

11-1-1948

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Recommended Citation

Spitz, L. W. (1948) "Roma Semper Eadem," *Concordia Theological Monthly*: Vol. 19, Article 69.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol19/iss1/69>

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Concordia *Theological Monthly*

Vol. XIX

NOVEMBER, 1948

No. 11

Roma Semper Eadem

By L. W. SPITZ

Rome ever the same! So says Rome, and her opponents agree; but there is agreement only in the choice of words, not in the sense or connotation. Rome predicates her assertion on the claim that she is the Church founded by Christ and by Him built on Peter, so that even the gates of hell cannot prevail against her. Her opponents, on the other hand, regard her merely as an organization against which the gates of hell have already prevailed in a large measure. Rome presumes to trace her organization and dogma — of course more fully developed in the course of time — back to Christ and the Apostles; her opponents accuse her of a persistently arrogant and intolerant spirit and of obdurate departure from the truth. We shall let Rome speak for herself.

Rome here designates the Roman Catholic Church, for a definition of which we may turn to Konrad Algermissen, who defines his Church thus: "The Church is the one, visible congregation of the faithful, established by Christ and joined to Him, the Head, by the spiritual rebirth of baptism to form one organically constituted body; governed by designated shepherds, who as legitimate successors of the apostles are under the one supreme shepherd appointed by Christ, the Church represents the kingdom of God on earth, leading individual souls to eternal life and in the course of time bringing all mankind back to God, by the truth of the same faith, the holiness of the same law, and the power of the same means of grace."¹ Algermissen defines the Church as a

¹ Konrad Algermissen, *Christian Denominations* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), p. 82.

visible congregation forming one organically constituted body, governed by designated shepherds, under the one supreme shepherd. Attention must also be given to the words "the power of the same means of grace." Rome is visible, is governed by the hierarchy, is dogmatically subjected to the sacramental system. It does not improve matters when Algrmissen reduces his definition of the Roman Catholic Church to the following statement: "The Church is the mystical body of Christ, consisting of the congregation of those who are joined to Christ, the Head, through faith and the sacraments; as the mystical body of Christ, the Church is perpetually sustained and brought to full maturity in Christ by the grace of the Holy Ghost and through the instrumentality of the ecclesiastical offices, particularly that of the supreme head as the visible representative of Christ."² It must be remembered that the faith here mentioned is not that saving confidence in Christ as the Redeemer by which the believer is saved, but merely the blanket acceptance of Rome's claims; also, the congregation of those joined to Christ, according to Rome, includes the evil as well as the good. It may be added here that whatever Scripture attributes to the *Una Sancta* Rome claims for herself.

Father Cassilly, in his book of instruction for high school pupils, quotes with approval Cardinal Bellarmine's definition: "The Church is the society of men on earth who are united in the profession of one and the same Christian faith, and in the participation of the same sacraments, under the rule of the lawful pastors, and especially of the Roman Pontiff."³ Father Cassilly argues that since the Church is a visible body it must have a visible head. This visible head was Peter, and now it is the pope. Quoting Matt. 16:16-18, he reasons: "Thus He [Christ] compares His Church to a building built on a rock foundation, intending thereby to show that *what a foundation is to a building Peter is to His Church.* Now what does a foundation do for a building? It holds it up, supports it, keeps it together, preserves it. And what is it that supports, holds together, and preserves a society? It is *the principle of authority* which resides in the head. Christ, then, in these

² *Ibid.*

³ Francis Cassilly, *Religion: Doctrine and Practice for Use in Catholic High Schools* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1926), p. 408.

solemn words promised to invest Peter with the principle of authority in the Church, that is, to make him its head and governing power."⁴ Now comes the question: "Who is the successor of St. Peter as visible head of the Church?" Father Cassilly replies: "The Bishop of Rome, commonly called the Pope, or Sovereign Pontiff, is the successor of St. Peter as visible head of the Church."⁵ The minds of Catholic high school pupils are thus prepared for the most extravagant claims of the papacy. In her demands for the hierarchy, with the pope at the head, Rome has not become less bold.

This is also demonstrated by the editor of the Catholic paper *Our Sunday Visitor*, whose editorial on the Church of Christ may serve to introduce the sources of Catholic dogma. The editor printed an advertisement, allegedly taken from the *Joplin Globe*, which reads: "WANTED—To find the Church of Christ; the only church that the Bible speaks of; the church that preaches the Gospel in its primitive purity and calls Bible things by Bible names; speaks where the Bible speaks and is silent where the Bible is silent. Any members of said church that see this ad. please drop me a card at 816 Hill Street, Joplin, Mo. Yours for truth, C. A. Lasater." Alluding to this as a most unique advertisement, the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor* replied in the following words: "The Bible could speak only of the Church which Christ was to establish, or which He had just established. History is a sufficient guide to that Church, which had the whole field from Christ's day until four hundred years ago (exclusive of the Greek and Oriental schismatics). It was the Church which had been known as the *Catholic Church* for fourteen centuries before Luther. If it does not teach the gospel in its primitive purity, then Christ broke His promises. It gave the name *Bible* to the Bible and told the world that the Bible contained God's revelation. The Bible does not speak with authority at all except through the mouth of the Church. (Witness six hundred Christian sects contradicting each other, with the Bible in hand.) Please invite Mr. C. A. Lasater in out of the dark; he asks the favor."⁶ Mr. Lasater was probably surprised if he ever read this answer. He was

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 410.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 416.

