



POCKET APOLOGETICS

Robert Bergin

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An Analysis of

- (a) Proofs from reason of the
EXISTENCE OF GOD.
- (b) Proofs that Christ is God.
- (c) Proofs that the Catholic
Church is that founded by
Christ during the time of
His Incarnation

Robert Bergin

**Happiness flows from
perfect virtue
(Aristotle)**

DEDICATED
To that overwhelming
worldwide victory of the
CROSS
which is soon to come

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FOREWORD

This unpretentious little work on Apologetics is offered to anybody who will read it in the hope that, *by the grace of God*, some souls somewhere may receive lights and insights from it.

The Christian faith conforms eminently to reason. But, curiously, one cannot *reason* one's way into it. "Men" Cardinal Newman asserted, "*are not converted by syllogisms.*"

Faith in Christ brings peace of soul, and it is this peace which engenders peace in families, in nations, and, ultimately, in the whole world.

The peace is a gift of God and is given only to those who are virtuous. "Peace on earth" the angels sang at Bethlehem "*to men of good will*"(Luke 2.14)

Thus the planners, analysts, lawyers of this world, skilled though they may be in logic and carnal wisdom, will never find Christ unless they are virtuous and of good will. The whole world is divided between men of goodwill and men of bad will, that is to say, between good and evil. If we are not satisfied with contemporary evidence of this, we have only to read the history of the human race to know it.

The ancient philosophers, the thinkers of every age, have been obsessed with this duality in the human psyche, this presence of good and evil which has caused such high drama in human society.

There is high drama in this conflict between good and evil today, between the just and the unjust, between those who love and those who hate. It would be naive, therefore, to expect that a little work on Apologetics such as this --or indeed any treatise, on matter how scholarly-- could change a man of bad will into one of good will. Such conversions are essentially works of grace.

The really *vital* discovery of the human intellect is not in the realm of Apologetics or in that of any other discipline. Rather, it is the discovery of the therapeutic effects of prayer upon the human psyche. It is this that transforms, inspires and enlightens, and changes *radically* the lives of men. That is the major discovery of one's life on earth. Indeed there is none greater.

May God grant that all who read this Pocket Apologetics will lift their minds and hearts to God, and absorb into their minds and hearts those sublime truths which bring peace and tranquillity and happiness to men!

Readers may check the quotations from St. Thomas Aquinas in the First Complete American edition of the *Summa Theologica* published by Benziger Brothers for the American Dominicans in 1920. The references from *History of the Church* by Hughes are from the edition published by Sheed and Ward in 1948.

A SUPREME LAWGIVER

The physical universe is obviously governed by fixed laws. The heavenly bodies obey these laws with such meticulous precision that your TV weatherman can tell you with split second accuracy at what time the sun will rise tomorrow morning - or any morning for that matter. There is no disorder in our universe. Rather, there is a truly marvellous '*law and order*'.

But law presupposes a lawgiver, in the case of the heavenly bodies, a lawgiver on the grand scale. One can only think of a supreme being, an omnipotent being who is God.

St. Thomas Aquinas notes that the word *lex* (law) derives from the Latin root *ligare*, to bind. A law binds either people or things to a certain form of conduct. For example it is clear that a law binds all genera and species that they should propagate their kind. And this they do, blindly, instinctively. Man is exempted from this universal law by reason of his free will.

The Scholastic definition of a law, cited by Pope Leo XIII in his Allegiance to the Republic, is "*A precept, ordained according to reason, promulgated for the good of the community.*"

Man is distinct from the rest of the animal creation because of his ability to reason. Not only

the Scholastic philosophers but all the ancient wise men agreed that it is for the good of men to live according to reason.

The Greeks spoke of a '*great rational principle*' which governed the universe. Some of them, the Stoics and Platonists, called it the *Logos*. They noted that it impelled men to admire good rather than evil, truth rather than error, love rather than hate, virtue rather than vice, justice rather than injustice. That is why it was called '*rational*.' Cicero called this '*great rational principle*' *the mind of God*. Following this line of reasoning, St. Thomas states that the whole community of the universe is governed by *Divine Reason*. (Q91.Artl.Ptl-11).

Accordingly, St. Thomas lays down the principle that the common good of the state cannot flourish unless the citizens are governed by reason; in other words, they must be virtuous. At least, he says, those whose business it is to govern must be virtuous. Of course, St. Thomas contends that the virtuous are the wisest in that wisdom is the fruit of virtue. (Wis.3.XI). The Angelic Doctor insists that it is reasonable to be virtuous, *unreasonable* to choose vice.

