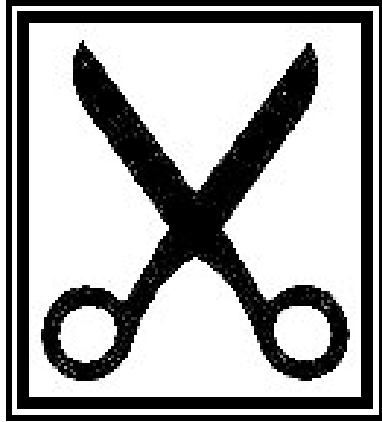


The Mystery of



The Wizard Clip

*The story of “one of the most wonderful manifestations
of God’s benevolence during the struggles of the
primitive Church in these United States.”*

With added “QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SALVATION”
by Rev. Michael Muller, C.S.S.R.

The Mystery of the Wizard Clip

Booklet compiled and typeset by Robert T. Hart
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May God reward you for what ever you do to make known “*One of the most wonderful manifestations of God’s benevolence during the struggles of the primitive Church in these United States.*”

~ Robert T. Hart

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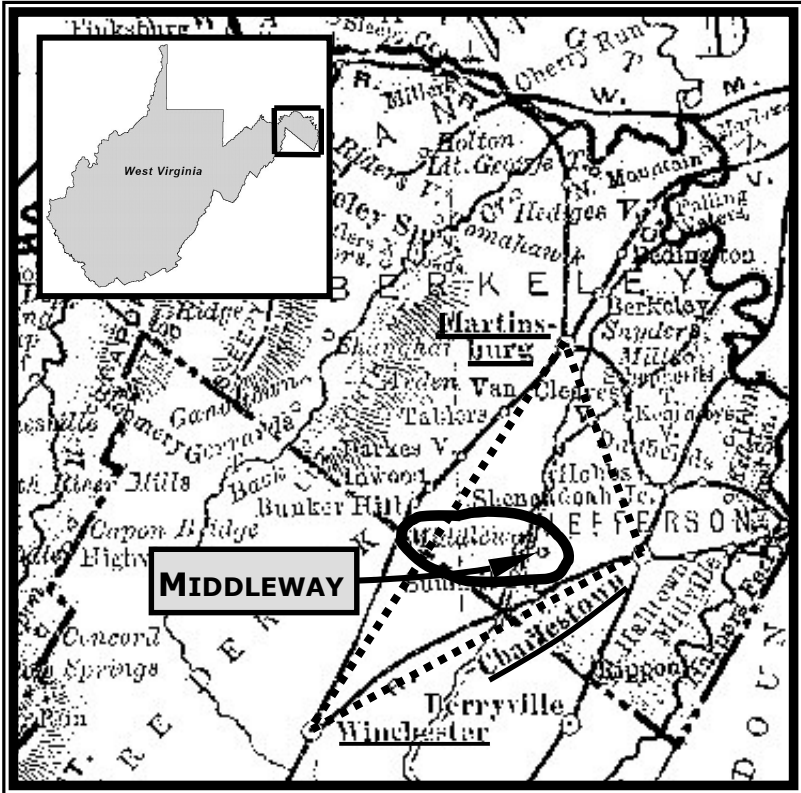
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Part 1

The Mystery of the Wizard Clip



*This amazing, true story — dubbed **The Mystery of the Wizard Clip** — took place in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, on a farm near the present Middleway, Jefferson County, West Virginia — within the triangle formed by Charlestown, Martinsburg, and Winchester.*

The Mystery of the Wizard Clip

“One of the most wonderful manifestations of God’s benevolence during the struggles of the primitive Church in these United States —” such is the impressive estimate of the learned Jesuit scholar, Father Joseph M. Finotti, concerning the extraordinary but little known spiritual drama which took place some 200 years ago near Martinsburg, West Virginia.

And in fact, in the year 1797, on a farm near the present Middleway, Jefferson County, West Virginia, a Lutheran family was saved by a Catholic priest from diabolical persecutions and then instructed in the Catholic religion by a mysterious, invisible Voice from the other world, that continued for seventeen years to enlighten, guide, and inspire these former Protestants and their Catholic friends to live as fervent and model Christians. Frequently during those years, this mystic Voice, whose *“influence was always beneficial,”* communicated timely warnings, prophecies, and messages of charity and mercy for many persons, which resulted in numerous conversions.

That such seemingly miraculous phenomena did actually take place has never been questioned by serious historians. According to the scholarly Professor P. J. Mahon, in his *Trials and Triumphs of the Catholic Church in America* (Chicago, 1907), *“no facts are better substantiated.”* Non-Catholic authorities also confirm the truth of the events. In 1904 an article in *The West Virginia Historical Magazine* admitted that *“the people there had no doubt of the facts related.”* And as recently as 1941 the West Virginia guidebook of the American Guide Series compiled by the Writers’ Program of the Works Project Administration gave nearly a whole page to an objective account of the locally famous Mystery of the Wizard Clip.

We shall now narrate the principal incidents of this fascinating and significant chapter in the early history of the Catholic Church in the United States, for the most part in the same words as they are recorded by eyewitnesses and by the children of eyewitnesses in Father J. M. Finotti’s valuable collection of documents entitled *The Mystery of the Wizard Clip*.

(Baltimore, 1879, 143p.). Holy Scripture teaches us that *“it is honorable to reveal and confess the works of God”* (Tobias 12:7). And it is our hope and prayer that many American Catholics — and non Catholics too — may come to share Father Finotti’s conviction that this stirring historical narrative *“draws our heart near to God; it teaches lessons of supernatural wisdom; the Finger of God is Here! ... Herein lies the beauty of the story.”*

§ § §

Adam Livingston was an honest and industrious Lutheran who owned considerable property in York County, Pennsylvania. Due to mysterious causes, however, his property began to diminish in various ways: his barn burned down, and his horses and cattle died. As these losses continued, Livingston and his family decided to move. Early in the seventeen nineties, therefore, with his second wife and several children, he left Pennsylvania and migrated to the lower end of the lovely Shenandoah Valley, where he settled on a large estate of the triangle formed by Charlestown, Martinsburg, and Winchester, all of which were then in the state of Virginia.

But there too the same mysterious forces continued to afflict the Livingston household. There too the cattle and horses died. Now the very house in which Adam and his wife and children lived seemed to have become haunted: at night they were kept awake by weird noises, such as loud knocks and rumblings as of galloping horses and wagons. But even in daylight their furniture would be suddenly banged about and their crockery smashed onto the floor by invisible hands. Chunks of fire rolled out of the beds across the rooms. At times the heads and legs of chickens and geese were seen to drop off suddenly. But by far the most sensational of these devilish afflictions was the strange persistent clipping and cutting that attacked almost every piece of cloth and leather on the Livingston estate. Sheets, table clothes, shirts, dresses, suits and even leather boots and saddles, whether in use or locked up in closets, were skillfully slit and clipped into crescent-shaped strips by invisible shears! The

noise of the scissors clipping merrily away was distinctly heard on many occasions by members of the family.