⁶ *Our Sunday Visitor*, Oct. 10, 1915.

looking for a church which speaks where the Bible speaks, and not the reverse, making the Bible speak what the church decides it should be saying. He was, furthermore, looking for a church which is silent where the Bible is silent. That cannot be the Roman Catholic Church; the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor* knew better than that. The fourth session of the Council of Trent declared that both saving truth and moral discipline of the faith brought into the world by Christ "are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand; (the Synod) following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety, and reverence, all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament — seeing that one God is the author of both — as also the said traditions, as well as those pertaining to faith and to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession." The sources of Catholic faith have not changed since the meeting of the Council of Trent. Algermissen explains: "What the Church of Christ, as the spiritual mother of her children, the faithful, proposes for belief through her teaching office, on the basis of the Bible and tradition, is called dogma. . . . God has transmitted the truth to the Church in the Scriptures and in the apostolic traditions. Therefore the Bible and apostolic tradition are the sources of faith."⁷ This is nothing strange — the children learn it in the Catholic parochial schools. In his catechism for these schools, Father W. Faerber declares: "The Catholic Church obtains all that she teaches from Holy Scripture and Tradition."⁸

Father Girardey comments on this answer as follows: "The Pope, the bishops, and the priests do not and may not teach what they fancy, but only what Jesus Christ Himself taught when He was on earth. How do they know what Jesus Christ taught? When you wish to find out something you do not know (e. g., when the battle of New Orleans was

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 238.

⁸ W. Faerber, *Katechismus fuer die katholischen Pfarrschulen der Vereinigten Staaten* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1912), p. 3.

fought), you look into and consult your books. Thus also do the Pope, the bishops, and the priests. We have many books for this; for instance, the Holy Bible, holy books which God inspired men to write, and which contain His word. They have also the books of holy and learned men of former times, and the holy and learned men now living; this is called Tradition, and contains the teachings handed down in the Church from the beginning."⁹

Tradition, revealed truths handed down by word of mouth, the faithful must believe, says Father Cassilly, as taught by the Church. All or most truths of tradition, he says, have now found their way into written books, and the written records of Catholic tradition can be found principally in the decrees of popes and councils, in the sacred liturgies, and in the writings of the Fathers, Doctors, and great theologians of the Church.¹⁰ Pope Pius IX declared: "I am tradition."¹¹ "As taught by the Church," says Father Cassilly. That should eliminate all controversy in Roman Catholic dogma; for: the Church is infallible; the councils are infallible; and the pope is infallible. And inasmuch as the pope's infallibility also extends to the pronouncements on faith and morals of the past, all disputes, including those of the past, should be resolved to the complete satisfaction of all concerned.

If Rome has not changed her attitude with respect to tradition, has she, perhaps, done so with respect to the Bible? Certain Romanist scholars have in recent years given a great deal of attention to the Bible; also certain pronouncements have come from the pope and others which seemingly reveal a change of heart on the part of Rome towards the Bible. Rome will doubtless manifest resentment against any suggestion that her attitude towards the Bible may not have been proper in the past. Under the heading "The 'Open' Bible was Never Closed," the Religious Information Bureau of the Knights of Columbus advertised the following statement: "You probably have heard the remark, at one time or another,

⁹ Ferreol Girardey, *Commentary on the Catechism of Rev. W. Faerber for the Catholic Parochial Schools of the United States* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1937), p. 10.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 320.

¹¹ E. H. Klotsche, *Christian Symbolics* (Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1929), p. 66.

that Catholics were not permitted to read the Bible. The misunderstanding about the attitude of the Catholic Church toward the Bible has even reached the state of fanciful fiction where some people believe the Church made the Bible a 'closed book.' In neither case does a proper understanding of historical truth permit such a misunderstanding to persist."¹² The Bureau states that Bishop Theonas of Alexandria 1,647 years back wrote: "Let no day pass by without reading some portion of the Sacred Scriptures, at such convenient hour as offers, and giving some time to meditation." It reminds the reader that the New Testament, first written in Greek, was translated into Latin by learned men of the Catholic Church in the second or third Christian century. So also was the Old Testament translated from the Greek version of the pre-Christian Jews. "Many centuries before the art of printing was known," it says, "Catholic scholars were translating and copying the Scriptures by hand." Finally, the Bureau claims that before 1520 there were 198 editions of the Bible in the language of the common people — Italian, Spanish, German, French, English, etc., and concludes: "In the face of such historical facts it is impossible for informed persons to believe that the Bible was ever closed, or that Catholics are prohibited from reading it. 'Our one desire for all the Church's children,' wrote Pope Benedict XV in 1920, 'is that, being saturated with the Bible, they may arrive at the all-surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ.'" So far the advertisement. In reading such advertisements, one is reminded of the fact that Rome is a clever propagandist; but by overstatement she may weaken her case as well as by misstatements. Several points are to be noted. Rome can scarcely claim a bishop of Alexandria of 1647 years ago. The Latin Church of the days of the *Itala* was not like the Rome of today. The number of versions of the Bible or of portions of it in the vernacular was fairly large before 1520, but the question immediately arises: How many of these were produced by the so-called heretics, whose versions were forbidden to the faithful? Finally, when Benedict XV expresses the desire that the Church's children, being saturated with the Bible, may arrive at the all-surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, one has the unhappy feeling that in view of Rome's generally cold attitude towards Bible read-

¹² *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 9, 1947.

ing the saturation point, speaking in terms of hygrometry, will be quite low.