But man, the 'animal who reasons' is given freewill. And his sensory nature sometimes clamours for satisfactions which reason tells him will surely do harm to his person. It is not reasonable, for example, to commit the crime of

rape, which may bring disgrace and a long term in prison. But men, acting *unreasonably*, commit it.

Nothing, perhaps, is more obvious to thinking men than the evidence of the countless laws of nature. But the laws which are implanted in the human heart, and which direct rational man along the paths of virtue, are the crucially important laws.

We understand something of the Lawgiver through the laws. If he directs us to be virtuous, he must be supremely virtuous himself. If he directs us to love rather than hate, he must, surely, be Love itself. If he directs us to be just then, is he not likely to be infinite Justice himself?

Aquinas tells us that the object of every law is to make men righteous or virtuous. (Q92.Art.1.Pt.1.11) For law-abiding citizens, in both ancient and modern times, have always been regarded as virtuous.

From this it is reasoned that the Supreme Lawgiver, responsible for bringing all the human race to a potential for righteousness and virtue by his laws, must be himself, not only omnipotent, but pre-eminently righteous and virtuous.

And this accords with the notion that He is God.

N.B. It should be remembered that laws which are perverse and contrary to reason are not laws at all. For example, laws which forbid the worship of God are mere wickedness. We are bound to obey the laws of the community, even stupid laws. We are not, however, bound to obey

**wicked laws, for no man, and no community has
the authority to coerce us into sin.**

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Another proof from reason of the Existence of God is what St. Thomas Aquinas calls the study of the "*order of efficient causes.*" (Pt. 1 Q2 Art.3).

It has never been known, he asserts, and neither is it possible, that a thing can be the cause of itself. It is reported that the Emperor Napoleon was on the deck of a ship in the Mediterranean one night when he heard some of his officers, seduced by the atheism which had launched the Revolution, vehemently rejecting the notion of a Deity. Napoleon joined the group, pointed to the magnificent canopy of stars in the sky above and said quietly: "*Gentlemen, who made those?*"

It is a universal concept that things come from things, contingent being from contingent being, leading back to necessary being which is God. Being is defined as that which exists or has the potential to exist. All observable being is, as the philosophers say, *ens ab alio*, that which is contingent or relative to other being. Every animal or bird, or fish or flower has its lineage. And the stars, travelling unerringly in the trackless wastes of the cosmos, have their cause.

This earth, with all its 'furniture' is a gift to man. Whence comes this gift? There is not only omnipotence manifested in this gift, there is also a fatherly benevolence.

A Supreme Being is surely manifesting his love for us in the happiness's the just have in associating with one another, through the food we eat, through the beauty and wonder of landscape and mountain and sea and star, through all the glory of creation.

Who is this Supreme Being who *caused* all this to happen? Who breathed the breath of life into our nostrils?

If we take away the cause, we necessarily take away the effect. That is, no parents, no child; no acorn, no oak tree.

But for all the magnificent flora and fauna of this complex earth, there has to be a first cause; for all this vast wealth of contingent being that we see before us, reason tells us that we must assume a necessary being, a being that does not derive its existence from another. This necessary—and obviously omnipotent-Being has to be God.

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

It is difficult to hear music or conversation, to examine anything, to look anywhere, without finding design.

If we examine a bird or an insect, or a flower, if we explore the tides and the seasons, if we look up at the cosmos itself, we find design. Who is there who can fail to be impressed by the intricate design manifested in the human eye, or in that most delicate of all microphones, the human ear?

The biologists tell us that life is an inexplicable system of protons, neutrons and electrons, combined into atoms and molecules, all following specific patterns of behaviour to produce specific results.

It is quite certain that a thing cannot design itself. Never in all history has a thing designed itself.

But, if we are charmed and intrigued by the design in the material universe, what of the design in the human psyche, the blending of the intellect, the will, the imagination, the memory, to form rational man!

And this design does not evolve. For the psyche is clearly spiritual. It can develop, but it cannot evolve. The design so apparent in the psyche is beneficent. Left to follow the orderly and rational

processes, man would attain perfect happiness in a just world, a world of peace and truth and brotherly love.

