

The Angel of Light



**or Controversies of doctrine, science and common
sense**

On issues of popular theology

by

Priest Julio Maria

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NS missionary of the SS. sacrament

SECOND EDITION

Reviewed by the author

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APPROVAL

of S. Excia. Revma. D. Carloto da Silva Távora, DD. Bishop of Caratinga

My dear Father Júlio Maria,

V. Rvma. ask me for the Imprimatur of his new book "The Angel of Light", or controversial doctrines.

With great pleasure and great satisfaction I give this Imprimatur, because I know the immense good that your books are doing, as I know the doctrinal, safe, clear and penetrating background of your expositions, refutations and responses.

The new book is worthy of its older brothers. It is even superior to them, in certain points; for, alongside Catholic doctrine, always luminous under its penalty, there is, in the present work, a scientific side of rare penetration.

One always feels the vigorous hand of the fighter, the formidable logic of the polemicist, the admirable doctrine of the theologian, but there is also, in this volume, the clear and penetrating science of the man of study, which is not limited to the branches of divine science, but penetrates the human sciences, with an agility and a certainty that excites the admiration of the cultivators and specialists in the field. In this book, for example, many Catholics as non-Catholics have to learn many things, which if they did not ignore them, they did not understand, however, with the lucidity that the Angel of Light case involves, and which is treated there with rare insight, vigor and documentation.

May your alert, formidable pen, continue to produce such works, which I consider a glory for the Diocese of Caratinga, for Brazil and for Religion.

Congratulations, dear Father Júlio Maria.

The good God bless his works and works for the glory of God, the triumph of the Holy Church, and the progress of true science.

Humble servant
+ CARLOTO, Bishop of Caratinga.

INTRODUCTION

Controversies are now a necessity.

The grumpy, Bolshevik wickedness throws thousands of his newsletters, single, infamous, both for hatred and slander, as well as for bad faith and ignorance. Nothing is respected: God, the Church, the priests, morals, society, the family, everything is vilified and blasphemed by the crude sophistry of the anti-Christian solariums.

The Church of the living God, column and firmament of truth, in the words of the Apostle (1 Tim 3,15), through the lips of its ministers, who are the depositaries of truth (Mt 2,7), raises its voice to repel error and impiety and to make the distorted truth shine, by refuting the contradictors (Tt1,9).

It is the source of religious polemics.

It is the defensive of divine truths and it is also the offensive against the errors of sectarianism.

Such controversies are a necessity for the full knowledge of religious truths.

It is from the shock that the light appears!

It is under the attacks of error that the truth rises most resplendent and most beautiful. The enemies of the Church thus become its involuntary panegirists.

In the polemics that follow, which are generally responses to consultations or refutation of attack articles, or bulletins, I have tried to be clear, within the reach of all, penetrating into the heart of the misinterpreted questions, and considering the subject under the different faces, so as not to leave any shadow, no doubt.

Each chapter is a succinct but complete study of the subject explained.

Have the reader the patience to read these controversies, and I am sure that they will leave clear, well-founded ideas in your mind about the cases studied, and in your heart a love for the exposed truth.

They are still irrefutable answers, addressing, however, a more scientific class of readers, more inclined to psychological or doctrinal questions than the previous volumes of refutations to Protestant and Spiritist errors. Make known the only Truth ... refute the various errors that distort the truth, and in this way lead souls to God, through the Church's infallible teaching: this is the author's only aim.

Fr Julio Maria

FIRST CONTROVERSY

A famous prophecy about the end of the world.

Prophecies always matter, because man has a natural tendency to want to know the future.

But how many prophecies run this world, without any foundation, having only the merit of being written in half-veiled words, with sibilin expressions, and a generality of terms that apply to all cases.

There is a Catholic prophecy, of unparalleled importance, astonishing precision, and of an integral achievement, of centuries, without contradiction: It is the prophecy of St. Malachi, Archbishop of Armazem, in Ireland, who died in 1118.

These prophecies were first published in Venice in 1595, under the reign of Pope Clement VIII, so that they were, after being made by the saint, as if buried for 455 years.

1 - What are such prophecies

Now, a curious fact, which is already a proof of its veracity, is that such prophecies admirably predicted the pontificates of each of the popes that followed from 1153 to 1595, from Pope Anastasius IV until Clement VIII, having in this interval 63 Popes.

But the document is not limited until then; continues the prophecies until the end of the world, quoting from Clement VIII, until the end, another 36 Popes; so that the complete list of Popes, from Saint Peter to the last, Pedro II, would be 270 Popes. Each prophecy consists of a brief legend, in which the personality of each Pope and his influence on world events are highlighted.

The coincidences between the facts and the expression of these prophetic couplets have been remarkable, often blatant and perfectly just, and often, as obscure as they seem, they are perfectly adaptable to the facts.

Certainly, the criticism applied to these prophecies and, with good arguments, discussed their probability and authenticity; nothing compels them to give them faith, but nevertheless they are still a very curious document and worthy of observant attention, one of those documents of an unusual kind and which takes on the aspect of a problem.

St. Malachi's prophecies underwent a graft in time. In 1899, Roger Lister, pseudonym of the Viscount of Poli, a former Pontifical Zuavian, published the remaining couplets of St. Malachi, accompanied by an indication of the name of each Pope and a small comment in Italian.

Roger Lister explained that he had known such a comment for a long time, and whoever had made it known had claimed to have received it from a religious saint in Padua, who died nonagenarian in the early years of the pontificate of Leo XIII.

II - The list of Popes

Looking closely at the synthetic trait of each Pope, one is amazed at the perfect similarity between prophecy and fact.

POPE PIO VI

Who will deny that Pius VI (1775) deserved the badge of - peregrinus apostolicus - when it is

well known that the unfortunate pontiff, after a painful pilgrimage, went to die in exile in Valença?

POPE PIO VII

There was the - aquila rapax (eagle rapace) - very clear allusion to Napoleon, who stripped the Pope of his states and had him under his iron claws.

