and temperately used. She does not prescribe what our occupations must be; but only that whatever they are they must conform to God's holy law and be followed from pure motives and by lawful means. But all she does tell she tells with a living voice. Protestant people sometimes speak of what the pastor preaches from the pulpit, or warns in the confessional, as if it were only the man speaking; but they go away under the shadow of God's displeasure since it was He they despised. They who cavil at the pastor's rulings (unless for reasons that would warrant appeal) cavil at Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost is in the Church not only to ward off error, but to lead the sheep where pastures are greenest and waters purest; not merely to keep away the wolves, but to make the spiritual life abound.

057.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, April 24, 1875 (3)

The Impatience of Unbelief.

The advanced thinkers of his time must have had rare sport with Noe during the hundred and twenty years while he was building the ark. What witty sayings, what boisterous laughter they vented on his folly in constructing a huge fabric to escape a danger threatened only by an invisible power--known only to faith!

What ribald jests followed Lot out of his wealthy home and luxurious surroundings in Sodom, when he fled in obedience to an unseen spirit.

To the Israelites in the desert the way seemed long, the manna insipid, the promised land a dream, many and many a time, as they mused fretfully over the abundance of Egypt.

Unbelief is always fretful, hasty and impatient. It does not look beyond the present, nor beneath the surface.

In its time the Flood came and the advanced thinkers went down in its waters saying, "It was we who were mistaken after all."

The fire was precipitated on the cities of the plain, and its flames devoured the scoffers, when their folly could no more be recalled.

The remnant of the Jews reached the land of promise in God's time, leaving the bones of the incredulous mouldering in the desert.

So unbelievers now are saying, "If she is God's Church, let her appear so to us; let her arise and shine; let her roll back the waves of opposition--deliver her goods from the spoiler's hand; her chief and her princes from prison; herself from contact of false brethren, from the scandal of them that work iniquity. Let her do these things if God is with her, and we will believe."

Our Divine Lord never promised that His Church should be known by her holding a visible attitude of triumph over all her enemies. On the contrary, His warnings were of evil speakings, persecutions, judges, chains, prisons and death. In His own life He exemplified His teaching that neither joy nor sorrow are worth prizing, but only the will of God.

The bright sun of Palm Sunday was followed by the fearful darkness of Good Friday, as shadow and sunshine go linked together over land and water all the time. The Church will achieve this triumph over all her enemies, dash to pieces every wave of persecution, open every prison, vindicate her every right, but not to please our impatience and unbelief.

It will be when the Master gets ready to say, "Peace, be still," that the "great calm will come."

In the meantime, it is not by triumph but in patience that we possess our souls.

058.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, September 19, 1857

The Catholic Church its own Demonstration.

The Church may be considered in a twofold aspect: first, as she appears to those without, in her form of visible society; and second, in her spiritual claims to the supernatural right of guiding the understandings and hearts of men to God. Under the first aspect she is a great, patent, undeniable fact; and her truth under the second is a logical sequence, of her existing under the first.

For she is true in all that she teaches, and claims[,] if she was founded by Christ, such as she now exists. But the fact of her existence, considered in its adjuncts, demonstrates that she was instituted by Christ as she now exists. Therefore she is true in all her teachings and claims.

What is the meaning of the fact that the Church exists? Wide-spread over the

world; among people that have no local, social, or political, bond of union, no community of language, sentiment, or interest, exists a society, one in religious belief, rite, discipline, and in the profession of obedience to a common centre of unity. As nothing can be without a cause, so no society exists among men without a founder. Who founded this society calling itself the Catholic Church? Interrogate its members, they answer "Christ." Ask its laws, they profess to be laws of Christ. Its Sacraments are said to be ordained by the authority of Christ. Its peculiar doctrines are called doctrines of Christ. Its head is the Vicar of Christ. Its martyrs who suffered death, rather than violate its commands, called themselves martyrs of Christ. Its temples are erected, its ceremonies performed, its festivals arranged, its poetry composed, its art consecrated to the honor of Christ. And, let it be remembered, all these testimonies were not arranged, by some cunning contriver, in order to prove Jesus Christ to have been the founder of the Church--but are testimonies of unconscious witnesses who are therefore beyond all possibility of suspicion. The Church in all her rites, ceremonies, doctrines, laws of discipline, mode of organization professes to have been founded by Christ. If therefore He did not found her, who did? Who asks for proof that Mahomet founded Islamism, beyond the testimony of the Mahometans themselves? Who goes to England and France for proofs, that our Republic was instituted by the men who whose agency its public documents ascribe it, and whose sentiments its laws embody?

It is said that the system of the Church is superstitious, absurd, tyrannical. It therefore could not be introduced without opposition. But to whom was opposition made? When was it made? In what country and by whom was it made?

It is bootless to deny it. The mere existence of the Church demonstrated, in its analysis, her claims of divine origin and supernatural authority. If she did not exist by the direct agency of God she could not exist at all. But what God aids to exist is true. Therefore the Church is true.

059.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, June 26, 1875

The Same Old Church.

The Church is not only one and unchanging from age to age in her doctrine, spirit, Sacraments and morals, but she is unchanging in the opposition to her from without.

Her Founder was slandered first and delivered to death next, and time has shown that the disciple is not above his Master.

There are many bodies professing to be Christian. The Catholic Church is the only one that has the opposition of all. The pagans of China and Japan make martyrs of her priests and faithful lay people; the crowned heads of Europe unite to oppress her;

the wild beast brood of atheistic communists--Garibaldi's mob--cry "crucify;" the countless sects from the elegant Church of England people to the other extreme seek to destroy her.