And what are we to say of that inward voice, commonly called the conscience, which checks and rebukes man when he has done evil, which warns him also that he should be just, truthful, honest? What is the design behind this? Is it not | that all men should be just, compassionate, truthful, honest, so that the world may become a paradise?

Reason suggests (a) that the design in the universe is inexplicable without a Supreme Designer (b) that the Supreme Designer is both benevolent and omnipotent (c) that the design in the universe, so beautiful, so marked by an exquisite superhuman genius, suggests a Supreme Designer of infinite beauty.

And this accords with the notion that He is God.

The fourth proof from reason of the existence of God

THE ARGUMENT FROM MOTION

Another proof from reason of the Existence of God is put down by St. Thomas Aquinas as the argument from motion.

Whatever is in motion, he reasons, is put in motion by another. If A puts B in motion, then, of necessity, A must be put in motion by some other force. And, in this way, we reason back to the Prime Mover, God Himself.

Science tells us that matter, of itself, is inert. Obviously, nevertheless, there is motion in the universe. The Greeks, centuries before Christ, explained the motion in the cosmos as the work of a Prime Mover, a vaguely defined supreme being.

Today, our astronauts see the Planet Earth as a vivid globe, looking something like an orange or green tennis ball, speeding on its precision course through space at more than 60,000 miles an hour. Of course all the heavenly bodies are travelling through space at similar dizzying speeds.

Modern telescopes reveal to us vast numbers of new galaxies and constellations stretching away into infinity. Some of these galaxies are estimated to be between thirty and fifty million light years away. The amount of energy consumed in this

fantastic movement of the billions of heavenly bodies is utterly beyond computation.

If matter is inert, who began the motion in the cosmos? Who sustains it?

Another more common example of motion is the heart of a new-born baby, a mysterious device which pumps blood into the baby's circulatory system to enrich, nourish and develop all the members of the body. What keeps it beating?

We know that, when artificial hearts are implanted as substitutes for diseased human hearts, electric generators are required to pump the blood into the circulatory systems of the patients. But what power system keeps the normal human heart beating rhythmically for sixty, seventy, eighty years?

The power is withdrawn some day, and we are clinically dead. Do we die without solving the mystery of the motion in the human heart?

Reason suggests that a Supreme Being begins the orderly motion in the heavenly bodies, and the purposeful motion in the beating of the human heart. As there is both omnipotence and benevolence reflected in this, it is reasonable to conclude *that it is a manifestation of the power of God*, that God is telling us of His presence by the grandeur of His works, that He has given us our reason to permit us to find Him, adore Him and love Him, in these dazzlingly beautiful heavenly bodies which have preoccupied men throughout the ages.

THE SOCIAL CONTINGENCY OF MAN

Philosophers agree that man was meant to live in society. Man, Aristotle asserted, is a social animal.

This social contingency, by which we all touch one another's lives, is deep and fundamental. The whole world knows, for example, that the most important and indispensable contingency is the biological union of the sexes which ensures the continuity of the species.

This fundamental contingency produces the family unit, the basis of society. Families become clans, clans become tribes, and tribes become nations.

But man and woman also complement one another psychologically in a fascinating way. In a virtuous society—and distinctly NOT in a corrupt society—the psychological blending of man and woman surely manifests the supernatural power of the Creator. For virtuous women have a tenderness, a willingness to sacrifice themselves, a feminine charm, an intuitive understanding of their more aggressive partners which are peculiarly the talents of their sex. The virtuous woman possesses skills and insights which can bring out the noblest and best in her husband, talents which are of vital importance in establishing a happy, stable home

life. Great wives and mothers in history have surely borne witness to this.

Throughout history, man has been the breadwinner, the tiller of the soil, the hunter, the trader, who, by his strength and endurance obtained food for his family and provided a roof over their heads. He also defended them from attack in ruder and more dangerous times.

Here we see distinctly masculine and feminine talents blending perfectly to form stable, wholesome families which form the basis of society. We are assuming, in this social contingency of the sexes, that both man and woman are reasonable, i.e. that they are virtuous. Virtue is the *sine qua non*. Without it, there is only the chaos which we see in society today.

In society, we find that the myriad talents of the individuals form a civic entity which historians are apt to call a civilisation. This word is from the Latin *civitas*, a city.

There are gifted city planners. But these need engineers and architects and many construction workers to build the city. And all of these workers need doctors and nurses to care for their health, farmers, bakers and food processors to provide nourishment, builders, carpenters and plumbers to construct their homes.