POPE GREGORIO XVI

Gregorio XVI belonged to the order that Romualdo founded in Balnes, in Etruria, and his qualification was: - De Balneis Etruriae.

POPE PIO IX

Pius IX had the caption: - Crux de cruce - and the life of this glorious pontiff was, in fact, a most painful and heavy cross.

POPE LION XIII

Leo XIII, who was the most brilliant head of the times now, for this reason and still for his coat of arms, well deserved the caption: - Lumen in caelo.

PAPA PIO X

Pius X - littis ardens funatus from Littore veniet. (Burning fire will come attached to ropes from the shore of the sea).

The Angel of Light Now, this Pope, in his shield, had a star (ignis ardens) an anchor (which explains the word funatus: anchored) and left the shore of the Venice Sea.

Pope Benedict XV

Benedict XV is attributed in the prophecy of St. Malachi the badge: Ecce religio depopulata et satanae soboles saevissima: This is the depopulated religion and the cruel race of Satan.

And the comment adds: Su, Italian league! (Standing, Italian league!).

In fact, the couplet of S. Malaquias is more than justified: the successes that mourn the present times are such as to give a better explanation to this severe legend. And the comment? Let us leave this simple question to him and move on to the other couplets and comments.

POPE PIO XI

Pius XI - Ecce fides intrepida et praedicta immolatio, victoria sancta certissima! "Most Holy Father Pio eleventh, Ré d'Italia, stinks of (meriti, città saneia!" - Here is the fearless faith and the predicted immolation, the most certain, holy victory. - Most Holy Father Pius XI, king of Italy! May the holy city have faith in your merits.

POPE GREGORIO XVII

Gregorio XVII. - You are Romae pastor angelicus, the mittis doctor, the Pater indulgentissimus.

- Hail, Gregory seventeenth, Father Santissimo, Pastor utile. - You are the angelic pastor of Rome, gentle doctor and most forgiving father! Hail, Gregory XVII, most holy father and necessary pastor.

POPE PAUL VII

Paul VII. - Ave docte Pastor nautaque populi romani prudentissime. -Holy Father Paulo seventh. Punk perfecta rivenuta dunk!

- Hail, wise Shepherd and prudent helmsman of the Roman people. - Most Holy Father Paulo seventh, behold, perfect peace returns.

POPE CLEMENTE XIV

Clement XIV. - Ecce fio florum, ecce lilium patriae virtutes coronans sanctissima, which is in Domino praedicta. - Holy Father nostro Clemente fourteenth; you Rome, your daughter, venerate the peaceful pacific.

Here is the flower of flowers, here is the lily, crowning the virtues of your homeland and the holy acts foretold in the Lord. Holy Father Clement XIV; You, Rome, your daughter, venerate the peaceful king.

POPE PIO XII

Pius XII. - From medietate lunae I proceeded! the divine doctore missus Romae. Hail amore, Father nostro duodecimo, mediatore most holy, presumptuous victim. - From the half moon (from the country of the crescent) he proceeds to Rome by the divine doctor.

Hail, beloved father, Pius XII, holy mediator, future victim.

POPE GREGORIO XVIII

Gregorio XVIII. - De labore solio optimo terra devote patioris sanctissima gregem enutrit.

Holy Father Gregorio eighteenth, hover tuto admirabile. - Thanks to an excellent work of the sun, the flock of the very holy shepherd nourishes the earth. Our most holy Father Gregorio XVI II, a priest for everything admirable.

POPE LION XIV

Leo XIV. - De gloria olivae Domini, qualis pacifer, quam omnibonus protector! Pope leone fourteenth, virille monarch, glorious dominion. What a messenger of peace from the glory of Oliveira do Senhor, what a protector full of goodness!

Pope Leo XIV, an energetic monarch, reigns gloriously.

POPE PEDRO II

Pedro II. - Tu in desolatione mundi supreme thirst. Ecce Petrus Romanus ultimus Dei veri pontifex. Roma nefans diruitur et judex tremendus judicabit triumphans omnes populos. - In the supreme desolation of the world, Peter the Roman will reign, the last true Pope of God. Criminal Rome will be destroyed and the tremendous Judge will judge all nations triumphant.

Will the same remarkable coincidences be verified that have already been realized so clearly?

III - The last times

In believing in the prophecy of St. Malachi, there would be only, from SS Pius XI until the end of the world, seven Popes.

From Saint Peter to Pius XI, there were already 263 Popes, with a total number of 270, as follows:

263 - SS Pius XI.

264- Gregorio XVII.

265 - Paul VII.

266 - Clement XIV.

267 - Pius XII.

268 - Gregorio XVIII.

269 - Leo XIV.

270 - Pedro II.

Seven Popes, is little, very little, when you consider that Popes are men of advanced age. SS. Pius XI is already 76 years old, and 10 years of pontificate, whose government cannot be long lasting.

The longest pontificates were those of Pius IX (32 years old) and Leo XIII (25 years old).

It can be deduced from these facts that the seven Popes appointed can hardly fill a 150-year period.

When examining the history of the Popes, it is noted that, in general, seven Popes arrived only in the middle of this time, as for example between Gregory XV (1621) and Alexander VIII (1689), or even closer to us, between Alexander VIII (1689) and Clemente XIII (1758), being the pontificate of the first seven of 68 years, and that of the seven seconds of 69 years.

Always supported by the same prophecy (note that they are not truths of faith; one can believe or reject these data) it could be said that the end of the world falters more or less between 70 to 100 years.

It's close, very close ...

IV - Conclusion

Here is a prophecy that deserves the application of the words of the apostle: Prophetias nolite spernere. Do not despise prophecies. Examine everything; and embrace what is good (1Ts5,20,21).

The Church did not declare such prophecies to be true of faith; you can believe them and you can also reject them.

The Angel of Light It should be noted, however, that they have reasons of prime value in their favor. They are the work of a saint and, for centuries, these prophecies have received almost textual execution, so that both the author's holiness and the fulfillment of the prophecies made by him are tests that deserve the examination and reflection of serious people.