Such pessimism, however, seems to be unwarranted in the United States. In a tract "Why Catholics Should Read the Bible" the author answers: "Because the Church wants it." He says: "The Bishops of this country, assembled at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, begged the Catholic people to read the Holy Bible. 'We hope,' they said, 'that no family can be found amongst us without a correct version of the Holy Scriptures.' They recommend, furthermore: 'If it be not always feasible in the morning, at least every evening, at a fixed hour, let the entire family be assembled for night prayers, followed by a short reading of the Holy Scriptures, the 'Following of Christ,' or some other pious book' (Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States)." Such an attitude on the part of the bishops should have kindled a fire of enthusiasm for Bible reading in the Catholic fold; but it did not. The tract gave another reason for Bible reading which should have been even more potent for Catholic readers. It declared: "Our late Holy Father, Leo XIII, on the 13th day of December, 1898, granted to all the faithful who will read the Holy Gospels for a quarter of an hour each day, an indulgence of three hundred days; and to those who follow this practice for a month, a Plenary Indulgence on any day within the month on which they approach the sacraments and pray for the intention of His Holiness. These indulgences are applicable to the holy souls in Purgatory." The question arises whether "Holy Gospels" here is synonymous with Bible; if so, one would expect a tremendous response in Bible reading throughout the Catholic world. Particularly in Catholic countries, where the pope's will is law, should one expect a pronounced interest in it. If the interest in the Bible was so great during the Middle Ages, when the monks with patience and skill laboriously copied the manuscripts of the Bible, it should be more wide-spread now in the days of the linotype and the rotary press, when Bibles can so easily be acquired. Again one would look for such interest particularly in Catholic countries, where the pope's wishes must be respected. But what do the records show? What about Bible reading in the Latin American countries? What about Italy and Spain? Some Catholic writers attribute the lack of popular Bible

reading in those countries to the prevailing illiteracy. That, however, merely raises another question. Has not Rome been responsible for popular education in those countries? If so, why the illiteracy among the common people? Or does it indeed take Protestant competition to stimulate Rome's commendable achievements in elementary education in countries like the United States?

History is not kind to Rome with respect to its general attitude towards the Bible. Gregory IX wrote 1229: "I forbid the laity to have the books of the Old and New Testaments, except possibly the Psalms, and I strictly prohibit them to have the translation into the language of the people." The Council of Toulouse, 1229, decided that no layman should be permitted to own the books of the Old or New Testaments, nor even the Book of Psalms translated into modern speech. The Synod of Beziers confirmed this resolution, 1233, and later, 1246, established that neither laymen nor priest should be permitted to own the Scriptures in the popular tongue. These resolutions of councils and papal decisions were found necessary as a "precaution to preserve integrity of doctrine and soundness of morals." Etienne de Bourbon laments that the heretics "know the Gospels or New Testament in the vulgar tongue." Eleven years after Luther's death, in 1557, Pope Paul IV published the Roman Index of Forbidden Books and, with certain exceptions, prohibited laymen from reading the Bible.¹³ Much closer to our own time Pope Clement XI, in the bull *Unigenitus*, 1713, condemned 101 propositions advanced by Quesnel, among them also the following: "The reading of sacred Scripture is for all" (80), and, "the sacred obscurity of the Word of God is no reason for the laity to dispense themselves from its reading" (81). Bible societies which circulate versions of the Scripture other than approved by the Church are condemned. Pope Pius VII, in 1816, declared them to be "a most subtle invention for the destruction of the very foundation of religion." Pope Pius IX designated them as "pests" and placed them in the same category with socialism, Communism and secret societies.¹⁴

¹³ Th. Graebner, *The Dark Ages* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), pp. 200—201 *et passim*; W. H. T. Dau, *Luther Examined and Reexamined* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), p. 61 ff.