Today, our city manager can go nowhere if his car breaks down. So that he is glad to have the

services of a competent mechanic in such circumstances.

How many and varied are the talents in civilised society! We all see, on television, men and women performing feats which we could never do. We all see, on television, men and women performing feats which we could never do. We do not give these talents to ourselves. Where then do they come from? They are not given haphazardly or capriciously. They are given intelligently. And they are certainly given benevolently, for the good of man, for the good of human society.

Would not the world have been a poorer place without the great artists and composers, the literary geniuses and architects, the great philosophers and idealists who have taught us how to live in peace with one another, even to love one another?

If man is to live in a civilised society, to reject the barbarism of ancient times - and indeed of modern times - he must use his reason to recognise that Supreme Being has arranged this social contingency of man, this delicate and harmonious array of talents which permits the building of civilisations. That Supreme Being is clearly omnipotent and benevolent. **Reason itself tells us that He is God.**

PROOFS THAT CHRIST IS

GOD

In putting forth proof that Jesus Christ is God we must, of necessity, deal with the historical Christ. In regard to this we should be allowed to assume that the Scriptures of the New Testament are valid historical documents, better authenticated than any of the ancient historical documents, even those of celebrated historians like Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, Flavius Josephus, even of the renowned Julius Caesar himself.

The original texts of the New Testament were brought under a wide and relentless scrutiny in both Eastern and Western regions of the Roman Empire in the first and second centuries A.D. They were analysed, studied, debated by thousands. They attracted far more attention than the writings of profane historians. Tens of thousands sacrificed their lives to attest the truths contained in these writing. And, because the apocryphal writings began to confuse the faithful, we find Pope Damasus, in the 4th century, commissioning St. Jerome to assemble a definitive canon of the authentic writings of the Apostles and evangelists. Jerome, a finished scholar, proficient in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, produced the Vulgate, the Latin Bible Which constituted - and still constitutes - the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

For these good reasons, the Scriptures of the New Testament are considered valid historical documents even by scholars indifferent to their religious significance.

The Scriptures are of vital importance in establishing proofs of the Divinity of Christ. They are replete with references to His miracles and, in particular, to His resurrection from the dead. There is clear evidence in the New Testament that Christ was seen by numerous witnesses after His crucifixion and death, that He spoke with them, and, in some cases, ate with them. St. Paul tells us that in one instance, He was seen, after His crucifixion, by more than 500 people at once. (I Cor.15.6).

Neither is it reasonable to believe that the Apostles and all the early Christian martyrs would have sacrificed their own lives and endured the cruel torments of the amphitheatre if they had had doubts about the reality of the Resurrection. It was indeed this compelling evidence of His divinity which emboldened and inflamed the early Christians and it is this which inspires Christians today. For it is Christ's resurrection which is the herald and promise of our own rising to glory from the grave.

The documents of the New Testament are accepted as historically valid even by non-believers. They tell of a man who worked mighty prodigies over a period of more than three years. He raised the dead to life, gave sight to the blind, hearing and

speech to the deaf and dumb. Who was this man? Could such a marvellous historical figure have been merely a pathetic megalomaniac in his claims to be God? For he did claim to be God. "I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. . ." (Jn.8.58). When He was asked who He was He replied: "The Beginning who speaketh unto you. . ." God is traditionally called alpha and omega--the beginning and the end.

Are not all the mighty prodigies worked by Christ during His life on earth easily explained by the simple assumption that He is God? Did He not demonstrate absolute mastery over all the laws of nature? Did He not demonstrate omnipotence in every conceivable way? Did He not demonstrate benevolence and love in every conceivable way? Are these then not the attributes of God?

There is further proof that Christ is God, discovered in a recent study of the Shroud of Turin, which has attracted so much attention in recent years. A consensus of scientists who have examined the Shroud, agree that the man who was buried in it had been scourged, crowned with thorns and crucified. The weave of the cloth has been identified as a type available in Palestine at the time of Christ.

It has also been revealed that the image of a man shown on the Shroud in the form of a photographic negative was so delicately etched on the cloth that the slightest movement on the cloth by the body

would have blurred, smudged or partially destroyed the image.

How then could the body have been removed from the Shroud without this happening? Certainly if the body had decayed as all bodies do, the image could not have survived.