It is good to draw the practical conclusion so that we are ready.

The end of the world is death. The Holy Spirit warns us: Remember that death is approaching (Ec14,12).

The day of the end of the world will come: it is certain. This day is ignored.

As for the day and the hour, says the Savior, no one knows them, not even the angels in heaven (Mt24,36).

Otherwise, we know neither the day nor the hour, however, we know the time. It is Jesus Christ himself who makes us known, this time, clearly, by the precursor signs he pointed out.

These signs can be summarized in the following five:

- 1 - The preaching of the Gospel throughout the universe.
- 2 - The appearance of the antichrist, who will be taken by Messiah (perhaps spiritism?) (2Ts2,1-11).
- 3 - Apostasy and corruption of men (2Ts2,3).
- 4 - The conversion of the Jews, caused by the return and the preaching of Enoc and Elias (Rmt 1,26).

The prophecy of St. Malachi

- 5 - The terrible signs in heaven, and the tribulation among men (Mt 24,2Q).

We cannot deny that, on many points, these predictions are made.

The Gospel has already been preached worldwide.

The Antichrist, who can be a person, like a sect, seems to be in this world, represented by Protestantism, Spiritism, Freemasonry, Bolshevism, all of them in struggle against Christ and his Church.

The corruption of the world is profound; Jews are getting closer and closer to the Catholic Church; we are going through crises, wars and other horrors that seem to be precursor signs of greater cataclysms.

Let us therefore be prepared!

Let us be Catholics in fact, without hesitation and without weakness.

Let us practice our holy religion, not partially, but entirely as Jesus Christ wants it to be practiced.

And so we will be ready, whatever the day and the hour, because for the righteous this tremendous hour will not be punishment, but rewards and happiness.

Parati estote: Let's be ready.

A breath of revolt passes over the world, a breath of sensuality for divorce, a breath of hatred for Communism, a breath of pride for Protestantism, a breath of hypocrisy for Freemasonry, a breath of madness for Spiritism ... and all these diabolical breaths constitute a single whirlwind against the true Church of Christ.

The rock is solid, it is safe; he does not fear storms, but the children of this Church are weak and can be overthrown, they can be lost.

In the midst of this gale we have love for the holy Church; let us group around our spiritual leaders, and, with our heads up, let us fight, because the triumph will be ours!

The Church has the divine promises of triumph!

SECOND CONTROVERSY

Origin of the human race

VARIOUS ELUCIDATIONS

A convinced Catholic college student, having encountered several objections against the origin of the human race among his colleagues, took the trouble to gather them together, asking for an answer in this regard.

Here is the consultation, which will be followed by the requested answers.

Rev. Fr. Julio Maria.

Not unnoticed, the beautiful articles by V. Revma pass through my hands or before my eyes. I read them carefully, keeping them with love and care, as they are a resource for me, when I find myself in difficulties regarding matters of religion, that is, I find myself in difficulty, because being attacked or being interrogated, I am in conditions to be either defeated or humiliated, but not because I doubt the least thing of Sacred Scripture, or about the dogmas of our holy religion; it is there on those pages, so well written, that I will draw the blessed water of truth, to destroy the darkness of my difficulties.

Father, I have been your profound admirer since I read that great newspaper, not for its material size, but for its so admirable lessons, for the science that is contained in it and, therefore, great for its content and for its intellectual greatness. .

We are in the middle of the battlefield, the enemies are succeeding each moment and the attacks are multiplying, but they are not reinvigorated, because whoever is in error, at every step by himself is destroyed for his reason, limping and being one. rotting mire.

That is why I am compelled to write this letter to you; the search for the light of truth on the path that leads to goodness, not for me, but also for my neighbor, are the causes of harassing him.

Mr. Father, several colleagues of mine, and teachers told me that the principle of man's creation is inexplicable, also saying that Adam and Eve are mythological characters and that they never existed. And also that, if Adam and Eve had children, and they only stayed with these children and these children of Adam and Eve with whom they were married to give rise to the spread of mankind?

They even said that if brothers married brothers, perfect children did not come out, but defective ones.

I ask you, therefore, the charity of giving me the explanation of this so that I can be calm.

Trusting in his benevolence and his apostle's ardor, I await the answers without delay.

Now, pledged, for this unlimited benefit, I subscribe.

From your Reverend. servant in Christo Jesu.

AA

1 - Answers

The consultation covers four difficulties:

- 1 - The principle of man's creation.
- 2 - Adam and Eve are mythological characters.
- 3 - They only had sons and not daughters.
- 4 - Defective children come out of the marriage of brothers.

I will try to satisfy my worthy consultant, showing him that these four objections are unfounded, and dissipate before the exposure of the truth, like darkness before the sun.

The principle of creation

Is the principle of creation really incomprehensible?

Absolutely not: the only incomprehensibility comes from ignorance of the facts, or from bad faith in the divine word. The creation of the first man is of a simplicity that has no equal, except the sincerity with which it was written.

Everything is clear, bright, convincing, are irrefutable pages, which bring the truth stamped and proven in each sentence. Those ignorant of the fact must read the first chapters of Genesis.

In the beginning God created heaven and earth.

What simplicity! What majesty!

It looks like lightning, which obscures the look.

God said: Let there be light and the light was. - And He continues: Extend the firmament over the waters and separate them. Gather the waters together - Let there be luminous bodies in the sky! - Produce animal waters to live in the sea! - Produce land live animals!

It is the creative word of Almighty God, whose word immediately realizes what it means.

After thus preparing the palace of man, God created it on the sixth day ...

You must be the king of creation. For this reason, the scene changes and the creative majesty gives way to the loving care of the Father.

God said: Let us make man in our image and likeness; may he send to the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the animals and all the reptiles that move under the sun.