One old lady in Martinsburg, wishing to satisfy her curiosity, went to visit the Livingstons, but before entering the haunted house she carefully took off her new silk hat and wrapped it in her large handkerchief, to save it from being clipped. Upon leaving, however, she found her new hat cut into small ribbons! Poor old Mr. Livingston's mental torture was acute and he turned to the Bible for help against these attacks which were clearly diabolical. As Father Gallitzin later wrote, *"the good old man reading in his Bible that Christ had given to His ministers power over evil spirits, started from his home to Winchester in Virginia, and having, with tears in his eyes, related to his minister the history of his distress, losses and sufferings, begged of him to come to his house and to exercise in his favor the power he had received from Jesus Christ. The parson candidly confessed that he had no such power. The good man. . .therefore rationally concluded that Parson S _____ could not be a minister of Christ ...and applied to other persons calling themselves ministers of Christ, some of whom promised relief. They came, prayed and read; but they prayed and read in vain..."*

As a result of so many disappointments, Mr. Livingston almost came to the conclusion that Christ no longer had any true ministers on earth. So in desperation he turned to some local conjurers or magicians, one of whom promised to banish the evil spirit if paid a good sum in advance, but refused the job when the shrewd old farmer offered to pay him double that amount — after he succeeded! Three others came very confidently from Winchester, but took to their heels when they saw a large stone whirl around the living room without any support for fifteen minutes!

Then one night, Mr. Livingston had a strange dream. He saw a beautiful Church and in it a *"minister dressed in peculiar robes"* and he heard a voice say to him: *"That is the man who can relieve you."* He decided to search that same morning for the minister dressed in robes. He was directed to the estate of a

distinguished Catholic family named McSherry. Late that evening Mrs. McSherry saw Mr. Livingston, whose farm was about four miles away, coming toward her house and she met him at the gate. When he asked to see the priest, she told him there was no priest there then, but that one would “hold church” at a home in Shepherdstown the following Sunday morning.

On the next Sunday, the McSherry’s met Mr. Livingston in the Catholic home in Shepherdstown, and as soon as the priest, Father Dennis Cahill of Hagerstown, appeared at the altar vested for Mass, the old Lutheran farmer suddenly burst into tears and exclaimed: *“That is the very man I saw in my dream — he is the one who will relieve me!”* When the Mass was over, going right to the priest, he poured out his sad story and earnestly begged him for help. After much persuasion, Fr. Cahill agreed to visit the haunted house. The priest questioned the whole Livingston family, but they all told him exactly the same story. He therefore consented to say some prayers and to sprinkle the house with Holy Water. And as he was leaving, a sum of money that had lately vanished mysteriously from the farmer’s locked chest, was suddenly laid by invisible hands on the door-sill between the priest’s feet!

Now the Livingston home became quiet for several days. But soon the weird noises and dreaded clipping started again. So Father Cahill came a second time and celebrated Holy Mass in the house, after which the various disturbances ceased — for good! The old Lutheran farmer was so deeply grateful for having obtained the relief which had been promised him, that he thereupon decided to accept the Catholic religion with all his family.

It was at this time, in the fall of the year 1797, that a very remarkable young priest was sent by his superiors to investigate these strange happenings at Cliptown: the 27 year old Father Demetrius A. “Smith”, who was born Prince “Mitri” Gallitzin, the son of a German countess and a Russian prince-ambassador of the Empress Catherine the Great. Later, during his forty years

of holy and heroic service to God at Loretto, Pa., he was to become famous as the great “Apostle of the Alleghenies.” Here is his testimony: *“My view in coming to Virginia and remaining there three months, was to investigate those extraordinary facts at Livingston’s, of which I had heard so much ... and which I could not prevail upon myself to believe; but I was soon converted to a full belief of them. No lawyer in a court of justice did ever examine or cross-examine witnesses more strictly than I did all those I could procure.”* Through the divine power of the True Church of Christ, the evil spirits were banished and in their place appeared a Spirit of Light and Truth whose inspiring spiritual guidance brought about profound changes for the good in the lives of the Livingstons, the McSherrys and their neighbors.

One evening, after he had been a Catholic for several weeks, Mr. Livingston perceived a dazzling light in one corner of his room and in an instant the whole house became filled with almost blinding light. And then the old man began to hear a mysterious Voice, which instructed him in the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. Often the Voice would come and exclaim: *“I want prayers”* It would awaken Mr. and Mrs. Livingston at night and tell them to pray hard for perseverance and for sinners. Sometimes it made them pray for three hours; they admitted that it did not seem to be more than a few minutes. And it would suddenly summon the whole family in the evenings with these words: *“Come-take your seats!”* And then it would instruct them very thoroughly in the various dogmas of the Catholic religion.

It emphasized that although they could not see the person who was speaking to them, they should always obey the visible voice which was the priest. Some of the young children are reported to have seen the author of the Voice. It revealed to Mr. Livingston that it had once been in the flesh as he was, and that if he persevered he would know who it was before his death. But he must have taken the secret to the grave when he died in 1820. After the Voice had sung three times very beautifully in Latin and in English the Livingstons naturally thought that their

mysterious visitor had perhaps been a priest. And indeed during the next seventeen years the Voice acted as a wise but strict spiritual director for the Livingston and McSherry families.

Whenever it came — sometimes accompanied by the bright light — it would say: *“In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, three great Names! None greater on earth! None greater in Heaven!”* Once it ordered the Livingstons to keep a forty days’ fast with three hours of prayer each day. It also commanded them to keep the fourth of March each year as a special holy day, in thanksgiving for their conversion. And it was on that day, at the end of the forty days’ fast, that Mr. Livingston heard it sing so beautifully, as also on one All Souls Day. It said the souls in Purgatory were much rejoiced on the day of All Souls on which the whole world was praying for them.

Every night the Voice would join the family in their prayers, saying the Rosary with them and instructing them how to pray well. It also explained the Mass to them and stated that *“One Mass was more acceptable to Almighty God than all the sighs and tears of the whole world put together, for it was God, a pure God, offered up to God.”* It stressed what a blessing it is for us to have the merciful Mother of God as our Advocate and that she has great power on behalf of poor sinners. And because Mrs. Livingston, who had been a Presbyterian, was somewhat stubborn about honoring the Blessed Virgin, the Voice insisted that in the second part of the Hail Mary they say: *“Holy, Holy, Holy Mary, Mother of God.”*

Once when one of the Livingston girls went to confession and failed to mention a certain sin through shame, the Voice not only told the whole family that she had not mentioned it, but reminded her of it and pressed her to confess it as soon as possible.

When Mr. Livingston’s son Henry came of age, he refused to do the reaping unless his father paid him regular harvest wages. But very soon he was taken with a pain in his knee,

which became so swollen and infected that he was confined to bed for eighteen months. After he had suffered that length of time, the Voice announced that *“he had satisfied the Justice of God for his disobedience and disrespect to his father,”* and the young man was healed. He must have taken this severe lesson to heart, for it is recorded that he too lived a very holy life henceforth. On the other hand, Father Gallitzin wrote that some of the other Livingston children, *“I believe they care very little for the Church.”*

It was particularly for the souls suffering in Purgatory that the Voice urged the Livingstons and McSherrys to pray, promising them that these souls, when delivered, would intercede for them at the throne of Almighty God. It told Mr. Livingston that every prayer they said for the poor souls was like a fresh plaster on a sore wound. And it gave them several unforgettable examples of the sufferings of Purgatory.