False Catholics, fallen priests and apostate lay people labor to kill her from within.

The power of Satan which unites these jarring elements of hate, as well as the power of Jesus Christ which resists and shatters them, seems to us an open manifestation of the supernatural.

060.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, January 3, 1878

[If, after all.]

"If, after all," must be a fearful thought of a man who has found out that the Catholic Church is not so despicable, and Catholics are not such dumb cattle, as he was raised to believe. "If, after all," this strange old Church, claiming kin to the Catacombs and St. Peter, so tenacious of life and so unconquerable, should turn out to be the true representative of Jesus Christ? "If, after all," those old Irish women in black bonnets, with beads in hand, should have the handling of the honor and influence in the next world! "If, after all," the class that has so often been the stepping stone to power, of those who maligned it, should hold the distribution of power in Eternity. "If, after all," the eulogies pronounced on them--Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, and the rest of our apostatizing ancestors--should turn up among the goats! It is hard to think, but it will be harder still when it turns out to be true. The Catholic Church is certainly the religion of History. What the Son of God became flesh to do, she does. "If, after all," --Voltaire, Darwin, and the rest,--she will appear divine and spotless, the Spouse of Christ, what will become of her persecutors?

b. Mission of the Church

061.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, December 18, 1852

The Mission of the Church.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every living creature." These words of our Lord Jesus Christ contain the mission of the Catholic Church. She is "to preach the Gospel" and "teach men to observe all things that He has commanded" in order that "believing, and being baptized" they may be saved. She is to teach the truth and the just to a world lying in sin, and under the wrath of God, and to furnish those who wish them the means whereby to be virtuous and holy.

61 - The Mission of the Church

The end of her teaching is the end for which Jesus Christ came into the world, namely, the eternal salvation of men. Now men can be saved only by a return of their intellect to the sovereign truth and of their will to the infinite good. The Church therefore, must reveal truth to the intellect and give a standard of right to the will.

This she does in her catechism. In the creed all the truth necessary to salvation is revealed. In the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments what is good and right is given to the will. And as in the present order of providence salvation is not attainable by natural means, she furnishes to all, in her Sacraments, the strength to be clothed with a supernatural justice, and become heirs of eternal life.

This is all her mission--to give truth to the intellect, right to the will, eternal life to the individual.

Hence, as her mission is to fit men for eternity, she has no direct interest in any of the affairs of this life. Nations may rise and fall, revolutions be effected; dynasties be changed; and she cares not--except to weep at the individual sins committed, or rejoice at the acts of virtue recorded in heaven, as those temporal events go on.

True, at times, in defining what is true and right, she may come in contact in some particular case, with individual opinions, and clash with the decisions of political rulers, whence, angry feelings and fierce opposition may arise. But the Church cares not. She teaches; and if political rulers and angry opinionists listen and believe, well for them; if not, ill for them; but to her it is no matter. When she has borne witness to the truth she has fulfilled her mission. If the nations perish, theirs will be the blame, as theirs the suffering. Oh! if all could understand this--*that the mission of the Church is to prepare men for eternity*, much perplexity and angry feeling might be spared both to Catholics and those not in the Church! The very thought of eternity cools the heat of our anger, and sobers the human warmth of our zeal. One hundred years from now we all, both those who defend, and those who attack the Church, will be in the bosom of eternity, fixed, in an unchangeable state, of either happiness or misery.

How foolish then will it seem to us to have wasted any portion of our brief probation time in angry discussion of trifling and irrelevant questions, when the question of our own eternity was undecided. How foolish to have written and talked--not for the service of God for which we were created, but for our own vanity--to avoid some trifling humiliation or to mortify some impertinent adversary!

The mission of the Church is to prepare men for eternity. If she does that she is to be received; if she does not that, she is to be rejected.

If she does that, she is favorable to the arts, sciences, improvements, sound progress--every thing good; if she does not that, she is opposed to all that is right. If she be the Church of Jesus Christ she can teach no falsehood, sanction no wrong; if she be not, she can contain no right.

062.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, July 10, 1875 (3)

[The Church as Noe's Ark.]

St. Peter himself likens the Church of Christ to the Ark of Noe. Those who are saved from the deluge of sin and its unending penalty are saved in the Church alone. But the likeness is also in many minor particulars. For instance, in the way people of the world judge both.

During the hundred and twenty years that Noe was getting the Ark ready, what a world of abuse and ridicule must have been spent upon him. The huge and unmeaning structure which consumed his means and time must have made inexhaustible fun for the wits and politicians of his time. So the statesmen and wits and pleasure-seekers have their own enjoyment over the unwieldy, changeless Church. What nonsense, they said, in the *old* Pagan times, for people to give up the good they have for the sake of the good that is beyond the grave! How absurd, they say, in the modern pagan times, for the Church not to go with the tide of progress, when she might easily ride the topmost wave? Pius IX. might hold the throne of Italy but for his stupid "*non possumus*;" and the German bishops might share Bismarck's favor if they would abandon Jesus Christ's.

After a while the flood came, and the Ark rose upon the waters, and the wits and politicians had scarcely time to utter the mournful "therefore we have erred" before the surges buried them.

Day by day the flood comes now to sweep off from the earth the scoffers against the Lord and His Church, and one by one they perish, saying with Julian, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean," and their works crumble and are forgotten, while the Bark of Peter rides on ever the billows, buffeted all the time, but always conquering.

063.