Then, with the clay of the earth, God formed the body of man; he breathed into this matter, still inert, a breath of life, and man arose, a living soul, and God named him Adam, which means: taken from the earth.

How sublime all this is, and refutes, in advance, all objections, for the simplicity of the narration, which reveals the finger of God.

What is inexplicable about that? Nothing!

Everything is explained: God created, that is, he took out of nothing, all works, by an act of his divine omnipotence.

Through the narration of man's creation, Sacred Scripture teaches us what our nature is, and

shows us our immediately divine origin. It thus condemns materialism, making the distinction between body and soul, showing that the first comes from the earth and the second from God (Ec12,7).

It also condemns the theory of evolutionism and transformism, which teach that man is only an improved animal.

Adam and Eve are myths

Such mythism is an invention of the rationalists, to deny the miracles and to distort the true character of the revelation.

Mythism is a false, wrong and imaginary sense, which does not deserve the attention of a serious person.

Would Adam and Eve be myths?

Rather say that Saint Alexander, Caesar, Pharaoh, Constantine, Napoleon, etc., etc. What proof do we have of the existence of these ancient and modern world rulers?

- History and monuments.

Now, we have all this, and much more, of the existence of Adam and Eve, of Moses, of Abraham and other patriarchs of the Old Testament.

You don't make up a whole story.

You can make up facts, you can't make up an entire story, which necessarily has its connection, its intrusion into the history of other peoples, capable of denying, of unmasking the invention.

Now, we must accept the story of "creation as it is told by the inspired historian, which is Moses, or we must deny all antiquity, from the creation of the world to Jesus Christ, because such a story is proved by that of other peoples. : Assyrians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Tarsi, Persians, Amalecites, Chaldeans, etc., etc.

And then, to deny a history of some 4000 to 6000 years, with all its facts, incidents, wars, etc., it is necessary to invent another one capable of replacing it.

And where will the mythists find it?

If Adam and Eve are myths, where does the human race come from?

What is the principle of man?

Where and how did it appear?

How did the spread of the human race take place? etc., etc.

They are pages, are volumes of questions to ask, and all are left unsolved.

Nothing is more opposed to the myth than the Bible.

The word myth designates, as opposed to real history, a kind of imaginary history, a fable that someone uses to express religious or metaphysical ideas or theories.

Now, the Old Testament aims precisely to put a barrier to the mythical current that dragged the ancient peoples to polytheism and its fables.

Adam and Eve are therefore real, authentic characters; they are the first parents of humanity, created by God in his image and likeness.

It is a truth as certain and undeniable, as the existence of earth, plants, animals, the sun and stars is certain.

If we accept the existence of the former, we must accept the existence of the latter.

Plants, animals, birds and fish are the fruit of procreation; why wouldn't men be?

Everyone understands that there must have been a first couple of animals and plants to transmit to the world the continuation of these plants and animals.

Man must also have his first type; the Bible says that this first type is Adam and Eve.

If they are not, then who is?

Man is a reality; it must therefore come from another reality. A myth is an imagination, and the human race cannot emerge from this myth.

I therefore ask the mythists to manufacture another book of Genesis, showing us the true origin of the human race ... and, until such work appears, we will continue to adapt and follow the Genesis of the prophet of Sinai, who has for himself the internal and external veracity, evidence of world history and the power of God.

III - The children of Adam and Eve

The third objection has a real appearance. The querent says that Adam and Eve only had children, and as such they could not marry girls who did not exist, since Adam and Eve were the only parents created by God.

Such an objection stems from ignorance of the Bible and a lack of reflection.

Genesis cites only the names of three sons of Adam and Eve, and does not name any daughter.

Does that mean you didn't have them?

- Absolutely not.

It is biblical custom not to mention the names of women, but in case they have to exercise a prominent role.

The Bible mentions the names of Cain, Abel and Set, not to mention the others.

After naming these three who were supposed to be the first trunk of humanity (Cain and Set), the Bible summarizes everything saying of Adam: After having fathered Set, he lived 800 years, fathering sons and daughters ... and his whole life of Adam was 930 years old (Dn5,4).

This is already a bright spot.

After the birth of Set, Adam and Eve continued to have sons and daughters. Now, when Set was born, Adam was already 130 years old. During these 130 years, how many sons and daughters has he had?

One can answer, without fear of making a mistake, that he may have had around 70 to 80.

Among these the Bible names the first, Cain; it was convenient to name him, both because he is the first and because he is the murderer of his brother Abel.

Abel, dead, was replaced by Set, reason to name this successor.

But now, a simple reasoning: Cain and Abel were already men when the disastrous fratricide happened, since they were already trained workers, suppose, with some 40 years of age.

In this 40-year interval, Adam and Eve continued to have children, perhaps 30 or more.

Abel, dead, is born Set, who is the first born after the death of his brother. The Bible was to name him.

The curse of Cain comes, condemned by God to a wandering and nomadic life.

Cain expresses the fear of being killed by others, in revenge for his brother.

Where did these other men exist, Set not yet born?

Later, Cain turns away from the family and begins to have children.

Where did this woman, his wife, come from, if there were no other men but Adam and Eve?

Finally, after the birth of his son, Cain builds a city; where did the people come from to populate a city?

Here is the set of different objections that can be raised against the biblical text.

The answer is simple.

First, Cain, in killing Abel, was perhaps already married to one of his sisters, which may have been some 10 to 15 years ago, since, being 40 years old, he may have had sisters from 39 years old down.

Everything is so elucidated. Marriage between brothers is secondarily forbidden by nature, however, not being primarily, God can dispense with this law, as He did and should do at the origin of the human race; being primarily against nature and forever the union in a vertical line, either ascending or descending, and this to the fullest extent.

There may be yet another solution.

Cain may well have married a niece, that is, the daughter of one of his brothers or sisters.

And the fact is very plausible and requires no calculation effort.

Suppose, as above, that the birth of Cain was followed by the birth of a daughter. Cain being 40 years old, his sister would be about 38 to 39.