One day when Mr. Livingston was working in the fields with his sons, all of a sudden he was apparently taken ill, for they saw him turn deathly pale and double up. As they helped him to walk home, he explained that he had just heard a soul in Purgatory screaming for help. And later he often said that he could never forget that shriek — it had been so dreadful!

One night the Voice made the Livingstons get up three times to pray for a certain soul in Purgatory. And when one of the girls began to think that after all the souls could have saved themselves and they deserved their pains and anyhow the whole thing was exaggerated, suddenly they all heard a voice shrieking: *“Help! Help!”* When asked what kind of help was needed, it replied: *“Prayers — for we are in excruciating torments. Hand me something — and you will be convinced!”* And as soon as a shirt was held up, a whole human hand was burned into it, leaving the spaces between the fingers not scorched. The entire family saw both the flame and the hand. On another occasion the letters *IHS* were cleanly burned in deep red colors on a vest. These supernaturally marked objects, as well as some of the clipped

cloth, were kept and seen by many persons for over thirty years, although unfortunately they were all eventually lost or destroyed.

The Voice often spoke of the grave troubles that were hanging over the world, and it told Mr. Livingston to inform Mrs. McSherry that *“she would not live to see it, but her children would — war, pestilence and famine!”* It added that those of the family who would remain faithful to God would not suffer from these scourges and that they would know when they were in God’s favor. And as a matter of fact, during the Civil War, none of the eight sons and daughters received the slightest injury, except for one son who died from overexertion in his work in a military hospital.

When Mrs. McSherry asked where the soul of her former confessor was, expecting to hear that he was long since in Heaven, as he had been a very holy priest who had died seventeen years before, the Voice replied: *“Father F_____ is still detained in the scorching flames of Purgatory, on account of some carelessness in the management of some property of orphans he had charge of. He trusted it to someone else, and did not see to it that it was properly attended to.”*

Early one morning Mr. Livingston went over to the McSherry estate and told Mrs. McSherry that the Voice had just informed him that her sister, Mrs. Mary Spalding, had died at midnight in Baltimore, that she was in Purgatory *“for over-indulgence to her children,”* and that Masses should be offered for her soul. Several days later a letter arrived from Baltimore announcing the death of Mrs. Spalding at the very hour mentioned by the Voice. Mrs. McSherry had eighty Masses said for her sister. And one day when she was walking to the Livingston’s with her husband, the gates were all opened for them to pass through, without anyone touching them. The Voice explained that *“Mrs. Mary Spalding had opened them.”* Mrs. McSherry had a brother at Georgetown College studying for the priesthood. Through Mr. Livingston the Voice informed her that her brother had become a blasphemer, who openly stated that he didn’t believe in the Real Presence of

Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament nor the power to priests to forgive sins. The Voice added that if he died in that state of mind he would open his eyes in the raging flames below among the damned. The Voice commanded his brothers and sisters to go to him and fall upon their knees and say to him: *"In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, why will you not believe that there is a God and that nothing is difficult or impossible to Him and that it is as easy for Him to give us His Precious Body and Blood as to give us a cup of cold water."* But he did not return to God and, as the Voice foretold, he died in his sins. He was thrown from a horse and died of a broken neck. This sad event occurred in Kentucky.

The mystic Voice from the other world always placed just as much stress upon living a true Christian life as upon praying for the souls in Purgatory. It strongly recommended hospitality and it often severely warned the Livingstons and the McSherrys against the vanities of the world and especially against fashions. It urged the wealthy McSherrys to set aside all pride and vanity and to humble themselves to the earth as though they were sackcloth and ashes. It informed them that some of their relatives who had been long detained in Purgatory because of their worldliness, very much lamented their children being so worldly and so full of worldly grandeur. It claimed that ruffles and fringes, flounces and tuckers and *"modesty pieces"* (Lace worn over the bosom) were all inventions of Satan. Our Lord had come meek and lowly, it asserted, and so how could we, sinful worms of the earth, deck and adorn our sinful bodies? It declared that thousands of persons were burning in hell forever because of grievous sins that had resulted from their wishing to follow the fashions of the world. Once when three McSherry girls were fitting on some new dresses and admiring themselves, the large mirror before which they were standing was suddenly shattered into hundreds of tiny pieces! In this connection, it is certainly significant that Father Gallitzin, who was intimately acquainted with the teachings of the Voice, always strongly opposed any ostentation in his parishioners, especially in the

dress of the women at church and he frequently preached against such display.

On one occasion, when Mr. Livingston's family assembled in one room, they saw a man in the midst of them and supposing him to be a beggar, as he was poorly dressed and barefooted, the day being cold, Mr. Livingston offered him clothes and shoes, which he accepted but said they were not needed where he came from. He tarried for some time, instructing them in the Christian doctrine and talking to them. He told them; "*Luther and Calvin were in Hell and every soul that was lost through their fault added to their torments.*" When he left the house, Mr. Livingston thought to watch him, to see where he went, as they had not seen him when he came in; they saw him go out by the front part of the house and then disappear.

As was only to be expected, these extraordinary events and revelations resulted in the conversion of many friends and relatives of the two favored families. In fact during one winter fourteen persons are known to have joined the Catholic Church in the region around "Priest's Place," as the Livingston property now came to be called. And the Catholics nearby of Maryland and Virginia were inspired to lead better lives, particularly when they saw that the Livingstons and the McSherrys, under the guidance of the mystic Voice, had become ardent lay-apostles of Christ. Mr. Livingston, before his conversion, bore his losses very impatiently, but after his conversion, he never complained.

In January, 1800, when the Protestant wife of the somewhat lax Catholic, Mr. Joseph Minghini, fell dangerously ill, at the bidding of the Voice Mrs. McSherry visited and consoled her. After they had repeated an Act of Contrition together, the dying woman seemed to be truly penitent and ready to see a priest. But her husband protested that she had her own preachers and that there was no priest within forty miles. Finally however, as the Voice had urged and predicted, Father Gallitzin was summoned and he received Mrs. Minghini into the Church. The Voice had also specified that the messenger would meet both Father Cahill

and Father Gallitzin, but that the latter was the one intended for the woman, "*as being of a milder nature.*" A few weeks later, in a letter to Bishop Carroll, Father Gallitzin described the conversion as "*miraculous.*" When Mrs. McSherry returned home she dreamed that she saw a little child strike a great rock with a stick, whereupon the stone crumbled to dust. The next morning the Voice informed her through the Livingstons that Mrs. Minghini had died during the night and that her sins had crumbled away, like the rock, as a result of her sincere contrition and the priest's absolution.

Another striking incident, however, served as a vivid warning against waiting for a deathbed conversion. The Protestant wife of a Catholic man in Winchester being near death and having finally asked for a priest, a messenger was sent to the McSherry's estate and found the priest there. But when they searched for the priest's horse, Old Bull, in a small nearby field called Spring Pasture, where it had been seen only a few moments before, no one could find the horse! After considerable searching and delay, one of Mr. McSherry's horses was saddled and the priest left. Soon afterwards Old Bull was heard neighing and was found in the middle of Spring Pasture to the utter amazement of the thirty persons who had just searched for him in vain. Then Mr. Livingston was told by the Voice that the horse had been there all the time but had been made invisible, because the woman put off her conversion until the last moment, that she had died before the priest could reach her — as was subsequently confirmed — and that Almighty God had permitted this as a warning to the living not to depend on a death-bed repentance. The Voice frequently advised the Livingstons to pray for perseverance and that there was but one Church out of which there was no salvation.