Sermon, *Daily Ohio Statesman*, Nov. 12, 1866,

reprinted without attribution in *The Catholic Columbian*, October 17, 1878

Sermon at the Laying of the Cornerstone of St. Joseph Cathedral, Nov. 11, 1866

(Synopsis)

The ceremonies just witnessed might seem strange to you, but they are such as have been prescribed by the Church on similar occasions from the fourth century. Ever since she emerged from the catacombs, she has consecrated her places of worship in precisely a similar manner.

What is the meaning of these ceremonies? They are evidences of the faith of the Church in the invisible world, and among the means to accomplish her mission on

earth. That mission is to reconcile men to God, from whom they have become estranged.

Such being the case, the Church is not a political institution, though she often comes athwart men's passions, prejudices and desires, and excites their ill will and hatred. This is the case now, as it has been in all ages. Her Founder was accused of being hostile to existing political institutions, and put to death for alleged crimes against the State. For the first three hundred years after the establishment of the Church, Christians were persecuted and put to death, on the pretense that they were enemies of the government, and would not conform to the religion and laws of the Roman Empire. Similar pretenses the enemies of the Church have ever made, and continue to make, as a ground of persecution.

The Church effects her mission of reconciliation through the understanding and the will. She enlightens the former as to the truths to be believed, and compels the latter to obedience in the things that ought to be done. In order to do this, she has authority to teach. The ground of this authority is in the institution of an order of teachers by Christ Himself--an order that must endure to the end of time. Where are the representatives of the apostolic authority to be found, if not in the Catholic Church? They cannot be found outside of it, and if not within it, then the apostolic succession which Christ declared should be perpetual, must have failed.

The edifice of which the corner stone has just been laid is to meet the wants of the Catholic population. It is to be a consecrated place, where children are to be trained in the right way, and men taught to fear God, to renounce the world, and to do all they ought to do as good citizens. To preserve peace and good order in society, and to make men what they should be in social and civil life, it is necessary to reach them through their consciences. This is one great and beneficial result to any community of an edifice like the one about to be erected upon this spot.

The Church believes in good works and teaches that a reward will follow them in the final making up of accounts. It teaches that we should not only be liberal in outward gifts, but give our minds wholly to the divine service; and that our bodies also should be consecrated as temples of the Holy Spirit, never to be defiled with sin or impurity, that we might be, body and soul, wholly given to God, and be eternally His.

064.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, September 13, 1856

Differences of Opinion.

A striking feature of the feebleness of the human understanding, is furnished by the honest differences of opinion among those who hold fundamental principles in common. Of course, truth being one, there is but one true opinion on every subject.

And as the nature of the human intellect is to acquiesce in truth alone, if all judgments were formed according to its dictation, diversity of opinion among men would be impossible. But the truth is, men seldom form their judgments from reasoning. The mass of men expend their reflections in confirming opinions adopted from prejudice or caprice; and even the thoughtful few, hold a thousand opinions from accident, to one, they have acquired by reasoning. It is for this reason that there exist so many different views of subordinate questions among those who, in main points, quite agree--and in this fact appears the wisdom of the philosophic maxim, that he knows a great deal who knows he knows nothing--or, in other words, he has begun to be wise who has learned to doubt his own intellectual perfection.

In this is evinced the wonderful adaptation of the Catholic Church to the actual wants of mankind. There are certain truths which it is essential for men to know--which they must know, or perish eternally. They must know God, as the rewarder of those who seek Him, they must know what is right and what wrong, or they are lost. On these points error is fatal. Men may err on questions of scholastic theology, of metaphysics, of history, of literature, of politics, of taste, without sustaining any further injury than in their temper and reputation, and attain all the substantial happiness for which they were created. Hence the Church teaches the great truths that pertain to duty with infallible certainty. Jesus Christ has placed her in the midst of the nations, accessible to all, in order that all might have an unerring guide to those truths upon which the eternal destiny of the soul depends. He came, in person, to show men the way. He made known clearly the unity and trinity of God, the manner of obtaining pardon for sin, and the precepts of the moral law. But as He only taught the generation and nation that witnessed His "day of flesh," He created His Church as the means of bringing the truths He taught into contact with all minds in all generations.

For truths that are unimportant to their interests men are still left to the light of their own reason, or, in point of fact, to the buffets of their passions. The liberty to err in our duty, abhorrent to nature, is rendered doubly inexcusable by the ease of finding out the truth.

So imperative is this want in human nature, of a living guide, that where men have not a true guide they will follow a false one. Protestants pretended to be scandalized with the Church's assumption of infallibility, but in their church organizations they could not help assuming it themselves. They had a hearty cry of "the Bible alone," until questions arose among themselves, and then they had to leave the Bible and appeal to acts of synods, decrees of leaders or laws of the civil government.

If there is any positive revelation to be the guide of all men in all ages, it must be taught by a living authority. And if what was a revelation to one age is not destined to become uncertain and false to another, that living authority must be infallible. In other words, this subject of infallibility proves that if Catholicity is false, infidelity must be

true; that if Catholicity is true, infidelity must be false--but Protestantism is false in any case.

065.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, April 16, 1859 (2)

The Church and the Intellect.