¹⁴ Klotsche, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

What of today? J. C. Macaulay tells of a group of Christians who for some time have been conducting a campaign of New Testament distribution among the French Canadians of Quebec province. The Cardinal-Archbishop of Quebec, Villeneuve, said of these New Testaments: "This sort of literature can neither be read, kept, nor given to others in good conscience, and the best thing to do if we are insulted by having these writings sent to us is to throw them in the fire."¹⁵ Bonfires are not altogether out of date. Macaulay relates that his friend Dr. Paul Culley, former dean of Wheaton College, has in his possession a Bible which he rescued from a pile of Bibles, Testaments, and Christian literature collected for burning by the Roman Catholic Church in a city of the Philippines as late as 1939. Dr. Culley himself relates the incident in the May issue of the *Philippine Evangelist*. Prizes had been offered for collecting "anti-Catholic" literature, consisting of Bibles, Testaments, Gospels, and portions. There was also a Catholic display, featuring magazines from many parts of the world, lives of popes, and other items, but not a single Bible — not even a Catholic version, nor any portion of the Holy Scripture.¹⁶ The writer's mother once rescued a Bible from being used for kindling a fire in the kitchen stove of a faithful Roman Catholic neighbor, who had received it as a gift. The first pages of Genesis had already been consigned to the flames. Macaulay is puzzled over Rome's denial of suppressing the Bible, when she turns right around and gives her reasons for doing so: like a man who pleads not guilty to the charge of murder and in the same breath tells the court why he murdered his victim. He cites three reasons Rome gives for denying the Scriptures to the people: (1) They cannot understand them. (2) It would smash the Roman unity as it has Protestant unity. (3) It is productive of atheism.¹⁷ Father Girardey has this to say on the subject: "A person may go to heaven without ever reading the Bible, for neither God nor the Church has ever commanded people to read it. Since the Bible is hard to understand, reading the Bible, as experience proves, may do harm to many, who would misunderstand it.

¹⁵ J. C. Macaulay, *Truth vs. Dogma* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1946), page 20 ff.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

We are allowed to keep and read the genuine Bible — that is, the Bible correctly translated, and having notes explaining the difficult passages. The Protestant Bible is not correctly translated; it is a counterfeit Bible, for it is full of errors, and is apt to lead people astray from the truth. The genuine, or Catholic Bible is easily known by its bearing the approval of the Pope or some Catholic bishop, and having notes explaining the difficult passages.”¹⁸ Considering the fact that Catholic versions are generally based on the Vulgate, the text of which is still giving Catholic scholars a good deal of trouble, one may be skeptical about accepting the Catholic Bible as the genuine one. Under the heading “The Book of Books Is a Catholic Book” an advertisement appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 19, 1947, in which the Religious Information Bureau of the Knights of Columbus encourages the reading of the Bible in its entirety — or at least the New Testament; but it gives the reader of the advertisement the comforting assurance: “You need not fear that if you don’t read the Bible you will lose your immortal soul. The True Faith, without which it is impossible to please God, comes by hearing God’s revealed Word. From Adam to Moses, God’s Word was not written . . . there were no books of the Old Testament. From Christ’s death to the end of the first century, the New Testament had not been completely written, yet God’s message was taught and believed as it is today. Remember it is not the mere reading of the Bible that is all-important. More important by far is the proper understanding of its teaching and conforming one’s life, not merely to favorite chapters or to verses lifted out of their context, but to God’s message in its entirety.” This sounds quite true, but the phrase “by hearing God’s revealed Word” introduces the entire subject of tradition and the infallible teaching office of the Church. Without the latter, Rome still regards the Bible as Glapion did in Luther’s days, when he declared that the Bible was a book similar to soft wax that could be drawn and twisted as a person liked.¹⁹

Turning now to Rome’s sources of dogma, we find that she accepts the three Ecumenical Creeds, which are in accord

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁹ W. H. T. Dau, *At the Tribunal of Caesar* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 100.

with the Bible. In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Melancthon states: "The First Article of our Confession our adversaries approve, in which we declare that we believe and teach that there is *one divine essence, undivided*, etc., and yet, that there are three distinct *persons*, of the same divine essence, and co-eternal, Father, Son, and Holy Ghsot." ²⁰ Again, Melancthon says: "The Third Article the adversaries approve, in which we confess that there are in *Christ two natures*, namely, a human nature, assumed by the Word into the unity of His person; and that the same Christ suffered and died to reconcile the Father to us; and that He was raised again to reign, and to justify and sanctify believers, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed." ²¹ Herein, too, Rome is still the same. The Roman Catholic Church is a trinitarian body and teaches the deity of Christ. In this respect it is to be commended above many so-called Protestants of today.

God is the almighty Creator of heaven and earth, but Rome shows her adaptability to the exigencies of the times by making room in her doctrine of creation for the theory of evolution. She does not object to this theory as long as the primary creative action of God is admitted. Writing for parochial elementary schools, Father Girardey says: "To create the world God employed six days:" ²² Father Cassilly, writing for high schools, is more explicit. He explains: "It is quite a common opinion among Catholic theologians to consider the days of creation as long periods of time." ²³ Of the world's age he says: "To this question neither revelation nor science gives a definite answer. Geologists claim for the formations of the various strata of the earth's surface long periods of time; and astronomers tell us that some stars are a million light years from the earth, and as the light of these stars has reached us, it seems very probable that these stars must have been created at least a million years ago. A Catholic is free to hold on this point what he judges to be the sound conclusion of science." ²⁴ In accord with this, Algermissen,

²⁰ *Triglot Concordia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 103; Article I: Of God.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119; Article III: Of Christ.

²² *Op. cit.*, p. 41.