Other brothers of Cain were born later. One of them, perhaps in his 20s, married his 18- to 22-year-old sister. It is plausible.

At the age of 25, they marry away from their parents to settle elsewhere.

From 25 to 40 years old, there is an interval of 15 years, so that these sons of Adam and Eve, brothers of Cain could, at the time of Cain's fratricide, have children of 15 years of age.

Cain, in his wandering life, travels through the regions, takes about 5 years, and marries his niece.

From this union was born Henoc, which the Bible mentions.

All of this is simple and natural.

Thus all objections are resolved.

IV - Membership Atavism

The querent presents a fourth objection, also without consistency.

He claims that children from close relatives are not perfect, but defective.

There is a great distinction to be made here, which leads us to address heredity or atavism, which is a matter of internal rather than biblical pathology.

However, it deserves to be treated, as it has its instructive and practical side with regard to heredity.

Heredity is a fact. If parents transmit to their children the physical similarities, sometimes intellectual and moral, they also transmit the morbid ones.

It is indisputable that many diseases are inherited. for example, madness, epilepsy, hysteria, rheumatism, cancer, tuberculosis, syphilis, gout, rickets, leprosy, etc.

If such heredity is not fatal, it is at least passive and quite frequent.

And note also that such heredity is unlimited in extent; it can attack the same direction in the course of many successive generations, and if the disease is severe, it may even cause the family to disappear.

Another important point: morbid heredity does not always imply the idea of perfect transmission of the inherited disease. For example, an epileptic man may have a child who is not an epileptic, but in which the hereditary tendency manifests itself with the symptoms of idiocy or general paralysis.

Consanguineous marriages considerably aggravate these pathological tendencies, uniting individuals affected by the same diseases; in such cases, the children of such unions all have, to a high degree, the marks that their parents have.

All of this is certain and proven, and it shows that, in fact, unions between relatives can be and are quite often dangerous, harmful to the offspring, giving society rickety, scrofulous, anemic, sick children.

It is the reason why the Church is as opposed to such unions as possible, and advises that they be avoided.

Canon law prohibits collateral consanguinity marriages up to the 3rd. degree (CN1076, n.1 and 2) and theology teaches that, probably, the first collateral line marriage, that is, between brothers, is forbidden secondarily by natural law, so that God can dispense with him, as he did in the beginning the world, but the Church does not dispense.

As for the other degrees in a collateral line, the prohibition being ecclesiastical, the Church may dispense.

V - Conclusion

Here is the law and the reason for the law.

The Church does not approve of marriages between relatives, although it dispenses in case of necessity, in order to avoid greater evils, because experience proves that quite often the children from such unions are born rickety, defective, sick.

But it is important to underline the reason for this physical or moral weakening of the offspring.

Heredity is a fact. Now, among relatives, there can easily be a family problem, so that, under the law of atavism, all members of the same family suffer more or less from the same disease.

Through marriage, these pathological tendencies, strengthened on both sides, must necessarily be transmitted more vehemently to the offspring, so that children are born with the disease of their parents, becoming weak, weak and stunted.

For example: if both parents are syphilitic, or hysterical, or rheumatic, it is almost certain that the children will have the parents' disease in duplicate; while, if it is only one of the parents, the morbid infection can be tamed and even extinguished by the healthy part.

And if the relatives thus infected by the morbid virus continue to contract marriages in subsequent degrees, then the disease, not being dominated by any contrary element, will be strengthened, until it gives the offspring an existence of idiocy, general paralysis and even madness.

In these cases it is almost always a sick hereditary heritage in the family.

Hereditary transmission can be dominant and recessive. There is talk of a recessive heredity, and there is no indication of a disease that appears on the outside, however, harmful factors act in the body. The disease, in the case of a recessive heredity, can span an entire generation, however, by manifesting itself, due to its disastrous consequence, in the generation of grandchildren.

Thus, it can happen that parents in good health (but only apparent) have sick children, with parents having a recessive heredity.

In the case of transmission of recessive factors, drivers take their characteristic stamp. This explains p. ex. dementia praecox, epilepsy and other diseases.

It is especially in consanguineous marriages that the recessive factors are disastrous.

Provisions of both health and disease pass from generation to generation, according to certain laws of creation, weakening or strengthening men.

What man does not have, he cannot transmit to another. Having health, transmits health; however, if there are signs of illness in your organism, it transmits illness, unless there is something to the contrary.

Now, in the beginning of the human race, men were healthy. God created them strong and robust, subject to disease without a doubt, but having no disease.

In this case, the children of Adam and Eve, from pure blood, without disease and without morbid tendencies, could unite in marriage, without inconvenience; children should, by heredity, be the direct heirs of their parents' health and strength.

Adam and Eve could not transmit any disease.

This is the reason why God dispensed, in the beginning, from a secondary natural law, allowing, as it was necessary, the children of Adam and Eve to marry each other.

No harm could come of these unions.

But today, that almost the whole of humanity is weakened by disorders and diseases, it can only transmit what it has: diseases.

That is why it is necessary to combat the encounter of two morbid dispositions, identical, so that they do not get stronger from this encounter, and reproduce in a more intense degree in the generation of children.

This is for our time ... it was not for the beginning of humanity.

This is how my assertion's assertion completely falls that such unions between the children of Adam and Eve were harmful, harmful ...

No, they were not; but they are today.

These are the four difficulties elucidated, and I hope that my worthy consultant and friends will be convinced of the truth and the inanity of the objections.

In this way, once again the harmony of divine works and the eternal wisdom that presides over all events appear resplendent. Benedicite Dominum in operibus suis (Ec39,19).

THIRD CONTROVERSY

Evangelical Issues or Evidence of the Truth of the Four Gospels

I received a letter from Capetinga with several consultations on evangelical issues.

These are more historical than dogmatic questions, however, they deserve a complete solution, in order to dispel doubts that may arise in the spirit of scholars and to strengthen faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Here is the letter in question:

Rev. Fr. Julio Maria.