It is a sight to provoke contempt, that of a little narrow-minded infidel, who complains that the dogmatism of the Church cramps intellectual activity. The poor man does not understand the intrinsic nature of a gooseberry; yet he fears, that if he is not allowed to doubt as to his own origin, nature, and destiny, as to the being and attributes of God, the relations between Creator and creature, his spirit may suffocate for want of space in which to vent its energies? The utter absurdity of this objection to the Church, is apparent from two points of view: first, because after all which the Church makes sure by her teaching, there is enough left to speculate about; and secondly because in what she does teach she does not cramp but exercise intellectual activity. The Church makes us sure of our origin, duties and destiny--of the nature and attributes of God, and His dealings with men--but leaves all the details of material creation to be investigated. We are perfectly free to find out what we can of the stars, the earth, the material elements, the history of nations, the mechanism [sic] of all that is about us, and surely here is field enough for doubt and discussion. Mathematics, mechanics, astronomy, geology, chemistry, botany, conchology, languages, living and dead, historical events, music, painting, sculpture, all furnish infinite topics of speculation, doubt and ignorance. We have heard an interesting debate on the subject of a Greek root, and seen displayed a praiseworthy amount of ignorance on the facts of almost cotemporary history. Among those who accept all the teachings of the Church, there is no lack of subjects for ignorance and error.

What stupid perversion of reason can look upon the authority of the Church, as cramping the freedom of thought, it is hard to see. The Church teaches us the truth concerning things on which our destiny hinges, makes us sure of what is true, what false, what good, what evil. Professors of the different branches of human learning, are not commonly said to cramp the freedom of the pupils they instruct. True, when the pupil does not know that "homo" means "man" he has the liberty of ignorance to conjecture some other meaning for it; but no one esteems that a desirable liberty. In like manner the Church by her authoritative teaching does not take away intellectual activity but gives it scope, exercise, and its end--truth.

c. Attributes of the Church

066.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, December 24, 1853

The Interior Glory of the Church.

The Church is an institution all perfect--all beautiful. She contains within herself what will satisfy every longing heart, and every aspiration of the human intellect. This is a fact not sufficiently observed by certain "progressive," baptized persons, and especially apt to be forgotten by converts of the faith. The converts are certainly less culpable in their inadvertence to the all-sufficiency of the Church for their happiness, than Catholics, but they are not less unfortunate in failing to find the true secret of Catholic content. We do not attack Catholic converts; we offer some suggestions for their benefit. Our own character as a convert takes from us the right to censure them; but the fellow feeling arising from it will, we hope, make them receive kindly our reflections.

Most converts do not see the interior beauty of the house of God, because they did not become Catholics *con amore*, but by force. They were dragged into the Church, by the consideration that there was no other way of escaping eternal punishment. We have seen boys engaged at a game of ball before a summer shower. They would prolong the game until the big drops that herald the storm, had given place to the heavy rain, and then would retreat into the house; and there, without engaging in some in-door play, would stand wistfully at the closed window, and look out upon the green meadow, longing to return. So it seems to us do converts, often stand in the vestibule of the house of God, and instead of looking in upon the shining proportions of that glorious temple, gaze out upon the desert of the world, longing to stray through its scorching sands, if they feared not death, to breath its tainted air, if they dreaded not its pestilence. This feeling of reluctance on their part to quit entirely old associations, is natural, enough--so natural, that a great grace of God, and heroic determination to correspond with it are necessary to overcome it. What is more natural--since every man is, for himself, the centre, around which the universe revolves--than that a convert from Episcopalianism should often employ his mind about the false tenets of that body--a converted Methodist should know much of the absurdities of Wesley, a baptized Jew should study with interest the reasons by which the children of Israel may be reclaimed from error? What is more natural than that each should magnify the importance of converting his own particular sect, and have a special fear of arousing the prejudices of his old associates? We never wonder when a converted Methodist praises vehemently (and legitimately) the "*missions*," because the hobby of his *sect* is "heart religion:" nor when we see a converted Puseyite, recommending "refinement," "politeness," &c., and deprecating any shouting, firing of cannon or "coarseness," because he has been

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educated according to a conventional code peculiar to people well to do in the world, with whom, only grossness is vice. Neither are we astonished when we see an East Indian convert delighted with Catholic monasteries, and temples--because we know he intends to point his brethren to them as evidences of spirituality superior to that of the Brahmin Bonzae--of a faith deeper than have the votaries of Buddha. Yet while we are not astonished, at the tenacity with which converts cling to their old notions of the important and unimportant, we are grieved at their loss of time, in thus dissecting the dead negations they have abandoned. If they would only turn their eyes inward, on the glory of the Church, they would behold an object worthy of all their admiration, a good proportionate to all their affections, a truth equal to their highest intellectual activity. *All truth is in the Church: all good is in the Church--all beauty is in the Church, in all their unbroken integrity. Without, are but fragments and portions tossing on the deluge of error. And as he who has been taken up from a plank in the ocean into a strong vessel, stands not to gaze on the feeble support which he has abandoned, to deride or contemplate it, so the man who has found repose in the ark of the Church ought not to gaze at the shattered systems floating in the sea of error, but to turn his eyes in upon the beauty of the ark! Melior est dies una in atriis tuis super millia!*

067.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, February 10, 1855

The Beauty of God's House.

There is an eastern story of an orphan peasant boy who was taken to the palace of the king. The peasant boy was sorry to leave what he in his ignorance thought the comforts of his cottage, and never once looked at the splendors of the palace whose inmate he had become. Moodily and with wet eyes he would go all day about the palace, and whenever he could steal out, he would go to a terrace which overlooked the valley in which his cot[tage] was situated, and sit looking wistfully at its thatched roof, pining to return. So he passed years, sullen and insensible to the delights that lay within his reach, longing for the low and coarse pleasures of his peasant childhood, and at last died without ever having once appreciated the fact that he was living in the splendor, the luxury, the delights of a palace.