²³ *Op. cit.*, p. 339.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

explaining the creation, declares: "In addition to the world of pure spirits, the triune God has called into existence a material world which has developed in separate, lengthy periods. The biblical presentation of the six days of creation is an expression of this evolution which took place in protracted periods of time."²⁵ Of man's creation he says: "No science, no research, no digging, leads to the origin of the first man. But the revelation of God teaches us that God in the beginning created a single human couple."²⁶ This statement presents certain problems in view of Algermissen's description of man's creation. He says: "The body of man was formed by God from the slime of the earth. This expression, of course, is not to be taken in the sense of a human forming and building, since God, as a pure spirit, does not shape things with arms and hands. The expression is a figure in the sense that through His will God permitted the human body to take form from the elements of which the things of this world consist. Whether this formation of the human body took place by an instantaneous creation or in the form of a slow evolution from inferior forms, which perhaps required hundreds of thousands of years, the Bible does not say, nor has the Church passed any doctrinal decision concerning it. It is a matter for scientific research, the results of which can change nothing in the fact of man's dependence upon God."²⁷ According to Algermissen, it was possible for the body of man to develop until it was adequate for the reception of a soul, which — so Rome teaches — is directly created by God. The early habitations of the first souls provided rather cramped quarters for them, it seems, for Algermissen says of what he calls primitive men: "Their cranial capacity is far nearer that of modern man than that of the most highly developed animal. They were men with a human soul."²⁸ Their cranial capacity is far nearer that of modern man, but not equal to it. Father Girardey tells the children: "God bestowed also other gifts besides sanctifying grace on our first parents. He gave them a clear mind, capable of easily learning and understanding things. Hence Adam was able to know all animals and give them their right names. Adam and Eve could speak well

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 403.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

without having learned to do so."²⁹ How can that be fitted into the picture drawn by Algermissen? Which of the creatures evolving from the earth's slime in the course of hundreds of thousands of years was Adam and received the first soul made directly by God? Rome's theology is still very broad in some areas, where her power and prestige are not endangered.

The anthropology of Rome has not changed to any extent since the Council of Trent. Rome still aims to salvage as much of man's original endowments as possible. To achieve this, she makes a distinction between the natural and the supernatural endowment of man in his original state. The natural image of God is to be found chiefly in man's soul, not in the body. It consists in the spirituality, freedom, and immortality of the soul. The freedom of the will constitutes an integral part of man's nature. The supernatural image of God consists in sanctifying grace, exemption from concupiscence, and immortality of the body. It was the supernatural image of God which man lost in the fall. But in losing it man experienced no important alteration in his nature. The Scotists and the Thomists could not fully agree on the true character of original sin. To the former it was merely something negative, the loss of original righteousness, a special endowment of grace; to the latter it was also something positive, consisting essentially of concupiscence, having its seat in the flesh. The Fathers at Trent did not expressly remove the difference. The decree concerning original sin declares: "If any one does not confess that the first man, Adam, when he had transgressed the commandment of God in Paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice wherein he had been constituted; and that he incurred, through the offense of that prevarication, the wrath and indignation of God, and consequently death, with which God had previously threatened him, and together with death, captivity under his power who thenceforth *had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil*, and the entire Adam, through that offense of prevarication, was changed, in body and soul, for the worse; let him be anathema."³⁰ The ambiguous word *constitutus* was substituted for *creatus*.

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 57—58.

³⁰ Session V, 1.

Modern Roman dogmaticians have not improved on this description of original sin. Father Cassilly states: "Adam's sin is called original sin, and it has passed to all his descendants, so that all men are conceived and born in sin, that is, deprived of sanctifying grace."³¹ That is, man has merely lost the supernatural endowment which God added to his natural endowment in the beginning. To Father Cassilly original sin seems to be merely something negative; he appears to be a Scotist. Algermissen, on the other hand, introduces also a positive factor; perhaps he may be styled a Thomist. He puts it thus: "Stripped of his pristine holiness, remote from the heart of God, exiled from his Father's house, every child of man enters this world, bearing within himself the seed of death and the inclination to evil."³² Algermissen describes the effects of original sin as follows: "With the disappearance of the soul's supernatural holiness there disappeared also the preternatural gifts which God in the beginning had joined to the grace of divine sonship. The harmony of the natural powers in man, effected by these gifts, was destroyed, so that the sensual appetites tended toward their natural, sensual goals, without consideration for the spiritual soul."³³

Previously Algermissen had declared: "All parts of this material world, as they went forth from the creative hand of God, were good. There is no such thing as matter that is evil by nature."³⁴ But now he speaks of the *natural goals of the sensual appetites*. Whatever he may mean, he reminds us of the fact that Rome, contrary to Gen. 1:31: "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good," contrasts man's body and spirit in his original state as two opposite principles. Rome has a long heritage of philosophy to reconcile, including Neo-Platonism, and therefore at times finds herself in trouble. That was true at Trent; it is still so today.