One night, in hard rain, a stranger came to Mr. McSherry and asked for a night's lodging. It was most convenient for Mrs. McSherry to put him in the room where the Priest usually slept and where the Church vestments and etc. were kept. They both knew him to be a Methodist Preacher. After retiring, Mr. & Mrs.

McSherry heard someone walking briskly about in that room, somewhat like one heavily booted. They were kept awake the whole night and much disturbed. In the morning they asked the stranger whether he had not been sick during the night; but he replied, no, he had slept very well. Mr. Livingston meantime, came and told them they had had an unpleasant night, being kept awake. The Voice had told him to tell them; *“God had permitted them to be disturbed to punish them for harboring him in a place where sacred things were kept — a minister of the devil.”*

In August 1804, Mr. McSherry nearly died of a severe illness. Having had some unpleasant difference with Father Cahill, he had not been to confession and communion for some time. But now the Voice told Mr. Livingston to go to Mr. McSherry and *“his dear helpmate,”* as it always called his wife (according to Father Gallitzin), and to tell them that Mr. McSherry *“should humble himself and go to confession, and touch Christ through the Church and he would be cured.”* The apparently dying man immediately sent for Father Cahill and that same night, which his family thought would be his last, he made his confession, received Holy Communion, made his thanksgiving and then fell into a peaceful sleep. The next morning he was up before anyone else and when his family saw him walking around the house, some of them at first thought he was a ghost. Actually, though still pale and emaciated, he was completely cured. And he lived until September 7, 1822.

Mr. Livingston’s second wife, despite the fact that she heard the Voice more frequently than anyone, was never sincerely converted. She herself used to say that she was the Judas of the family, and she constantly tried to falsify whatever the Voice said. One Thursday evening when some meat-soup was left after dinner, she decided to serve it on Friday and she therefore locked it in the cellar. But the next morning she found the pot in which she had left the soup filled with exactly the same quantity of clear water! And the Voice told her that it had done it for *“it was more proper to take water than to violate the rules of the Church!”* Mrs. Livingston herself told Mrs. McSherry the whole

occurrence. She also stated that the Voice had said, *“If she would not submit to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church, she would open her eyes in Hell.”* The Voice also prophesied that she would die in her own home and room, and so when she became ill she deliberately left the house, in order to prove the Voice wrong, and went to live with a Quaker family, whose daughter happened to be dying. This girl told Mrs. Livingston that she wanted some spiritual help but did not know just what it was she needed. The Voice informed Mrs. Livingston that it was Baptism and urged her to arrange for it. After the girl died without being baptized, the Voice told Mrs. Livingston that this would appear against her on Judgment Day. And when she was near death, she was obliged by circumstances to beg to be taken home, where she died in her own room, just as the Voice had foretold. Everything that the Voice predicted happened accordingly.

One of the Livingston girls, Eve, became a very saintly woman. However, once after joining the Catholic Church, she went to a Protestant meeting and while there, she was moved to tears at the sight of so many persons who did not know anything of the True Church. But the Voice reproved her for going to the meeting, saying that she *“had committed a great sin, as the people thought she was affected by what she heard — they did not know her thoughts.”* Eve Livingston spent much of her time with the devout old Mrs. McSherry, and after she died *“in the odor of sanctity,”* the Voice declared that *“her soul did not even pass through Purgatory.”*

Mrs. McSherry, *“the dear helpmate,”* had at least two remarkable mystical experiences. One day she was frightened at seeing a cradle containing her infant son William being rocked violently without anyone touching it. Later the Voice told her through Mr. Livingston that *“it was the Devil who was trying to destroy the child, knowing that he would one day be his enemy.”* And in fact that child became the Very Reverend William McSherry, one of the Provincials of the Society of Jesus in the United States.

One Sunday Mrs. McSherry stayed home with a sick child while the rest of the family went to Church. As she was praying for her child in an upstairs room, she suddenly saw a beautiful person standing before her in a light cloud, with one hand up and the other down, and a nail running through each hand, who said to her: *"Whatsoever you do for one of My little ones, you do it for Me."* She told no one about this marvelous vision, until the priest informed her that the Voice had described it to Mr. Livingston.

One night the good old farmer and his daughter Charlotte were sitting together, when the Voice spoke from a bright light in a corner of the room and told the girl that the Devil had been trying to tempt her all day and would have succeeded, if she had not been holding in her arms all the time a neighbor's baby, but *"the innocence of the babe had protected her."*

Of course in those times as today many persons refused to believe what they heard about these supernatural events. Once when Mr. Livingston wanted to warn some acquaintances about their way of living, the Voice said: *"No — they are like Dives: if they will not hear the Church, they will not hear a voice from the dead."* However, soon after his conversion, the former Lutheran went to Baltimore to see Bishop Carroll and the wise and cautious old "Founding Father" of the Catholic Church in the United States, after a thorough examination, declared that *"he thought the man had received his knowledge from above."* Nevertheless the Voice warned Mr. Livingston that many people would not believe these things, that even some priests would laugh and not believe and that when he saw this, he should not try to convince them.

Mr. Livingston seems to have become especially devoted to Father Gallitzin, whom he visited at Conewago near Gettysburg only a year or two after joining the Catholic Church. He is known to have walked there and back, and the Voice told him *"that it had been with him the whole way."* It is also said, though without conclusive evidence, that through Mr. Livingston the Voice disclosed to Father Gallitzin some of his future sufferings

and advised him how to bear them. In any case it is a significant fact that, according to Father Gallitzin, *“Mr. Livingston removed from Virginia to Bedford County, Pennsylvania, about twenty miles from here (Loretta), where he died in the spring of 1820. I had Mass at his house repeatedly. He continued, to the last, very attentive to his duties, but did not receive the rites of the Church in his last sickness, which carried him off too quick to afford any chance of sending for a priest.”*

Let us end our story with this wise advice from Father Joseph M. Finotti, S.J.: *“The narrative of the Clip is for edification; it draws our heart near to God, it teaches lessons of supernatural wisdom. With uncovered head, then, unsandaled feet, and humble brow we approach the spot and reverently exclaim — The Finger of God is here!”*

One of the greatest lessons that this story confirms is the infallible teaching of the Catholic Church that there is no salvation outside of the Catholic Church. Please recall Mrs. Livingston’s statement that the Voice told her, *“If she would not submit to rules of the Roman Catholic Church she would open up her eyes in Hell.”* The teachings of the Church as confirmed by the Voice not only apply to Mrs. Livingston, but to all who wish to be saved. Pray and work for the salvation of souls. Distribute this wondrous story of the Wizard Clip so that many others may benefit from its revelations.

As the events of this true story bring to light the teaching of the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation, it seemed appropriate to add Part 2: “QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SALVATION” by Rev. Michael Muller, first published in 1875. As the truths of the Salvation can never change, the teaching contained in this article remains just as valid today as it was in the 19th century.