That image could have survived only if the body buried in that Shroud had possessed subtlety, which is one of the four qualities attributed by scholastic theologians to the risen body. A glorified body, possessing subtlety, would have passed through the Shroud without disturbing that image just as Christ's glorified body passed through the locked doors of the Cenacle after the Resurrection.

We do, it is true, find certain men in history working prodigies of nature e.g. the magicians of Pharaoh were able to imitate some of the miracles of Moses and Aaron in their confrontation before the king (Ex.ch.7) These were worked by the power of the devil who has been given by God a certain very limited mastery over the laws of nature.

But no one in all history has ever risen by his own power from the dead, nor do historians report any serious claim with regard to this. Nevertheless we have many witnesses, men of character, who testified, often with their blood, that they did indeed converse with Christ—and sometimes ate and drank with him—*after* His resurrection. The Apostles were the most celebrated of these witnesses but there were many others.

The theandric personality of Jesus Christ bestrides the history of the human race like a Colossus, determining our calendar by the date of His appearance on earth, inspiring men and women, even today, to go to the ends of the earth to proclaim His greatness and His love, continuing, even in this century, the countless miracles that have been worked in His name. *Who can be indifferent to the appeal and inspiration of such a Man?*

It is not possible that a Person of such moral grandeur could have lied when He claimed to be God. It is not possible that a Man who inspired the founding of so many hospitals, orphanages, hostels for the poor and heroic self-sacrifice in so many lives, could have been the victim of a pitiful self-delusion.

It is submitted therefore that Jesus Christ was indeed God as He claimed, that He demonstrated the love, the inspiration, the omnipotence of the Divinity. *"And we saw His glory"* St. John wrote *"the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* (Jnl.14).

UBI PETRUS, IBI ECCLESIA

It is recorded in the 16th chapter of St. Matthew how Jesus Christ addressed these solemn, awe-inspiring words to the Apostle Peter: *I say to thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shall bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven. And whatsoever thou shall loose upon earth it shall be loosed also in Heaven.*

Simon the fisherman had been one of the first disciples called by the Saviour. And when Christ called him He changed his name to Peter—as St. Mark tells us (Mk.3.16). And Peter is translated as *rock*.

Jerusalem was the Holy City, the religious capital of the world at that time. Why then did Peter, as head of the Church and Vicar of Jesus Christ, not establish his see in Jerusalem? Jerusalem was in turmoil with successive revolts against the Roman authority. It was under a curse, a curse uttered by the Saviour Himself. An enemy was to come who would surround Jerusalem and compass it on every side and batter it into submission. He would destroy the city and leave of the temple not so much as a

stone upon a stone, because, as the Saviour said "thou hast not known the time of thy visitation ". The 'enemy' was Titus with his Roman legions and the prophecy was fulfilled to the letter in the year A.D. 70.

Peter, under Divine inspiration — according to a universally accepted tradition — made his way to Rome, the political capital of the world, and died there. He was buried on Vatican Hill. And that was a crucial moment in the history of the Christian Church. Was the great privilege of the Primacy given to Peter personally by Christ Himself to pass to his successor as bishop of Rome?

We find an answer in the subsequent history of the early Christians, guided as they were by the Holy Spirit and by the Apostles themselves.

As the evidence of Peter's presence in Rome and his establishment of his see there is accepted by a consensus of scholars, it is unnecessary to go into this question. According to tradition, Peter was succeeded by Linus, who was, in turn, succeeded by Anacletus. Peter's third successor, Clement, is famous for his intervention in a quarrel which was troubling the church at Corinth.

Monsignor Philip Hughes has an excellent chapter on the administrative actions of the Christian Church of the first and second centuries in the first volume of his well-known and highly respected *History of the Church*. A famous letter, written by Clement in A.D. 96, carries with it

unmistakable overtones of authority. There had been spirited faction fighting at the time in Corinth and the Pope cautions them that obedience to authority is the first duty of all believers. The believers are a people divinely set apart, Clement tells them. Authority is the source of unity, and unity is achieved by submission to the tutelage of authority.

"Let us submit to the tutelage" Clement goes on *"obey the elders and allow them to tutor you . . . learn to be submissive. It is better to be nothing in the flock of Christ. . . than to appear to be great and lack all hope in Christ. "* (Hughes: Vol. 1p.53).

The authoritative intervention of Clement in the affairs of a local church so far away is all the more significant because the Apostle John was still living, presumably at Ephesus, a city much closer to Corinth than Rome.