To understand Rome's atomistic approach to actual sin, it is necessary to keep in mind what the Council of Trent said about concupiscence. The Fathers declared: "This concupiscence, which the apostle sometimes calls sin (Rom. 6—8), the holy Synod declares that the Catholic Church has never understood it to be called sin, as being truly and properly sin

³¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 330.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

³² *Op. cit.*, p. 415.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

in those born again, but because it is of sin, and inclines to sin."³⁵ Luther, on the contrary, called it the essential sin which does not sin for an hour or for a certain time, but wherever and as long as the person is.³⁶ If evil inclination itself is no sin, then the sinner need only count up the sins of act to determine his moral status before God, and after an inventory it should be equally possible to balance the sinful acts with an equivalent number of good deeds. Father Cassilly defines a sin as an offense against God, which may be committed by any willful thought, word, deed, or omission against the law of God; it is the sin which one commits himself.³⁷ The emphasis is on the word "willful." The division of actual sins into sins in thought, word, and deed, and sins of omission is correct; not so is Rome's division of sins into mortal and venial. Mortal sin is defined as a grievous offense against God, which deprives the soul of sanctifying grace. Venial sin is a lesser offense against God, which need not be confessed, but may be forgiven in Holy Communion, or by prayer or good works, provided one no longer has any affection for it.³⁸ Faerber tells the children in his catechism that "he commits sin who knowingly and willfully transgresses a divine commandment."³⁹ Girardey explains: "There is a great difference in sins, for instance: between a little blow and a murder, between stealing a nickel and stealing \$1,000. One sin is light or venial, and the other grievous." It appears that it is quite within the limits of possibility for sin to fluctuate with the stock market or the value of the currency.

No matter how sin may be defined and divided, Rome finds that man is still a sinner and must do something about it to square himself with God. This raises the question of justification. The Tridentine Fathers had considerable difficulty reaching an agreement on terms. Session VI summarizes the results of their debates. It treats of the preparation for justification; of justification itself; and of the fruit of justification, or the merit of good works. The Council demon-

³⁵ Session V, 5.

³⁶ *Saemmtliche Schriften* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1882), XI: 287.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 37—41.

³⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

strated its ability to combine conflicting theories by joining those of the Scotists and Thomists, stating that man consenting to the work of God and working with Him *prepares himself* for justification (Scotist view); at the same time the process of justification receives its first impulse, *independent of man's merit*, from the *gratia praeveniens*, the supernatural grace of vocation (Thomist view). Justification, then, is not a forensic act, by which God declares a believer in Christ as the Savior free from the guilt of sin and as righteous in His sight, but a process within man by which God makes the sinner just and holy. Good works, says the Council of Trent, are not merely the fruits and signs of justification, but are truly meritorious. The Fathers at Trent declared: "If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified; let him be anathema."⁴⁰ And regarding works: "If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema."⁴¹ Joseph Pohle defines the principal object of Christ's meritorious actions as the justification of sinners. He states: "It is an article of faith that our Divine Saviour merited for us the forgiveness of all sins, including original sin, and, in addition, sanctifying grace."⁴² The words "sanctifying grace" show that Pohle has not improved on the Fathers at Trent, for he continues: "That the actual graces required for and during the *process* of justification also flow from the thesaurus of Christ's merits, is a theologically certain conclusion." So justification is not a forensic act, God declaring the world justified for the sake of the active and passive obedience of His Son, but a process. Pohle declares: "The privilege of participating in the merits of Christ's vicarious atonement does not relieve us of the duty of personally atoning for our sins. That Christ has rendered adequate satisfaction for the sins of the whole race, does not mean that each individual human being is *eo*

⁴⁰ Session VI, Canon XII.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Canon XXIV.

⁴² Joseph Pohle, *Soteriology* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1933), page 58.

ipso subjectively redeemed. This is the teaching of 'orthodox' Lutheranism [sic!], not of the Catholic Church. We Catholics believe that the individual sinner must feel sorry for his sins, confess them, and render satisfaction for them — though, of course, no satisfaction can be of any avail except it is based on the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."⁴³ Rome still today rejects the chief article of Christian doctrine, "that we receive forgiveness of sins and are justified before God, not by our works, but by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith." Just what has the Savior, then, according to Rome, accomplished by His life, suffering, and death on earth? He has atoned for original sin, removed eternal guilt, and merited for the sinner that sanctifying grace whereby the latter may now save himself by his own good works.

To the Catholic it sounds quite proper when Father Ostheimer intimates that abstinence from eating meat on Friday is making some little sacrifice for our sins.⁴⁴ The sister superior was true to her Romanist conviction when she replied to the sainted Pastor Fr. Brust, who had complimented the new Catholic hospital at Boonville, Mo., on its fine appointments: "Es kostet aber auch 'was, in den Himmel zu kommen!" The Paulist Press has put out a tract containing some of the "Wise and Loving Counsels" by St. Francis de Sales, who died Dec. 28, 1622. By publishing the following counsel, taken from St. Francis' *Conversations*, the Paulist editor gives it the present-day stamp of approval. St. Francis said: "Many persons are tormented at death with the remembrance of their crimes, and seeing that they have done no penance, they are tempted to despair. 'Oh, if I had fasted! Oh, if I had performed great charities for the poor! Alas, I am no longer in a state to perform them! What will become of me? What shall I do?' You can do something greater than all you have mentioned, namely, to accept death and unite it with that of Jesus Christ. There is no mortification comparable to this; it is the deepest humiliation, the greatest impoverishment, the most terrible penance. And I do not at all doubt, but that he who is grieved for having offended God and who accepts death willingly, in satisfaction for his sins, will immediately obtain

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 40—41.