Column of (Jewish) Ann Landers

(Published in the late 1990's)

Dear Readers: Do you have any idea when your religion was founded and by whom? ... I found the following fascinating:

- *If you are a member of the Jewish faith, your religion was founded by Abraham about 4,000 years ago.*
- *If you are Hindu, your religion developed in India around 1500 B.C.*
- *If you are a Buddhist, your religion split from Hinduism, and was founded by Buddha, Prince Siddhartha Gautama of India, about 500 B.C.*
- † **If you are Roman Catholic, Jesus Christ began your religion in the year 33.**
- *If you are Islamic, Mohammed started your religion in what is now Saudi Arabia around 600 A.D.*
- *If you are Eastern Orthodox, your sect separated from Roman Catholicism around the year 1000.*
- *If you are a Lutheran, your religion was founded by Martin Luther, an ex-monk in the Catholic Church, in 1517.*
- *If you belong to the Church of England (Anglican), your religion was founded by King Henry VIII in the year 1534 because the pope would not grant him a divorce with the right to remarry.*
- *If you are a Presbyterian, your religion was founded when John Knox brought the teachings of John Calvin to Scotland in the year 1560.*
- *If you are Unitarian, your religious group developed in Europe in the 1500s.*
- *If you are a Congregationalist, your religion branched off from Puritanism in the early 1600s in England.*
- *If you are a Baptist, you owe the tenets of your religion to John Smyth, who launched it in Amsterdam in 1607.*
- *If you are a Methodist, your religion was founded by John and Charles Wesley in England in 1744.*
- *If you are an Episcopalian, your religion was brought over from England to the American colonies and formed a separate religion founded by Samuel Seabury in 1789.*
- *If you are a Mormon (Latter-Day Saints), Joseph Smith started your church in Palmyra, New York, not Salt Lake City, which would have been my guess. The year was 1830.*
- *If you worship with the Salvation Army (yes, it's a religious group, not just an organization that collects money in kettles on Christmas and serves dinners to the homeless), your sect began with William Booth in London in 1865.*
- *If you are a Christian Scientist, you look to 1879 as the year your religion was founded by Mary Baker Eddy.*
- *If you are a Jehovah's Witness, your religion was founded by Charles Taze Russell in Pennsylvania in the 1870s.*
- *If you are Pentecostal, your religion was started in the United States in 1901.*
- *If you are an agnostic, you profess an uncertainty or a skepticism about the existence of God or a Higher Being.*
- *If you are an atheist, you do not believe in the existence of God or any other higher power. This country's best-known atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, has not been seen or heard from in more than a year. According to her son, she has disappeared without a trace.*

PART 2

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
ON SALVATION**

by Rev. Michael Muller, C.S.S.R.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SALVATION

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(This article, taken from TraditionalCatholic.net,
was first published in 1875)

1. Do all admit that the Catholic Church is the first and the oldest Church, and, consequently the Church established by Jesus Christ?

That the Catholic Church is the first and oldest and consequently the Church established by Jesus Christ, is and must be admitted by all, because it is a fact clearly proven by Scripture and by history.

2. Who bear witness to this fact?

The Jews and the Gentiles bear witness to it, and even Protestants themselves acknowledge it, because, if asked why they call themselves Protestants, they answer: "*Because we protest against the Catholic Church.*"

3. What follows from this answer?

That the Catholic Church is older than Protestantism; otherwise they could not have protested against her.

4. If we go still farther back and ask the Greeks how they came into existence, what will be their answer?

The Greek Church must answer: "*We began by separating from the Catholic Church in the ninth century.*"

5. What follows from this?

That the Catholic Church existed for eight hundred years before the Greek Church began, and consequently, it is older than the Greek Church.

6. If we thus go back to the very days of the Apostles, what do we find everywhere in regard to the manner in which religious sects arose?

If we go back to the days of the Apostles, we find that every sect separated from the Catholic Church, and therefore we see

Calvinists, Kilhamites, Quakers, Shakers, Panters, Seekers, Jumpers, Reformed Methodists, German Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists, Baptists, Particular Baptists, Hardshell Baptists, Softshell Baptists, Forty-Gallon Baptists, Sixty-Gallon Baptists, Mennonites, Millerites, Universalists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Mormons, Christian Perfectionists, etc., etc., etc.

7. Is it not all the same to God whatever religion a person professes?

If it were all the same to God whatever religion a person professes, God would not have forbidden, in the First Commandment, to worship Him in any other than in the true religion. Nor would Christ have solemnly declared: *“He who will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican”* (Matt. 18:17).

8. Who, then, will be saved?

Christ has solemnly declared that only those will be saved who have done God’s will on earth as explained, not by private interpretation [see 2 Pet. 1:20], but by the infallible teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. *“Not everyone,”* says Christ, *“who saith to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father Who is in heaven, he shall enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt. 7:21). The will of the heavenly Father is that all men hear and believe His Son, Jesus Christ. *“This is My beloved Son. Hear Him”* (Luke 9:35).

9. Must, then, all who wish to be saved, die united to the Catholic Church?

All those who wish to be saved, must die united to the Catholic Church. For out of her there is no salvation, because only she teaches what Jesus Christ requires of everyone to be saved, and because only to her did Christ leave the means to obtain all the graces necessary for salvation. Hence Jesus said to His Apostles and to all their lawful successors: *“Go and teach all nations: teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. He that believeth not all these things shall be condemned.”*

Our Divine Savior says: *“No one can come to the Father, except through Me.”* If we then wish to enter heaven, we must be united

to Christ — to His [Mystical] Body, which is the Church, as Saint Paul says. Therefore outside the Church there is no salvation.

Again, Jesus Christ says: *“Whoever will not hear the Church, look upon him as a heathen and a publican,”* a great sinner. Therefore outside the Church there is no salvation.

Holy Scripture says: *“The Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved”* (Acts 2:47). Therefore the Apostles believed and the Holy Scriptures teach that there is no salvation out of the Church.

10. What did Saint Augustine and the other Bishops of Africa, at the Council of Zirta, in 412, say about the salvation of those who die outside the Roman Catholic Church?

“Whosoever,” they said, *“is separated from the Catholic Church, however commendable in his own opinion his life may be, he shall for the very reason that he is separated from the union of Christ not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”* (John 3:36).

11. What does Saint Cyprian say about the salvation of those who die outside of the Roman Catholic Church?

Saint Cyprian says: *“He who has not the Church for his mother cannot have God for his Father.”* And with him the Fathers of the Church in general say that, *“as all those who were not in the ark of Noah perished in the waters of the deluge, so shall perish all who are out of the true Church.”*

12. Who are out of the pale of the Roman Catholic Church?

Out of the pale of the Roman Catholic Church are all unbaptized and all excommunicated persons, all apostates, unbelievers, and heretics.

Infidels and Apostates

13. How do we know that unbaptized persons are not saved?

That unbaptized persons are not saved, we know from Christ, Who said: *“Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5). For

God cannot unite Himself to such souls in heaven on account of original sin, with which they are defiled.

14. How do we know that persons justly excommunicated who are unwilling to do what is required of them before they are absolved, are not saved?