Catholics are but too often like the peasant boy. Transferred by baptism from the hovel in the valley of sin to the palace of the great King, they are too often blind to the beauties of the palace where God's glory dwelleth, and to often sigh for the pleasures and honors of the world they have renounced. In this country, particularly, our being Catholics deprives of many worldly advantages and pleasures, and we too often show our attachment to the world by the vehemence with which we inveigh against our unjust deprivation. Our thoughts are always busy and our hearts worried about what

we are deprived of. We are in perpetual turmoil of mind about the calumnies that are circulated against us, the unjust odium with which we are regarded, the evils and persecutions with which we are threatened. We are always looking down into the valley, instead of around and above at the palace wherein we dwell.

If we but knew it, we are dwelling in the midst of splendor and abundance equal to our wildest wish. The Catholic Church, the masterpiece of God's wisdom, contains in her the fullness of all that is good for man. No craving of the intellect, no desire of the will, no faculty of the soul, no lawful desire of the senses, even, but is provided for within her pale.

Does the intellect, recoiling from falsehood and error, seek truth? She furnishes it with her infallibility.

Does the will pant after good, as the hart for the fountain? She gives it in her unfailing sanctity.

Does the imagination delight to dwell on visions of greatness, of beauty, of peace, and love? No poet's dream is more thrilling, no vision of beauty more enchanting, than the real lives of her Founder, her propagators, her martyrs, her virgins, her hermits, and confessors.

Does the eye desire to feast on the creations of art, to revel in the almost living beauties of sculpture and painting? The Church alone can give the groundwork of his conception to the painter and the sculptor, and alone can furnish him with an adequate motive of patience in his labor.

Does the ear long for the "harmony of sweet sounds," the pure pleasure derived from music? The Church alone, having the worship of God worthy of its sublimest strains, can furnish a kind that satisfies the highest conception we can form of what music ought to be.

In a word, the beauty of God's temple, the adaptation of the Church to the wants of man, is complete. It is upon her, then, and not upon the world, that we should fix our gaze. The glory of the King's daughter is within. We have no need to stand upon the terraces, looking down upon the denizens of the valley, as they cast the dirt of their calumnies and spit up towards the inaccessible walls of the King's palace. We can, and should, go in, and taste and enjoy the banquet of delights with which God has empowered her to satisfy every lawful want of our nature.

068.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, August 8, 1878 (1)

[A Perfect Society.]

The Catholic Church is a perfect and complete society. Its organization is sufficient to define all the duties of its members, and to punish all infractions of its

rules. When any one does not want to submit, he can walk out. Certain persons, who talk about forms and tribunals, seem to not understand this principle.

069.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, December 2, 1876 (2)

[200,000,000 Miracles.]

The fact that the Catholic Church exists in the world, at all, is a miracle of manifold character. From the beginning to the end, worldly wisdom, the fashion of society, and the natural appetites are all against her existence. "It is true, you can take a higher stand, and gain a wider popularity," says the politician, "by having some principle which you see rooted in the popular mind. But as for really taking your principle for an end, and persevering in it after you have seen that there is no hope for success, that is simply going over to the impracticables." Fashion will sometimes tolerate wearing of crosses, going to High Mass and benediction, but never sincere piety, real preference of God to anything in the world. The natural appetites are always tyrannical and insolent, never satisfied with what is enough, but always craving to domineer. Hence, they are, practically, at enmity with the life of faith. So it is a miracle that faith should find a home in any single heart of the 800,000,000 through which the blood of Adam flows. Yet it does exist in 250,000,000 hearts. Protestants try to explain this by imagining a vast conspiracy of priests. But why should the priests conspire? What can they gain by leaving home and friends, and living lives of self-denial and hardship? The aggrandizement of their order. But what care they for the aggrandizement of their order, when it brings no profit to them? The existence of faith in a single soul is a miracle; in 200,000,000 souls it is 200,000,000 miracles.

070.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, March 9, 1861

Catholic Unity.

The union among Catholics is supernatural in its motive, and in its manner. Their material interests, their national feelings, and local prejudices, their grades of talent and rank, education and refinement, are as various as those of other classes. They are one in the common aim at happiness beyond the grave, by obedience to the common pastor and guide; and in the fact that they are all made partakers of the one Divine Nature.

There is something mysterious and beautiful in this manner of Catholic unity. Every Christian, to use the strong expression of one of the ancient fathers, is another Christ. In his moral life there appears nothing of his human, or carnal nature. His aims, his hopes, his fears, his joys, his sorrows, are not his--not suggested by what strikes his

senses--but Christ's. He is transformed into his Redeemer. And this holds of every Christian all the world over. The thorn-crowned High Priest of the world, in Rome, the Indian kneeling in the rude cabin church beyond the Rocky Mountains--the missionary braving obloquy and persecution, the nun telling her beads in the cloister, is each another Christ. And thus, all are one. Hence the sacrament which transforms us is called the sacrament of unity. The Redeemer on the altar is the vine reaching from earth to heaven with branches stretching away through all the regions of the earth. The life-current that circulates through them all is one and the same, though the leaves and fruit may vary in shape and color. Here they may be smaller, there greater: here thicker, there more scattered: in one place they may hang ripe, and red as martyr-blood; in another white and cold as a virgin's brow; but these numberless forms of beauty are only manifold exhibitions of the one principle of life--the spirit of Christ.

Now we are not scandalized that all Christians are not such with their whole hearts. We are not astonished though grieved to see even well meaning persons treat their faith as something of minor importance, not to be yielded to threats or openly renounced, indeed, but still only to be remembered at leisure times. In like manner we should not be cast down, at the apparent want of unity which has appeared among the Catholics of America since our unfortunate political troubles have arisen. The supernatural unity may still subsist, though the natural unity is broken. So long as we live sinless lives, and partake of the same sacraments North and South, we can still be one in Christ.