I was informed by a friend of mine and a profound admirer of V. Revma., Of your high knowledge in theological issues, which is the reason why I decided to take a little of your precious time, presenting you with a questionnaire about the doubts I have about concerning certain obscure passages in the Bible and which I would like to see elucidated.

Sure to deserve your attention, I am Amo. Co. Obo.

GAV

Then follow six questions that I reproduce here with the respective answer.

FIRST QUESTION

1- External veracity of the Gospels

Is there any other story that deserves credit about the life of Jesus, other than the narrations attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?

Perfectly; such narrations exist among authors foreign to the Church.

It should be noted at once that such a life of Jesus Christ must have been written, first, by those who lived with Jesus Christ, or at least with contemporaries.

After the narrations of the four evangelists, the lay, uninspired writers began their criticism, accepting or rejecting the evangelical narrations.

Among them we have Catholics in great numbers from the first centuries, and we have heretics and Jews, attacking the doctrine of the Savior, but accepting his person, his life and his gestures.

The first serious writer appears to be Cerdon (130-140), who admitted the New Testament as inspired, but rejected the old one.

Marcion (140) succeeded him, who admits nothing but the narration of S. Lucas and a few epistles from São Paulo.

Tatian (180) was the first to make a kind of harmony of the four Gospels, thus writing a true life of Jesus Christ.

Montano, from the second half of the second century, admits all scriptures.

Basilides (130) wrote 24 books on the Gospel of St. Luke, making a true life for Christ.

Valentino (135) quotes Saint John verbatim and admits all Scripture.

Heraklion (180) wrote two comments, one about S. Lucas and the other about S. João.

Ptolemy (180) quotes S. Mateus and S. João.

Theodoto (180) gives us more than 80 quotes from the New Testament.

Opluto, Perato, Sothiano and other heretics who succeeded each other in the second century, cite texts and entire pages of the four evangelists.

These heretics who believed in the gospels, but interpreted them in their own way, were refuted by the first doctors of the Church with admirable eloquence and science.

Jews and pagans alike had their writers who recognized the existence of Jesus Christ and his teaching, but fought his doctrine in denying its authenticity.

Among them are known Trifão, against S. Justino, and Celso against Christians in general.

Trypho says that he knows the Gospels and that he has read them several times, but he pretends not to be able to accept the doctrine, because it would be to deny Moses and the prophets.

Celso accuses Jesus Christ of proclaiming himself the Son of God, and accuses the apostles of having agreed to accept the Messiah's impostures; and ends up making a series of objections against Christianity, covering the entire life of Jesus Christ, which demonstrates the knowledge of the four Gospels.

Here are narrations subsequent to those of the evangelists, fighting doctrine, but recognizing and describing the personality of Jesus Christ.

If Jesus Christ were not what the Gospels teach us, the writers cited, who were pagans, Jews or heretics, would have denied the facts.

And the opposite happened: they accepted the personality, the works, the doctrine of it, contesting only the scope or interpretation of this doctrine.

Of this feat they are true historical testimonies of the Savior's life, and they are historians who

deserve faith as historians - not, however, as indoctrinators - because they were enemies of Christians.

SECOND QUESTION

II - Profane sources of Christianity

Was there a historian, whose works are beyond suspicion, (I mean gross interpolations, as in the case of Josephus, where the interpolation does not absolutely link with the text of the story) that at least mentions the name of Jesus Christ?

Yes; there are many ancient historians who not only remember the name of Christ, but speak of his person, his doctrine and his miracles.

I limit myself to mention those that occur to me at the moment and that are better known, in addition to being of unassailable authenticity.

The first known writer is Tacitus.

In his book of the *Anais*, written in 115-117, under the empire of Trajan, he mentions Christianity as a new religious sect originating from Jew, spread to Rome, and whose founder is Christ condemned to death by Pontius Pilate (*Anais* 15 , 44).

Then we have Suetonio, private secretary of the emperor Hadrian, being thus able to consult the imperial archives. Suetonio wrote the life "Claudio", between 117-138, in which he tells how Claudio expelled the Jews from Rome, who disturbed the order under the instigation of Christus.

This expulsion of the Jews (Christians that Suetonio confused) is mentioned by Lucas, in the Acts of the Apostles; in his "Life of Nero ", the same writer speaks of the torments of Christian martyrs, saying that they have given themselves over to new and ill-fated superstitions (Nero, 16).

Plinio, the young delegate at Bithynia, is another pagan writer, who wrote from 111 to 113 a relationship to Emperor Trajan about Christians.

We see, in this relationship, how the Christians had invaded the cities and the campaigns of Bithynia, finding Christians of all ages and of all conditions, among whom there were some who professed the religion of Christ, more than 20 years ago, so that the official pagan cult was in serious danger of being abandoned.

Plinio verified that all the error and the lack of Christians consisted of meeting habitually on certain days and singing hymns to Christ, as to a God (*Liber epist: 10,97*).

The historical existence of Jesus Christ is also attested by pagan writers, between 125 and 175, such as Numenio, Phlegon, Saleno, Lucio and Celso.

Flavio Josefo, Jewish historian, died in 100, also speaks of Jesus Christ, in his *Jewish Antiquities*. Cites the preaching and torture of St. John the Baptist (*Ant. Jud.*, 18); the martyrdom of St. James the minor, which he names brother of Jesus, called Christ (*ib.20*).

The authenticity of these texts is admitted by everyone; it is not, however, that of another fragment, in which titles are attributed to Christ that exceed the knowledge of a Jewish historian, hostile to Christianity.

Here is the passage from Josephus under discussion:

"At that time Jesus lived, a wise man, who worked wonderful miracles, a teacher of men who received the truth willingly.

He called on many Jews and pagans. He was the Christ. Like Pilate, due to the accusation made by the chief of the people, he had been condemned to death on the cross, notwithstanding those who had loved him sincerely.

He appeared to them resurrected on the third day, as the prophets had announced, and performed other miracles; and until now the Christians, who took their name from him, have not disappeared ".