Persons justly excommunicated, who are not willing to do what is required of them before they are absolved, are not saved, because the sin of great scandal, for which they were as dead members expelled from the communion of the Church, excludes them from the kingdom of heaven.

15. Which Catholics are excommunicated?

All those Catholics are excommunicated, who are members of secret societies, which have been excommunicated [condemned] by the Church, such as Freemasonry, and other societies affiliated with it under various names.

16. Why have several Popes solemnly excommunicated all Freemasonry?

All Freemasons have been solemnly excommunicated by several Popes on account of the main object and spirit of Freemasonry, to establish heathenism or the Church of Satan all over the world:

1. By upsetting governments to obtain for themselves the power of governing and making impious laws for their subjects;
2. By trying to overthrow the Catholic Church, which teaches and maintains the rights and laws of God and civil society;
3. By spreading immoral and impious principles through the infidel press and other satanic means;
4. By establishing public schools for the infidel education of youth.

17. Is this main object and spirit known to all Freemasons?

This satanic object and spirit is known only to the members of the highest grades of Freemasonry. But it is sufficiently known to all from the works and speeches of Freemasons, and therefore

every member, even of the lowest grade, is guilty of the foul deeds of this satanic society.

18. How do we know that apostates are not saved?

Apostates from the Catholic Faith are not saved, because to fall away from the Faith is a great sin, which makes one lose the kingdom of heaven.*

*Apostasy, or the failing away from the true Faith, is a kind of infidelity. As the virtue of true faith unites us with God, so the sin of apostasy separates us from Him. As the real loss of faith is a total separation from God and His Holy Church, it is called apostasy of perfidy. Whoever is guilty of this kind of apostasy, is deprived of grace and of all other means of salvation, for, *“Faith is the life of the soul: the just man lives by faith” (Rom. 1: 17). “When the soul, the life of the body.”* says Saint Thomas Aquinas, *“has left the body, all its natural powers and physical organization begin to be dissolved. In like manner, when true faith, the life of the soul is totally destroyed, a mortal disorder, a spiritual contagion, pervades all the members and faculties of the body, which are the instruments of the soul.”* Hence it is, that the apostate uses every faculty of his soul and body to pervert others, by inducing them to renounce the Faith which he himself has renounced to his own perdition. *“It had been better for them (heretics and apostates) not to have known the way of justice than, after having known it, to turn away from it” (II Peter 2: 21). “Woe to you ungodly men,”* says Holy Writ, *“woe to you who have forsaken the law of the Most High Lord! If you be born, you shall be born in malediction, and if you die, in malediction shall be your position. The ungodly shall pass from malediction to destruction; the name of the ungodly shall be blotted out” (Ecclus. xli: 11-14).*

19. How many kinds of infidels or unbelievers are there?

There are three kinds of infidels or unbelievers: (1) Those who are guilty of the sin of infidelity; (2) those who are not guilty of the sin of infidelity, but commit other great sins; and (3) those who are not guilty of the sin of infidelity, and live up to the dictates of their conscience.

20. What kind of infidels are guilty of the sin of infidelity?

All those unbaptized persons are guilty, who do not embrace the true religion, although the truths thereof have been sufficiently made known to them - like many of the Jews of whom our Lord said that they had no excuse for their sins, because He had spoken to them.

All those unbaptized persons are guilty, who have received sufficient light to know the truth, or at least to understand the danger of their position, and the obligation of making diligent inquiries to ascertain and embrace the truth, but neglect to do so.

And all those are guilty of the sin of infidelity, who willfully deny the truth and obstinately resist it.

21. Why is it that positive infidels are not saved?

Positive infidels are not saved because, *“positive infidelity, being willful obstinacy, palpable contradiction, and public contempt of divine revelation and of the precepts of the Gospel, is one of the most grievous sins in the sight of God and of His Holy Church,”* says Saint Thomas Aquinas.

22. Explain the grievousness of the sin of infidelity?

Mortal sin is a deviation from virtue and divine law. The most heinous sin, therefore, is that which separates man from God more than any other. Now, no sin causes a greater separation from God than that of positive infidelity. When the intellect is in error and abandons the knowledge of God, the will follows it and increases in malice in proportion as the intellect turns away from the path of truth, justice, and charity. Each step that such a man takes in the darkness of infidelity, increases the distance that separates him from God. A return from that dangerous course is very difficult, for when the intellect is in error and the will is filled with malice and depravity, all the bonds capable of uniting man to God are torn asunder.

If such men die in this disposition of mind they are infallibly lost, says Saint Thomas. *“Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6).*

23. Which kind of infidels are not guilty of the sin of infidelity, but commit other grievous sins?

Those who are not guilty of the sin of infidelity, but commit other grievous sins, are all those unbaptized persons who never had an opportunity of knowing the true religion, or of becoming aware of the obligation of seeking and embracing it, but who do not live up to the dictates of their conscience.

24. Will this class of infidels be lost?

This class of infidels will be lost, not on account of their infidelity, which was no sin for them, but on account of other grievous sins which they committed against their conscience. *“For whosoever have sinned without the law,”* says Saint Paul, *“shall perish without the law” (Romans 2:12).*

25. Will those infidels be lost, who are not guilty of the sin of infidelity and live up to their conscience?

Of those infidels who are not guilty of the sin of infidelity and are faithful in obeying the voice of their conscience, Saint Thomas Aquinas says: *“If anyone was brought up in the wilderness or among brute beasts, and if he followed the law of nature to desire what is good, and to avoid what is wicked, we should certainly believe that God, by an inward inspiration, would reveal to him what he should believe, or would send someone to preach the Faith to him, as He sent Peter to Cornelius.”*

Heresy Explained

26. What is the meaning of the word “heretic”?

The word “heretic” is derived from the Greek, and means “a chooser.”

27. What is a heretic?

A heretic is any baptized person, professing Christianity, and choosing for himself what to believe and what not to believe as he pleases, in obstinate opposition to any particular truth which he knows is taught by the Catholic Church as a truth revealed by God.

28. How many things, then, are required to make a person guilty of the sin of heresy?

To make a person guilty of the sin of heresy, three things are required:

1. He must be baptized and profess Christianity. This distinguishes him from a Jew and idolater;
2. He must refuse to believe a truth revealed by God, and taught by the Church as so revealed;

3. He must obstinately adhere to error, preferring his own private judgment in matters of faith and morals to the infallible teaching of the Catholic Church.

29. How many kinds of heretics (Protestants) are there?

There are three kinds of heretics:

1. Those who are guilty of the sin of heresy;
2. Those who are not guilty of the sin of heresy, but commit other grievous sins;
3. Those who are not guilty of the sin of heresy and live up to the dictates of their conscience.