There is another instance of early recognition that Rome had the primacy in teaching. St. Ignatius is thought to have been a disciple of St. John, the Apostle and Evangelist. He was the third bishop of Antioch. He was arrested and sent to Rome under the persecution of Trajan.

During his journey to Rome he wrote letters to church groups in certain cities and to his disciple St. Polycarp. The letters are, generally speaking, in perfect harmony with the letter Clement has already sent to the Corinthians, in harmony also, of course, with the teaching of the New Testament itself.

"Erroneous teaching cuts off from the Church whoever believes it" St. Ignatius lays down. It was St. Ignatius who first called the Church of Jesus Christ the Catholic Church (Katholike ecclesia) (Hughes Vol.1.p55).

Ignatius wrote one of these letters to the church at Rome and to Clement as its bishop. *"In his address he adds epithet to epithet, in Eastern fashion to show his sense of its distinction."* He defers to the Roman Church because *"it has taught the others."* (Hughes Vol.1.p56). St. Ignatius was thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre in A.D. 107. He is one of the most illustrious of the early Christian martyrs.

St. Polycarp, who, in his youth, was a disciple of St. John, became bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor. He made a long journey to Rome in A.D. 160 to settle a controversy concerning the proper time for the celebration of Easter.

There is any amount of evidence from the early Christian centuries of a consensus amongst the Faithful that Christ's commission to Peter passed on to his successors in the see of Rome. The three instances referred to above are important because they are directly linked to the Apostles themselves, and show that, from the earliest times, the Holy Spirit had enlightened the Church to know and recognise the successors of Peter in Rome as the Vicars of Jesus Christ. Thus it was believed, by virtually all Christians, that the Popes held in their

hands the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, that they had the power to bind and to loose, and to pasture the whole flock, sheep and lambs, with sound doctrine. (Jn.21.16-17).

In A.D. 190 we find the Pope, St. Victor 1, ordering a series of regional councils to be held to determine when the Feast of Easter should be held. All twenty-one General (Oecumenical) Councils of the Church, beginning with Nicaea (A.D. 325) and ending with Vatican II in 1965, have clearly understood that they met by authority of the Pope and under his presidency.

Another clear sign that the Catholic Church is the Church set up by Christ is the consistency with which mystical phenomena manifest themselves within her ranks. There have been four well-known stigmatics in this century, all of them Catholics. Two of them, Teresa Neumann and Padre Pio, were carefully scrutinised by non-Catholic observers. A team of doctors and nurses lived in Teresa Neumann's home for fifteen days to test her claim that she never ate or drank. They watched her closely for twenty-four hours each day. They had to admit that she did not eat or drink during those fifteen days. Neither had she lost any weight, and she retained her good health all through the period. A one-hour documentary was made by the BBC on the stigmata of Padre Pio. The BBC did not claim to have any explanation for the mysterious wounds in his hands and feet.

The miracles worked at Lourdes and Fatima have made those Shrines famous. Non-Catholic experts from many countries have admitted themselves baffled by the cures at Lourdes. Leftwing antireligious journalists were unable to explain the "miracle of the sun" at Fatima. The liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, twice each year, at Naples, has continually mystified chemical analysts, and they have no explanation for it.

A former Satanist priest, converted to Christianity, reported that the Satanists on the U.S. West coast had no interest in the communion breads of Protestants. But they were desperately anxious to obtain the consecrated Hosts from Catholic churches so that they could profane and blaspheme them.

All of the Christian denominations in the world today honour some particular person, e.g. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, as their founder and source of inspiration. But the Catholic Church acknowledges no human founder. She traces her lineage back to that awe-inspiring day at Calvary nearly two thousand years ago, when Jesus Christ shed His blood for the redemption of the world.

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL TRUTHS

The basis of many Christian retreats and mission sermons has been a trenchant reminder of the eschatological truths, a solemn warning concerning man's last ends and the confrontation with eternity that overwhelms us all.

What awaits us at death, when life shall be no more, and the powerful charms of this fleeting world are gone forever?

The Christian faith tells us with absolute certainty that a throne of eternal glory awaits the just man at his death. It tells us, with equal certainty, that a place of eternal torment, indescribable torment, awaits the wicked.

It is no light matter, therefore, to brush aside the claims of Christ upon us, to reject His sacrifice upon the Cross and the truths contained in the Christian Gospel. *"He who believes and is baptised will be saved, he who believeth not shall be condemned. . . "* (Mk.16.16).