In the history of the Church of Eusébio, there is a letter from Prince Abgar of Edessa to Jesus, and an answer that Jesus had given him.

This exchange of correspondence has found defenders, but it is difficult to maintain its claim to legitimacy.

Pilate's relations with Tiberius and Lentulo's letter to the Roman Senate are certainly not authentic; but even if they are interpolations or inventions, it is certain that they are very ancient writings and demonstrate the rapid extension of Christianity.

Sirio Mara, in a letter to his son Serapião, speaks of the "Wise King of the Jews", who after his death had taken over the kingdom of the Jews, but that his name was linked to his laws.

THIRD QUESTION

III - Authenticity of the Gospels

Is there proof that the four Gospels were written by the apostles, whose names they bear?

Perfectly! ... there is plenty of proof of that. The four Gospels have been known since the first century, as the work of the four respective evangelists.

Hundreds of proofs of this assertion could be cited. Here is, for example, a quote from Tertullian, written in 207: "The authority of the Gospels is guaranteed to us by the Churches that the apostles founded and transmitted to us. I speak, above all, of the Gospels of Matthew and John; but I could also quote Marcos, since his narration is attributed to Pedro, of whom he was secretary, as well as that of Lucas, who is attributed to Paul "(Tert. c. Mc1.4)!

And in another Place the same Tertullian also writes: "We affirm and prove that the Gospel comes from the apostles, to whom the Lord entrusted the task of making the good news known. If the apostles gave this narration, they were not the only ones, but they worked with the apostles.

Among the apostles, John and Matthew teach us the faith; among the apostles, Lucas and Marcos confirm it "(Ibid. lib.14).

Here's what is clear.

And, not only does Tertullian know the four Gospels, but he quotes hundreds of steps from them.

Now Tertullian was born in 160, just 60 years after the death of St. John.

It is almost an eyewitness testimony, so your word deserves all faith.

It is, therefore, certain that the four evangelists were known since the second century as being the true authors of the four Gospels.

This is what Renan himself said: "In short, I admit, as authentic, the four canonical Gospels; all, in my opinion, go back to the first century, and are more or less of the authors to whom they are attributed" (Renan, *Vie de Jésus* - introd. Sp23).

IV - The four Evangelists

Will it be necessary to prove that each Gospel is authored by the evangelist to whom it is attributed?

It seems useless, but it is easy: the story is unanimous.

The first Gospel is by St. Matthew.

The Holy Fathers are unanimous in this regard.

This Gospel was written in Hebrew for the use of Jewish Christians, before Matthew left this country to go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, between the years 45 and 48.

Reading this Gospel, the tradition of its origin is immediately confirmed. It is recognized that it is the work of a Jew, a witness to the facts, writing for the Jews of Palestine.

The language used confirms this impression. It is Hebrew, or rather Syrocaldaic, a mixed language, that was used in Palestine until the destruction of Jerusalem.

This Gospel was soon translated into Greek, and it was this version that reached us, having lost the original Hebrew.

S. Marcos wrote his Gospel, more or less, in the year 60 of our time.

This evangelist did not personally know the Savior; it is an echo of the preaching of St. Peter, of whom he was secretary.

The content shows clearly that Mark was a Jew and a contemporary of the apostles, closely united with St. Peter, and wrote for the Gentiles, especially for the Romans.

His style is clear, edgy, but dry.

S. Lucas is the author of the third Gospel.

All antiquity confirms this. The author himself says that he is not the first to write the life of the Savior (Lc 1,1). In another Place he says he published his Gospel before writing the Acts of the Apostles (Ac.1,1).

Now, the book of Acts was finished before 62 or 63 of our time; hence, it can be concluded that this Gospel must have been written between the years 55 and 60, that is, some 8 years after the Gospel of S. Marcos, and some 15 years after the Gospel of S. Mateus.

The third Gospel offers numerous marks of authenticity. It is known that St. Luke, a doctor, Gentile of origin, a disciple of St. Paul, consecrated himself with his master to the evangelization of the Gentiles (2Ch 8,18); finally that, after having written his Gospel, he composed the Acts of the Apostles (Ac.1,1).

Now these particularities, these habits of spirit, these dispositions, are reflected in a visible way in the third Gospel.

You can see immediately that the author has a literary culture as an artist, as one can discover, by the way of speaking, that he is a disciple of S. Paulo.

It is also noted that the author is not a Jew and does not write for Jews, but for Gentiles.

S. João is the author of the fourth Gospel. Evidence of authenticity, both extrinsic and intrinsic, is irrefutable.

All authors who speak of this Gospel, attribute it to St. John. S. Teófilo, bishop of Antioch, (180), St. Irenaeus (202), Clement of Alexandria (217), Tertullian and others, are all in agreement with this respect.

Santo Irineu says that St. John composed the Gospel in Ephesus, where he lived until the reign of Trajan (98-117). - According to S. Jeronimo, he was the last of the sacred writers, and made this Gospel when he returned from Patmos, at the request of the bishops and faithful of Asia Minor. Santo Epiphane says he was 90 years old.

The testimony of tradition is proved by the internal characters of the book. It is enough to go through it to be convinced that it was composed after the other three, at the end of the first century, and that the writer lived among the Gentiles, but was born in Judea, who had been an eyewitness to the facts he narrates, and he was part of the apostolic college, which cannot be another *sinão* S. João, author of the Apocalypse and the Catholic Epistle - entitled *ad Partos*.

Simplicity, simplicity combine with an unmatched insight, penetration and elevation.

Like S. Marcos, S. João prefers direct language, leaving words with the proper form given to them by the people who uttered them.

His narrations are a few pictures, full of life and movement.

Everything he represents is alive: he thinks he is watching the scenes he describes.

These characters are found in all the writings of S. João.

FOURTH QUESTION

V - The Gospels and the first theologians.