⁴⁴ Anthony L. Ostheimer, *Instructions for Non-Catholics Before Marriage* (Philadelphia: The Dolphin Press), p. 174.

pardon. What a consolation to be able to perform, while dying, a greater penance than all the anchorets have been able to perform in deserts, and this at a time when one would seem no longer able to do anything! Why waste so advantageous an occasion of honoring God, satisfying His justice, discharging one's debts, and purchasing Heaven?—" Any comments are quite superfluous.

Regarding the scope of Christ's redemptive work the Tridentine Fathers correctly stated: "Him [Christ] God hath *proposed* as a propitiator, *through faith in his blood, for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for those of the whole world.*"⁴⁵ Pohle quotes these words in support of his thesis: "Christ died for all men without exception."⁴⁶ "The doctrine of the universality of the atonement," he states, "is not disproved by the fact that many human beings are eternally lost."⁴⁷ In support of this he quotes the Council of Trent, which teaches: "But though He died for all, yet not all receive the benefit of His death, but those only unto whom the merit of His Passion is communicated."⁴⁸ Pohle correctly points out that it is indeed quite obvious that if a man neglects to appropriate the fruits of the redemption, he derives no more benefit therefrom than one who is dying of thirst receives from a spring within his reach but from which he refuses to drink. Quoting Thomas Aquinas on this point, he concludes: "The atonement is universal only with regard to its objective application or efficaciousness."⁴⁹ What Christ has merited for the sinner and the latter must regain for himself, says Rome, is the supernatural image of God, which consists in sanctifying grace, exemption from concupiscence, and immortality — all of which Adam lost for himself and his descendants when he fell. The important question which remains is: By what means may the sinner regain these things? Rome answers: By means of the sacraments, which are visible signs imparting to the recipient invisible grace. "Two of the sacraments — baptism and penance — confer sanctifying grace; the former imparts it to those who have never before possessed it, and the latter to those who have lost it. The other five sacraments increase sanctifying grace."⁵⁰ The validity of the

⁴⁵ Session VI, Chapter II.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 77—78.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴⁸ Session VI, 3.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 82—83.

⁵⁰ Girardey, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

sacraments does not depend on the faith of the recipient, since they have power to produce their effects *ex opere operato*, that is, by a virtue inherent in themselves. The Tridentine Fathers declare: "If any one saith, that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed (*ex opere operato*), but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace; let him be anathema."⁵¹ "It is to be noted," says Father Cassilly, "that the sacraments, according to the institution of Christ, give grace of themselves."⁵² Still the *ex opere operato*!

"In addition to the conferring or increasing of sanctifying grace, each sacrament gives the right or title to certain *actual graces* which are necessary for the proper effect of that sacrament. Thus holy orders confer on the priest the graces which are necessary to fulfill his priestly duties," says Father Cassilly.⁵³ The way to heaven, to the beatific vision of God, is the sacramental way; this way is in the hands of the priests. There are only a few exceptions. Baptism, for instance, may be performed by a layman. The sacramental plus the sacerdotal system gives the priest his tremendous hold on the laity. Father Cassilly states: "The principal powers of the priest are to offer the Holy Sacrifice [in the mass] and to forgive sins."⁵⁴ The medieval power of the interdict is largely a thing of the past—the popes wore it out; but the threat of excommunication is still a force to be reckoned with. Only the priest can perform the sacrifice of the mass, by which Christ, according to Rome, is repeatedly offered for the actual sins of the living and the dead. Only the priest can ordinarily absolve from mortal sin in the sacrament of penance, that second plank for those who have suffered spiritual shipwreck after baptism. Only the priest can ordinarily legitimize marriage. Only he can help the dying person across the bar in the sacrament of extreme unction. Rome has lost no means of controlling the individual member of her body.

This fact has far-reaching political implication. For Rome the Church is a kingdom of this world with a complete system of rulers—all under the all-powerful and infallible pope as the supreme potentate. The sacramental system—not to overlook the confessional box—gives her an internal solidar-

⁵¹ Session VII, Canon VIII.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Op. cit.*, p. 179.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

ity for which any other totalitarian state might envy her. This solidarity gives her a measure of political power even in Protestant countries quite in excess of her numerical strength. History recounts Rome's political ambitions on pages penned with blood. In her political aspirations Rome is also still the same. The celibate clerics, finding prestige and security only in the Church to which they have been pledged, constitute a dependable force for political machinations. The laudable expressions of outstanding American Catholics on the separation of Church and State do not reflect the official position of Rome on that question. To disarm the fears of the non-Catholic, Father Ostheimer declares: "If the Pope were to command Catholics to be disloyal to their lawfully constituted civil authorities, we would not be bound to obey him. As Cardinal Gibbons wrote: 'The Pope will take no such action . . . even though it is part of the Catholic Faith that he is infallible in the exercises of his teaching authority; but were he to do so, he would stand self-condemned, a transgressor of the law he himself promulgates.'" ⁵⁵ Father Ostheimer names a number of Catholics who rendered outstanding service to America. He could have increased the number many times. No one who knows the history of our country will deny that splendid men and women of the Roman Catholic Church have made admirable contributions to America. The question is not how many good or bad citizens this Church has contributed to America, but what Rome's official attitude is towards the separation of Church and State and the great freedoms for which men have been willing to die: freedom of speech, of the press, of religion. Cardinal Gibbons denied that the pope would command Catholics to be disloyal to their lawfully constituted civil authorities, adding: "Were he to do so, he would stand self-condemned, a transgressor of the law he himself promulgates." We may ask: Which law is that? History must stand aghast at the Cardinal's presumption on American credulity. In view of the record, one feels an impulse to cry out: *O si tacuisses!* Down through the centuries it has been one of the papal weapons to absolve subjects from their allegiance to rulers who were at odds with the papacy. Some classic examples are Henry IV, who came to Canossa, and John Lackland, not to mention Philip Augustus, Frederic II

⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 185.

of the Holy Roman Empire, and an array of others. The political claims of Gregory VII and of Innocent III have never been retracted, though since the days of Boniface VIII they have lost some of their potency. In the *Syllabus Pius IX* (d. 1878) asserted: The Church has power to use force (24); kings and princes are under the jurisdiction of the Church and subject to it in litigated questions of jurisdiction (54); the Church is not to be separated from the State nor the State from the Church (55); the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State to the exclusion of all other forms of worship (77); hence it was not well that in some parts of the Catholic world immigrants should be allowed the public practice of any form of worship whatever (78).⁵⁶ Father F. Cavalli, S. J., writing on the conditions of the Protestants in Spain in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, an official organ of the Society of Jesus, presents the official position of Rome in matters of Church and State. It would be difficult to improve on his wording for clarity. Father Cavalli states: "The Roman Catholic Church, convinced, through its divine prerogatives, of being the only true Church, must demand the right of freedom for herself alone, because such a right can only be possessed by truth, never by error. As to other religions, the Church will certainly never draw the sword, but she will require that by legitimate means they shall not be allowed to propagate false doctrine. Consequently, in a state where the majority of the people are Catholic, the Church will require that legal existence be denied to error, and that if religious minorities actually exist, they shall have only *de facto* existence without opportunity to spread their beliefs. If, however, actual circumstances, either due to government hostility or the strength of the dissenting groups, make the complete application of the principle impossible, then the (Catholic) Church will require for herself all possible concessions, limiting herself to accept, as a minor evil, the *de jure* toleration of other forms of worship. In some countries, Catholics will be obliged to ask full religious freedom for all, resigned at being forced to cohabitate where they alone should rightfully be allowed to live. But in doing this the Church does not renounce her thesis, which remains the most imperative of her laws, but merely adapts herself to *de facto* conditions, which must be

⁵⁶ Klotsche, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

taken into account in practical affairs. Hence arises the great scandal among Protestants, who tax the Catholics with refusing to others freedom and even *de jure* toleration in all places where they are in the majority, while they lay claim to it as a right when they are in a minority. . . . We ask Protestants to understand that the Catholic Church would betray her trust if she were to proclaim, theoretically and practically, that error can have the same rights as truth, especially where the supreme duties and interest of man are at stake. The Church cannot blush for her own want of tolerance, as she asserts it in principle and applies it in practice."⁵⁷

In another area Rome is still the same, namely: in her worship of angels and the saints, images, relics; in making meritorious pilgrimages, praying for the dead, and granting indulgences. Indeed, as long as Rome anathematizes justification by faith alone, her devotion to these things can be comprehended. They will thrive on her false doctrine of work-righteousness like fungi on a decayed tree. If Christ is regarded as a judge rather than as the Redeemer, the invention of other mediators to plead with Him for mercy can be understood. When Sinai flashed with lightning and quaked before the holiness of God, Israel pleaded with Moses to intercede for them. So in Rome's legalistic religion the saints are invoked to plead for God's mercy, and Mary, the blessed mother of Christ, is called upon rather than her merciful Son, who said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Rome still has not learned the comforting significance of the Master's repeated promise: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you" (John 16:23). Rome still detracts attention from the only One who can hear prayer by directing her people to God's creatures — no matter how noble these may be — rather than to the Creator, to whom, because He hears prayer, all flesh shall come (Ps. 65:2).

Rome is ever the same. We thank God that in her midst the Holy Trinity is worshiped and Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, is confessed as the Savior. Father Cassilly reminds Catholic pupils that in making the sign of

⁵⁷ *Christian Century*, June 23, 1948; reprinted in the *Lutheran Witness*, July 13, 1948.

the cross they call to mind the existence of God, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and the incarnation and death of the Son of God. "The mention of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," he says, "recalls the three Persons in God; the expression 'in the name,' not 'in the names,' shows that the three Persons are but one God; and the cross itself is a reminder that the Son of God became Man and died upon it for our salvation."⁵⁸ In the Roman Catholic Church there is doubtless a portion of the *una sancta ecclesia*, built not upon Peter alone or upon the pope, but "upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20). "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). The saints who learned to know their Savior in the Catholic Church will join the throng of martyrs before the throne of the Lamb—the confessors who died for their faith in the Gospel under the bloody persecution of Rome's fanaticism. Rome is ever the same; but so is the Sword of the Spirit, God's Word, with which Luther met her threats and errors. Turning to the Bible, not to the decrees of councils or papal decisions, we hear Christ declare: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 314.