30. Who are guilty of the sin of heresy?

Of the sin of heresy are guilty:

1. All those baptized persons, who profess Christianity and obstinately reject a truth revealed by God and taught by the Church as so revealed;
2. Those who embrace an opinion contrary to Faith, maintain it obstinately, and refuse to submit to the authority of the Catholic Church;
3. Those who willfully doubt the truth of an article of Faith, for by such willful doubt they actually question God's knowledge and truth, and to do this is to be guilty of heresy;
4. Those who know the Catholic Church to be the only true Church, but do not embrace her faith;
5. Those who could know the Church, if they would candidly search, but who, through indifference and other culpable motives, neglect to do so;
6. Those who, like the Anglicans, think that they approach very near the Catholic Church, because their prayers and ceremonies are like many prayers and ceremonies of the Catholic Church, and because their Creed is the Apostles' Creed. These are heretics in principle, for, "*The real character of rank heresy,*"

says St. Thomas Aquinas, “*consists in want of submission to the divine teaching authority in the Head of the Church.*”

31. Why are true heretics lost?

True heretics are lost because by rejecting the divine Teacher — the Catholic Church — they reject all divine teaching, to do which is one of the greatest sins. Hence Pope Pius IX spoke of Protestantism in all its forms as “*the great revolt against God,*” it being an attempt to substitute a human for a divine authority, and a declaration of the creature’s independence from the Creator. For this reason Holy Scripture condemns heresy in the strongest terms. “*A man,*” says St. Paul, “*that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid; knowing that he who is such an one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment*” (Tit. 3: 10). And again he says: “*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a Gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema,*” that is, “*accursed*” (Gal. 1:29).

Heretics are lost because they have no divine Faith. “*To reject but one article of Faith taught by the Church,*” says St. Thomas Aquinas, “*is enough to destroy Faith, as one mortal sin is enough to destroy Charity.*” For the virtue of Faith does not consist merely in adhering to the Holy Scriptures, and in revering them as the Word of God; it consists principally in submitting our intellect and will to the divine authority of the true Church charged by Jesus Christ to expound them. “*I would not believe the Holy Scriptures,*” says St. Augustine, “*were it not for the divine authority of the Church.*” He, therefore, who despises and rejects this authority, cannot have true Faith. If he admits some supernatural truths, they are but simple opinions, as he makes those truths depend on his private judgment.

And as divine Faith is the beginning of salvation, the foundation and source of justification, and is found only in the true Church, it is clear that there is no salvation for one as long as he is a heretic.

Heresy denies all Faith

32. Have heretics faith in Jesus Christ?

Saint Thomas Aquinas says: *“It is absurd for a heretic to say that he believes in Jesus Christ. To believe in a person is to give our full consent to his word and to all he teaches. True Faith, therefore, is absolute belief in Jesus Christ and in all he taught. Hence, he who does not adhere to all that Jesus Christ has prescribed for our salvation, has no more the doctrine of Jesus Christ and of His Church, than the pagans, Jews, and Turks have.”* *“He is,”* says Jesus Christ, *“but a heathen and a publican”*; and therefore he will be condemned to hell.

33. Show how Protestants have no absolute faith in Christ.

Jesus Christ says: *“Hear the Church.”* *“No,”* say Luther and all Protestants, *“do not hear the Church; protest against her with all your might.”*

Jesus Christ says: *“If anyone will not hear the Church, look upon him as a heathen and a publican.”* *“No,”* says Protestantism, *“if anyone does not hear the Church, look upon him as an apostle, an ambassador of God.”*

Jesus Christ says: *“The gates of hell shall not prevail against My Church.”* *“No,”* says Protestantism. *“’Tis false, the gates of hell have prevailed against the Church for a thousand years and more.”*

Jesus Christ has declared Saint Peter and every successor to Saint Peter — the Pope — to be His Vicar on earth. *“No,”* says Protestantism, *“the Pope is Anti-Christ.”*

Jesus Christ says: *“My yoke is sweet, and my burden light.”* (Matt. 11:30). *“No,”* said Luther and Calvin, *“it is impossible to keep the Commandments.”*

Jesus Christ says: *“if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments”* (Matt. 19:17). *“No,”* said Luther and Calvin, *“faith alone, without good works, is sufficient to enter into life everlasting.”*

Jesus Christ says: *“Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish” (Luke 3:3).* “No,” said Luther and Calvin, *“fasting and other works of penance are not necessary in satisfaction for sin.”*

Jesus Christ says: *“This is my body.”* “No,” said Calvin, *“this is only the figure of Christ’s Body; it will become His Body as soon as you receive It.”*

Jesus Christ says: *“I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery” (Matt. 19:9).* “No,” say Luther and all Protestants, to a married man, *“you may put away your wife, get a divorce, and marry another.”*

Jesus Christ says to every man: *“Thou shalt not steal.”* “No,” said Luther to secular princes, *“I give you the right to appropriate to yourselves the property of the Roman Catholic Church.”*

34. Do heretics speak in this manner also of the Holy Ghost and the Apostles?

They do. The Holy Ghost says in Holy Scripture: *“Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred” (Eccles. 9:1).* *“Who can say: My heart is clean, I am pure from sin?” (Prov. 20:9).* And, *“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Philip. 2:12).* “No,” said Luther and Calvin, *“but whosoever believes in Jesus Christ, is in the state of grace.”*

Saint Paul says: *“If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (I Cor. 13:2).* “No,” said Luther and Calvin, *“faith alone is sufficient to save us.”*

Saint Peter says that in the Epistles of Saint Paul there are many things *“hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as also the other Scriptures, to their own perdition.” (II Pet. 3:16.)* “No,” said Luther and Calvin, *“the Scriptures are very plain, and easy to be understood.”*

Saint James says: *“Is anyone sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord” (Chapter 5, verse 14).* “No,” said Luther and Calvin, *“that is a vain and useless ceremony.”*

35. Now, do you think God the Father will admit into heaven those who thus contradict His Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the Apostles?

No, He will let them have their portion with Lucifer in hell, who first rebelled against Christ, and who is the father of liars.

36. Can a Christian be saved, who has left the true Church of Christ, the Holy Catholic Church?

No, because the Church of Christ is the kingdom of God on earth, and he who leaves that kingdom, shuts himself out from the kingdom of Christ in heaven.

37. Have Protestants left the true Church of Christ?

Protestants left the true Church of Christ in their founders, who left the Catholic Church either through pride or through the passion of lust and covetousness.

38. What will be the punishment of those who willfully rebel against the Holy Catholic Church?

Those who willfully rebel against the Holy Catholic Church, will, like Lucifer and the other rebellious angels, be cast into the everlasting flames of hell. *“He who will not hear the Church,”* says Christ, *“let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.”* (Matt. 18:17).

39. But if a Protestant should say: “I have nothing to do with Luther or Calvin or Henry VIII or John Knox, I go by the Bible,” what would you answer him?

In that case, you adopt, and go by, the principles and spirit of the authors of heresies, and you change the written Word of God into the word of man, because you interpret Holy Scripture in your own private manner, giving it that meaning which you choose to give it, and thus, instead of believing the Word of God, you believe rather your own private interpretation of it, which is but the word of man. Hence, Saint Augustine says: *“You who believe what you please, and reject what you please, believe yourselves or your own fancy rather than the Gospel.”*

Inculpable ignorance

40. Which Protestants are not guilty of the sin of heresy, but commit other great sins?

Those who are Protestants without their fault and who never had an opportunity of knowing better, are not guilty of the sin of heresy; but if they do not live up to the dictates of their conscience, they will be lost, not on account of their heresy, which for them was no sin, but on account of other grievous sins which they committed.

41. Will those heretics be saved, who are not guilty of the sin of heresy, and are faithful in living up to the dictates of their conscience?