There are subjects on which the Catholics of the discontented States, and those of the ones which adhere to the Constitution, do not say the same thing. In one section that may be called bad faith which in another is called chivalry. But this diversity does not agitate the supernatural unity of the Church. It belongs to the natural life. Grace had as little to do with secession as with the election of Lincoln. The formula used in blessing the flag at *Baton Rouge* was not in the Roman Ritual. The decision of the venerable Abbe Perche on the right of secession, controverted by the *New York Freeman's Journal*, was not a sacramental announcement, since the State of Louisiana never went to confession. The "truth" which the *Charleston Miscellany* "propagated" by dropping "United States" from its title was not one of the truths of revelation, any more than were those uttered by the *Freeman's Journal* and *Pilot*, in their advocacy of Douglas. So long as no divisions are carried into the Church, supernatural unity remains; and that unity alone is Catholic. So long as no Catholic shall consider himself the organ of Catholic truth, because he speaks to Catholics, or think himself ordained to preach because he has found a congregation, there will be no schism in the body of Christ.

071.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, July 16, 1853 (1)

[Sifting the Church in Every Nation.]

And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you
that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee
that thy faith fail not. Luke ch. 22.

These words, though particularly applicable to Peter and the Holy See, may without impropriety be addressed to all the faithful--to the whole Church of Christ at the present day. This great work of "sifting like wheat" has been always in operation, separating the luke-warm from the zealous--throwing away the chaff to the wind--dividing the sound fruit from the rotten--cutting off the withered branches from the great vine. Though the work may be assigned to Satan, yet it can have dominion over those only who, being baptized in the Church, afterwards fall away from God, [by] apostasy or other grievous sin. This defection, however, does not destroy the Church; it only adds to her efficiency, and thus our Lord bringeth forth good out of the malice of His enemies.

But nevertheless this "sifting" is a great trial to which it is necessary that we should be subjected. Nearly all the Catholic nations have had their turn, as if in preparation of some great coming event. Some have been tried by open tyranny, or by oppressive legislation, by calumny, by revolution, by the sword, by infidelity. Thus we have seen the Catholics crushed in Russia and yet growing up again into strength. They have been slaughtered in Syria, and other provinces of the Turkish Empire, their churches burned and their homes plundered. Yet the latest intelligence from that baneful empire gives flattering hopes of Catholic advancement. Under the seductive name of liberty, revolutions have shaken Austria and Italy; there have been insurrections in Spain, and traitorous ministers at the head of her government,--but after the work of evil has been accomplished--after the sifting of the wheat--the wicked fall away and as the dust they are scattered by the winds, but the Church lives and triumphs. Under Louis Phillip the Church in France was "sifted;" the infidel university almost extirpated the faith in the minds of the young, but the trial is over--the foolish king is dead, his family banished and another is in his place. In Germany, that country so conspicuous for intellect and heresy, the Church was sifted by Ronge and his associates, by rationalists, by brutal kings, by faithless ministers of religion, but the storm is departing and the Church survives. In England, ever tyrannical England, what has not the Church of Christ endured! How spitefully has the "snow white hind" been pursued by the hounds and curs of heresy! And in Ireland the same vindictive power has been at work to destroy the name, the power, and the ministry of Christ. But the island is true to the faith. She has been sifted; her Young Irelanders have been flung off

like chaff, leaving the wheat to fill the granary of the Lord. And in the United States, we can distinguish between those who follow Christ and those who fear and follow the world. There is no temptation here to be Catholic; every inducement is against us; on our side is nothing which this world admires. Hence we have been sifted but have not suffered much; the sordid, the cheat, the deceiver, the unjust man, the proud, the seeker after notoriety, these have gone forth from amongst us--self-excommunicated, bearing a mark worse than that which gave Cain eternal notoriety. Thus in every land has the Church been sifted, and in every land is she strong because purified, bearing onward the standard of the cross which is never overthrown, before whose sacred advent heresy and infidelity are dismayed.

072.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, September 11, 1858

The Test of Time.

There is an old and true adage, "Time will tell." How often in disputes when other arguments have failed have we heard said with an air of deep solemnity, "well, time will tell!" And time *does* tell: it is the great test of the truth of every theory, of the practicability of every scheme, of the success of every enterprise. Passion, prejudice and self-interest, may cloud for a while the most lucid evidence and neutralize the force of the strongest proof; but time dissipates them all and reveals the truth in the noon-day brightness of stern fact. The electric wire that sleeps amid the solitudes of the ocean deeps and thrills, at is awakening, hemispheres two thousand miles apart, proves the practicability of submarine telegraphic communication between Europe and America better than all the scientific arguments that prompted the enterprise and promised it success.

God, Himself, who has gifted the soul with the attribute of free thought and allows its exercise in the cause of right and wrong alike, mainly depends on time for the vindication of that providence which, tho' threatening woe to its abuse, respects, during the term of its probationary career, the liberty of the human will. The lesson of experience which time imparts is not the exclusive privilege of those whom the distant future may usher on the stage of life; the ages that have passed away have taught it over and over and have left it for the benefit of the present on sculptured monument and historic page. The antediluvians, rapt in luxury and deaf to the warnings of heaven, scorned the announcement of the threatened flood, and mocked the ark whose vast proportions grew and swelled and rose aloft beneath the enterprising skill of Noa's simple faith; but the deluge came at last, and the ark rode safely on the whelming waters, amid the shrieks of drowning millions. Faith triumphed over unbelief and God's veracity was established! Such is the evidence of sacred writ, and geology shows