It may be that some who read this booklet will seek the peace and happiness that comes with the Christian faith. A warning is necessary here. Should the reader seek admission to the Catholic Church he

MUST be most careful to acquire an orthodox Catholic catechism in order to discover the complete corpus of sound Catholic doctrine. This should be supplemented by a copy of the *Credo of the People of God* promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1968. This precaution is necessary because there is serious error being taught in certain areas bearing the name Catholic in some countries today.

It is not possible to be a Catholic unless one believes in the full range of doctrines taught by the official Magisterium of the Catholic Church. The statement of St. Ignatius of Antioch should be noted. *"Erroneous doctrine cuts off from the Church whoever believes it."* That statement has been echoed and re-echoed by all the great saints and doctors throughout the ages. And, of course, it is found in the Scriptures. (Gal.1.8-9).

Many of the greatest saints have taught that a tender and devoted love for Mary the Mother of God is a sure sign of predestination, a sure sign that one is guided by the Holy Spirit. This love of Our Lady has been a Catholic tradition since the time of the Apostles—as history attests.

In the dark period through which we pass today, many consider it a misfortune to have been born, and some commit suicide. But it is a tragedy to despair. We are not failures. No matter how bleak the out look, no matter what trials confront us, we must realise, with holy Job, that life is a warfare and we must soldier on. We must know too that we are

personally victorious over the powers of darkness every time we pray sincerely.

When Constantine was marching with his troops to that fateful battle against Maxentius for control of the vast Roman Empire, though not yet a Christian, he prayed to the God of the Christians for victory. And, in the cloudless noonday sky, the historians report, he saw a cross of fire and the words:

"in hoc signo vinces"

"in this Sign thou shalt conquer."

It is a historic fact that he immediately changed his insignia from the Roman eagle to the Cross of Christ. And, with his smaller army, he went on to meet his rival at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, to defeat him decisively, and enter Rome in triumph—under the Cross of Christ. And with what immense consequences for the future history of Europe and the world!

EPILOGUE

There are signs of a consoling change coming over the youth of the Western World. There are reports of a pronounced swing away from the mindless hedonism of the sixties and seventies, a reawakening of the Christian conscience amongst some of the best and brightest of our youth.

It is an hour of great opportunity.

The search for pleasure and material goods is yielding to a hunger for wisdom, for valid transcendent experiences, for a knowledge of the culture and the civilisation that enlightened Europe and so dominated the history of that continent, and of the world.

We have degraded our Christian civilisation by our crass hedonism. And, we have found, not happiness, but despair. It was a pagan, Seneca, who declared that happiness is the result of virtue, that pleasure is "*a low, servile, weak, perishable and shameful thing. . .*" Had not Socrates said much the same thing before him, and Antisthenes, Plato and all the others?

Did not Confucius, Lao Tse, the Buddha, and all the Eastern philosophers say much the same thing? Education does indeed begin with the teaching of virtue. The ancient philosophers and the Christian Schoolmen are unanimous on this. Cesar Augustus knew, 2000 years ago, that a degraded pursuit for

sensual pleasure would harm the state. He banished the poet Ovid from Rome for writing a pornographic poem. Shakespeare also noted the harm done to the young by pornography in his Richard II: "lascivious metres to whose venom sound the open ear of youth doth always listen. . . " We don't have to PROVE that hedonism and pornography are harmful to the young. Thousands of years of history attest to this.

Are we really about to jettison the Cross as the emblem and the ethos of our civilisation? The noted psycho-analyst, Carl Jung, warned us some years ago that, before we do this, we had better discover why the barbaric tribes of Europe accepted it in the first place. They accepted it, he tells us, as a "welcome relief from the brutality and tyranny of the unchained libido".

It is all in the will. If our youth will to serve Jesus Christ they may scale the empyrean heights, gaze at vistas and panoramas undreamed of; rise to the eternal destiny and glory that has always been the birthright of a Christian. This is the challenge of our age, the call to Sinai that resounds like a trumpet blast in the ears of the youth of our times.

“You will be hated for my names sake”
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- One of His favourite prayers -

***“O Jesus, it is for the love of you,
for the conversion of sinners
and in reparation, for all the offences
committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
I am all Thine, my Queen, my Mother,
and all that I have is Thine!”***

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through Robert Bergin to assist the Beatification
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