Inculpable ignorance of the true religion excuses a heathen from the sin of infidelity, and a Protestant from the sin of heresy. But such ignorance has never been the means of salvation. From the fact that a person who lives up to the dictates of his conscience, and who cannot sin against the true religion on account of being ignorant of it, many have drawn the false conclusion that such a person is saved, or, in other words, is in the state of sanctifying grace, thus making ignorance a means of salvation or justification.

If we sincerely wish not to make great mistakes in explaining the great revealed truth, "*Out of the Church there is no salvation,*" we must remember:

1. That there are four great truths of salvation, which everyone must know and believe in order to be saved;
2. That no one can go to heaven unless he is in the state of sanctifying grace;
3. That, in order to receive sanctifying grace, the soul must be prepared for it by divine Faith, Hope, Charity, true sorrow for sin with the firm purpose of doing all that God requires the soul to believe and to do, in order to be saved;
4. That this preparation of the soul cannot be brought by inculpable ignorance. And if such ignorance cannot even dispose the soul for receiving the grace of justification, it can much less

give this grace to the soul. Inculpable ignorance has never been a means of grace or salvation, not even for the inculpably ignorant people that live up to their conscience. But of this class of ignorant persons we say, with Saint Thomas Aquinas, that God in His mercy will lead these souls to the knowledge of the necessary truths of salvation, even send them an angel, if necessary, to instruct them, rather than let them perish without their fault. If they accept this grace, they will be saved as Catholics.

Other questions

42. But is it not a very uncharitable doctrine to say that no one can be saved out of the Church?

On the contrary, it is a very great act of charity to assert most emphatically, that out of the Catholic Church there is no salvation possible; for Jesus Christ and His Apostles have taught this doctrine in very plain language. He who sincerely seeks the truth is glad to hear it, and embrace it, in order to be saved.

43. But is it not said in Holy Scripture: “*He that feareth God, and worketh justice, is acceptable to Him*”?

This is true. But we must remember that he who fears God, will also believe all the truths that God has revealed, as Cornelius did (Acts, Chapter X). He believes Jesus Christ when He speaks to us through the pastors of His Church. But he who does not believe all the truths that God has revealed, but instead believes and rejects whatever he chooses, does not fear God, and cannot work justice. “*He that believeth not the Son of God*” — Jesus Christ — “*maketh Him a liar,*” says Saint John (I John 5:10); and will, on this account, be condemned to hell.

44. But are there not many who would lose the affections of their friends, their comfortable homes, their temporal goods, and prospects in business, were they to become Catholics? Would not Jesus Christ excuse them under such circumstances from becoming Catholics?

As to the affection of friends, Jesus Christ has solemnly declared: “*He who loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of*

Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:37). And as to the loss of temporal gain He has answered: “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?” (Mark 8:36).

45. But would it not be enough for such a one to be a Catholic in heart only, without professing his religion publicly?

No, for Jesus Christ has solemnly declared that, *“He who shall be ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed when He shall come in His majesty, and that of His Father, and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26).*

46. But might not such a one safely put off being received into the Church till the hour of death?

To put off being received into the Church till the hour of death is to abuse the mercy of God, and to expose oneself to the danger of losing the light and grace of Faith, and die a reprobate.

47. What else keeps many from becoming Catholics?

Many know very well that, if they become Catholics, they must lead honest and sober lives, be pure, and check their sinful passions, and this they are unwilling to do. *“Men love darkness rather than light,”* says Jesus Christ, *“because their deeds are evil.”* There are none so deaf as those that will not hear.

48. What follows from the fact that salvation can be found only in the Roman Catholic Church?

It follows that it is very impious for anyone to think and to say that it matters little what a man believes provided he be an honest man.

49. What answer can you give to a man who speaks thus?

A man who says, *“it matters little what a man believes, provided he be an honest man,”* I would ask whether or not he believed that his honesty and justice were so great as that of the Scribes and Pharisees in the Gospel. They were constant in prayer; they paid tithes according to the law, gave great alms, fasted twice a week, and compassed the sea and land to make a convert and bring him to the knowledge of the true God.

50. What did Jesus Christ say of this justice of the Pharisees?

He says: *“Unless your justice shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matt. 5:20).

51. Was, then, the righteousness of the Pharisees very defective in the sight of God?

The righteousness of the Pharisees was most undoubtedly very defective. Their righteousness was all outward show and ostentation. They did good only to be praised and admired by men; but within their souls they were full of impurity and malice. They were lewd hypocrites, who concealed great vices under the beautiful appearance of love for God, charity to the poor, and severity to themselves. Their devotion consisted in exterior acts, and they despised all who did not live as they did. They were strict in the religious observances of human traditions, but scrupled not to violate the Commandments of God.

52. What are we then to think of those who say: *“It matters little what a man believes, provided he be honest?”*

Of those who say this, we think that their exterior honesty, like that of the Pharisees, may be sufficient to keep them out of prison, but not out of hell.

Pius IX answers

53. But did not Pope Pius IX [19th Century] say that all men, however alienated from Catholic union they remain, are alike in the way of salvation and may obtain life everlasting?

To this calumnious report of certain newspapers, Pope Pius IX replied:

In our times, many of the enemies of the Catholic Faith direct their efforts towards placing every monstrous opinion on the same level with the doctrine of Christ, or confounding it therewith; and so they try more and more to propagate that impious system of the indifference of religions. But quite recently — we shudder to say — certain men have not hesitated

to slander us by saying that we share in their folly, favor that most wicked system, and think so benevolently of every class of mankind as to suppose that not only the sons of the Church, but that the rest also, however alienated from Catholic unity they may remain, are alike in the way of salvation, and may arrive at everlasting life. We are at a loss, from horror, to find words to express our detestation of this new and atrocious injustice that is done us.

We love, indeed, all mankind with the inmost affection of our heart, yet not otherwise than in the love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who came to seek and to save that which had perished, Who died for all, Who wills all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth; Who, therefore, sent His disciples into the whole world to preach the Gospel to every creature, proclaiming that those who should believe and be baptized should be saved, but that those who should not believe should be condemned.

Let those, therefore, who wish to be saved, come to the pillar and the ground of Faith, which is the Church; let them come to the true Church of Christ, which, in her bishops and in the Roman Pontiff, the chief head of all, has the succession of apostolical authority which has never been interrupted, which has never counted anything of greater importance than to preach, and by all means to keep and defend the doctrine proclaimed by the Apostles at Christ's command (Allocution to the Cardinals held on December 17, 1847).

54. What conclusion, therefore, should every non-Catholic draw from this conviction?

From this conviction, every non-Catholic should draw the practical conclusion to become a Catholic. For when there is a question about eternal salvation and eternal damnation, a sensible man will take the surest way to heaven.

“In the year 1797, on a farm near the present Middleway, Jefferson County, West Virginia, a Lutheran family was saved by a Catholic priest from diabolical persecutions and then instructed in the Catholic religion by a mysterious, invisible Voice from the other world, that continued for seventeen years to enlighten, guide, and inspire these former Protestants and their Catholic friends to live as fervent and model Christians. Frequently during those years, this mystic Voice, whose ‘influence was always beneficial,’ communicated timely warnings, prophecies, and messages of charity and mercy for many persons, which resulted in numerous conversions.” (p. 5)