today on the mountain peaks the fossil remains that confirm its truth. The prophets of old, too, foretold the fall of mighty empires in the hour of their brightest glory, and their predictions were treated as the ravings of madmen; but time rolled away and these empires fell, and the dust of their proud monuments have vanished in the "viewless winds," and we of the present, in search of the sites on which they stood, find here and there only crumbling pedestals mingling with the ashes of the dead and shattered columns, like the spirits of the past mourning in silence over the desolation of their former homes! The utterance of the Prophet of Prophets also and of His inspired Apostles patiently await the endorsement of time: the past has confirmed the truth of some; and the future will fulfill the rest. Of Jerusalem that listened to our Saviour's words, not a stone upon a stone is left;--false brethren have arisen to betray; the time came when they did "not bear sound doctrines." The Arian and Manichean and Donatist have impugned the truth; but "Woe to them; for they have gone in the way of Cain, and have poured out themselves after the error of the Balaam for a reward and have perished in the gainsaying of lore." The Church of Christ, the Holy Roman Catholic Church, can also look back over the years of her life and count along the path of time the standing monuments of her unalterable truth and imperishable glory. With prophetic voice she told the reformers that the principle of "private judgment" was suicidal; that division and strife would mark the religious body that rested for support upon it; that it would ultimately dissolve the union of charity among believers and gradually eliminate from the dissenting creeds every element of Christian truth. Every day confirms the warning voice and sad anticipations of Mother Church. Free Love, Spiritism, Mormonism and Philanthropy with its thousand hues discolor and infect the waters of truth; it is only in the Catholic Church they well up and sparkle amid the sunshine of primeval purity.

She, like her Founder, is "ever ancient and always new;" "the eternal years of God are hers;" her life is perpetual youth; every thing around her may change, decay and perish, but she knows no change. Ages may roll away and others again and again succeed and vanish; but the Church is the self-same to-day and forever. Thus in the enjoyment of perpetual and unchangeable life, she can afford to await and say to the creeds that war against her: "You war in vain; and, time will tell."

073.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, September 17, 1853

Change.

Nothing is stable that is under the sun.--Change pervades the works of nature and of art. The seasons scarce come ere they go, the sun rises but to set, the moon waxes to wane, the ocean rushes against its wild beach, sullenly to retire--the flowers

bloom to fade, and wither again to bloom; nature is full of change; and art too is ever varying. All the works of human cunning, are perfected but to perish.--Cities rise and fall, empires are set up to crumble, manufactories, commerce, come and go, as the generations pass, as cloud-shadows over a plain. Even mind, that creates art, though changeless, in its spiritual essence, is in the degree of its culture and in the best of its affections, changeable as art itself. One generation knows what another loses, and a third again discovers, one generation hates what another loves, and reveres what another contemns. Nay, the same individual, forgets to-day what he learned yesterday, will despise to-morrow what he adores to-day and covet that of which he is now careless. In the morning the heart bounds with gladness, and, at evening, it is rent with anguish. Joy, grief, hope, fear, presumption, despair, love, hate, are near to each other, as ocean wave to wave, in the human soul. *Change* is written upon all that the eye sees, the ear hears, that experience knows.

Yet in all these changes of the physical and intellectual world, is the *law*, of the GREAT RULER visible, His controlling power manifest. The changes have their limits and, in the circle of never-ending variations, appears an unerring constancy.

In the ebbing and flowing of the tides, in the coming and going of the seasons, and in all the thousand other changes of material things, we behold the wisdom of the great God who knows how to give unity to unending variety, and stability to the ever fluctuating.--So of the variations of art and mind. They have their limits, and run in their circle. Science creates nothing new, ignorance annihilates nothing old; error itself is circumscribed, and, as ages pass, has to repeat itself. "*Impii in gyro ambulans.*" The generations by-gone have known all the errors of the present, and the generations to come will again resuscitate delusions now forgotten. So change is not limitless, and instability begets no disorder.

From the contemplation of these changes, with what delight does the faith-illuminated intellect turn to abyss itself in the unchangeable truth, the heaven guided will cling to the supreme and immutable good! With what gratitude does the soul behold itself united to that mystical body, that is to know no change, but that, from warfare to triumph, from pilgrimage to rest, from humility to glory, the Catholic Church! Symbol in her imperishable existence, of the God, from whom she emanated, she speaks to the mind that contemplates her history, of His calm and changeless eternity; and the mouldering of empires along her path, the shattering of social and political systems, that her long career has witnessed, call to mind that "the crash of matter and the wreck of worlds," which the archangel shall herald in, when with "one foot upon the sea, and one foot upon the land," he shall proclaim that "Time shall be no longer." "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," who, through the Catholic Church, gives us, "to serve Him without fear of our enemies in all our days," and to reap in the enjoyment of stable and unchanging good, the reward of our fidelity!

074.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, September 30, 1854 (1)

Infallibility not Absurd.

We often hear it said that to believe any man infallible is too much. People "can believe in the infallibility of God" but not in that of man. This objection is a striking illustration of that strange weakness of the human mind whereby it refuses belief to a truth under one form of expression which it willingly admits under another. There is no man living who does not believe in the infallibility of other men in some sense. Our non-Catholic objector, to whom the saying "the Church is infallible" seems so absurd, since the Church is only a collection of men, does believe in the infallibility of other men, whatever he may say of its absurdity.

In the first place, he believes that the testimony of men as witnesses is infallible. He has not the shadow of a doubt that Julius Cæsar, Napoleon Bonaparte, George Washington existed. But such a doubt he could have unless "men are infallible."

In the next place, he believes that men are infallible in matters of religious opinion. He has taken sides against the Catholic Church, staked his eternal salvation on the authority of his parents, teachers, and of the community with whose prejudices he is imbued. He has no doubt that he is right. But a doubt he could not help having, unless he believed men to be infallible.

Nor can he escape the charge of trusting to men for his opinions, by saying that he had examined for himself. If he did so, he had to trust to the infallibility of versions, commentaries, etc.; and again he leans on the authority of men.

Neither does he change the case by saying that he rejects all religion, and therefore trusts no authority. If he rejects all religion he must do so on some grounds, and those grounds must be stated to him by *men*.

In like manner the masses *act as though* they believed other men to be infallible in other matters. The invalid trusts his life to the doctor; the man of wealth, his property to the lawyer; the child, his soul to the parent. Mutual confidence, the disposition to trust and be guided, is the natural instinct common to all men that binds together the framework of society. Now what nature dictates, what no man can escape practicing, what is an inevitable consequence of our mental constitution cannot be absurd. Therefore it is not *absurd* to say that the Church is infallible, even though it were *false*.

Add to this that we do not say that the rulers of the Church are infallible by nature, but through the mercy of God, whose Holy Spirit assists them to guide us in the paths of truth and virtue to eternal life, and you will see how crooked prejudice has made the mental vision that can see absurdity in the claim of infallibility.

075.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, September 16, 1854

Intolerance and Infallibility.

While Catholic churches are being burned, Catholic men shot down by mobs, the whole body of Catholics marked for political and social proscription by a secret faction, it is strange that any of our enemies should have the effrontery to charge *us* with intolerance. Yet they do it; and they try to give the charge an appearance of truth, by saying that so long as we believe in the infallibility of the Church we must necessarily be intolerant, if not persecuting.

Now, we do believe in the infallibility of the Church; we believe that the Holy Ghost did come and guide the disciples into all truth; that Jesus Christ is with the successors of the Apostles throughout all time. But does it follow, therefore, that we must be intolerant? It does not, as even our enemies can be convinced, if they will hear to reason. There are three arguments, each conclusive to any candid mind, of what we assert.

1. The first argument is to every man living *ad hominem* and unanswerable. The belief in infallibility implies nothing more in the believer, than the absolute certainty that he is right. But no man is living who has not absolute certainty of some opinion or other. Thus, if we have certainty that we are right, anti-catholics (except the leaders of the Know-Nothings, who have *no* convictions) are as firmly persuaded that we are wrong. They *must be* as firmly persuaded as we are, since they risk their souls on their convictions, as we risk ours. Now, does this conviction that we are right necessarily produce in non-catholics a spirit of persecution? In like manner, infidels and atheists are firmly *persuaded* that they are right, as we are in our doctrine; and infidels and atheists profess to be patrons of liberality. Both infidels and Protestants are as firmly persuaded that they are right, as we are. If our doctrine of infallibility, which engenders certainty in us, necessarily produces persecution, then their doctrine of private judgment, from which they derive equal certainty, must necessarily produce in them an intolerant spirit. How can the certainty of being right produce intolerance in us, and liberality in them?

2. The second argument, equally cogent, is drawn from the nature of the case. The doctrine of infallibility is a part of a great system, and to be rightly judged of must be considered in connection with the whole doctrine of Christ. The infallibility of the Church is our reason for believing all that we do believe of our relations to God and to our fellows. From these relations springs the obligation of love to God, in a supreme degree, and to our neighbor as ourselves.

Infallibility, therefore, causes us to be *absolutely certain* that in order to save our souls we must love our neighbor as ourself. If we love him as ourselves, can we

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persecute him? Hence we have an answer to the objection so often made, that "if we are infallibly certain that our neighbor's opinions are wrong, we *must* persecute him." We must love him as ourself. We must be sorry that he is wrong, try to persuade him to be right, for his sake, but feel no ill will towards him. This objection, too, gives us an insight into the objector's spirit. If you *are* certain that your neighbor is wrong, why, pray, must you persecute him? Is it because you doubt the truth of what you profess to believe, that *you* do not persecute? Are you the Almighty God, that you must take the government of the world into your hands, and punish every wrong as soon as you know it to be wrong? This is the spirit of these objectors, who assume that there is no equality among men, and no medium in the heavenly virtue of charity between knowing a man to be in the wrong and annihilating him--a spirit of the fiercest intolerance. Persecution, therefore, cannot come from the doctrine of an infallible church. It never did come from that or from any other *doctrine*. It comes from *passion*--from the avarice of newspaper editors, who grow rich by pandering to prejudice and sacrificing truth--from the ambition of self-seeking demagogues, who wish to rise over the crushed rights of their fellow-citizens to some height of political distinction--from the anger of apostates, seeking to dishonor those among whom their own reputation is tarnished--from the malignity of impure scribblers, proud to throw the dirt of their filthy imaginings upon whatever is pure--from every passion of the human heart, envy jealousy, hate--and from that more than human malice which has prompted and still prompts Irish Orangemen to pursue with unrelenting vengeance the Catholic religion, *because* they know it to be holy. Passion, and not doctrine, originates persecution.

Our third argument was to have been an induction from facts; but want of space forbids us to state it. Recent facts are arguments that strike the senses, and bring home conviction that not the believers in infallibility are intolerant, but the revilers of that doctrine. The mobbing of convents, the burning of churches, the trampling of the cross, indicate sufficiently, one would think, where the spirit of intolerance abides.

It is therefore certain, that whatever acts of persecution be objected, truly or falsely, to Catholics, those acts never were produced by the doctrine of infallibility.