Is there evidence, of any kind, that the four Gospels were known to early theologians, to any of the bishops, to any of the Churches, or to anyone else, before the year 181?

Yes; there is evidence for hundreds.

There is no need to look far to find them; just open the history of the Church, from these times.

As a solid starting point and outside of discussions, we can cite Origen, from 185 to 254, an extraordinary character for science and genius, which is like the summary of the theology of this time.

Origen did not simply know the four Gospels, but made them a historical and logical commentary, with an unparalleled exegesis.

About S. Mateus, that commentary contains 25 books (Euseb: Hist. Ecl.1,6). He wrote another one about S. Marcos (Orig. Tract.35); yet another one, in 5 books, about S. Lucas (Hieron. Ep.104) and, finally, a last one, even more extensive, in 39 books, about S. João,

the .which S. Jerônimo knew in full, existing today 9 books; moreover, Origen left us a large number of homilies on each of the evangelists.

If Origen knew and commented in this way on the four Gospels, it is because they were generally known.

We find in theologians of these times continuous comments on the Gospels, especially in the writings of S. Clemente de Alexandria, Ammonio, S. Gregório, Thaumaturgo, S. Cipriano, Santo Hipólito and others.

The starting point is therefore one of complete security. We go up and we will soon find two extraordinary men, worthy representatives of their century, the first being the model of eloquence: Tertullian; and the second model of the wise: Sto. Irineu.

I have already quoted a text by Tertullian, born in 160. Sto. Irineu was a disciple of S. Policarpo, who was also of S. João Evangelista.

Here is what he wrote in 178: "Such is the certainty of our Gospels that the heretics themselves testify to them, lending them passages, to prove their mistakes. The Ebionites, who use only the Gospel of St. Matthew, they can be convinced by this same Gospel that they have wrong feelings about the person of Jesus Christ.

Marcion, who tells several things about the Gospel of St. Luke, can be refuted by the quotations he keeps from him. Those who distinguish Jesus and Christ, could correct themselves by lovingly reading the Gospel of St. Mark, which they admit. Valentino's disciples accept the Gospel of St. John in its entirety.

It is therefore easy to show them your mistakes. Now, in view of our adversaries paying homage to the Gospels, and making use of them, the evidence that we draw from them is therefore certain and invincible (Sto. Irineu contra heresias, 1.3, c.11).

This text shows us clearly that in the time of S. Irineu, that is, in 178, the Gospels were known, explained and commented on by Catholic theologians, absolutely as they are today.

VI - Other testimonies

And between Santo Irineu, born in 149, and S. João, who died in 100, we have only one generation.

And this generation is represented by a famous name: São Policarpo.

With one hand he holds S. João, of whom he is a disciple, and with the other he holds Sto. Irineu, whose master is.

At the same time, we met a sage and at the same time a philosopher, speaker and martyr: he is S. Justino.

S. Justin, born in 103, was a Jew and converted to Christianity in 133; he was born in Naplousa, in Samaria, near Jerusalem, having traveled the East and the West several times, and died in Rome in 167.

Now St. Justin quotes entire pages of the Gospels, commenting on them and giving them to Christians, as a rule of life and faith.

Another proof that the Gospel was studied and commented on by Christian theologians, as it still is today.

Here, then, we are almost in contact with the apostles themselves.

Going back from S. Justino to S. João, we do not find, as is incidentally, large and extensive commentaries on the Gospels, but everywhere we find quotes and allusions.

From 150 to 100, or from S. Justino to S. João, we find the Epistle of S. Barnabé; that of São Clemente, Papa; the admirable epistle to Diogneto, that of the Pastor of Hermas, the seven letters of Sto. Ignatius; a letter from S. Policarpo and the Papias fragment.

In short, 9 or 10 books of a few pages, of indisputable authenticity, and whose dates must be remembered.

While the evangelists go down the ladder of time, in the following order: S. Mateus, in 40; S. Marcos, in 50; São Lucas, in 70; São João, in 100; the writers cited go up in the following order: Papias, in 120; Sto. Inácio and S. Policarpo, in 107; Epistle to Diogneto, in 100; Epistle to Barnabas, in 90; Hermas and S. Clemente, in 70.

The evangelists and these authors are contemporary. - Their writings intersect.

The Epistle to Diogneto is written at the same time as the Gospel of St. John; and that of S. Clemente is almost the same year as the Gospel of S. Lucas.

And here's what you find in these books: The Epistle to Diogneto does not contain any quotation: it is pure apostolic sap, but without textual quotations.

The Epistle of Barnabas quotes three passages from St. Matthew.

The Epistle of S. Clemente mentions three passages from S. Mateus, one from S. Marcos, and two from S. Lucas.

Hermas's contains twelve citations: 10 from S. Mateus, one from S. Lucas and another from S. Marcos.

The Epistles of Sto. Inácio and S. Policarpo present thirteen quotations with comments, 11 from S. Mateus and two from S. Lucas.

In all, in these 5 or 6 such short books, written between the 70s and 120s, there are 36 New Testament texts and comments, departing from everything whose authenticity has not been indisputably proven.

I must mention the celebrated Didaquê (80-100), which contains numerous expressions taken literally from S. Mateus. He quotes Our Father and mentions the existence of the Gospel: Do your prayers, your alms, all your actions as you will find in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians (93-95) we find many passages from St. Luke and St. Matthew, but we must point out this beautiful and luminous expression: "Apostles are instituted by Jesus Christ, preachers of the Gospel, and Jesus Christ is sent by God. Christ is therefore of God, and the apostles are of Christ".

What do these quotes prove in contemporary evangelist writers?

They prove that the four evangelists were known, studied, commented on and explained everywhere by theologians, bishops and priests, who adopted them as a rule of faith and life.

Only with the quotations and comments found in the writings of the first doctors of the

Church, could the four Gospels be almost completely reconstructed, if the authentic text were to be lost one day.

Only Santo Irineu quotes and comments 469 texts, 234 from S. Mateus, 18 from S. Marcos, 125 from S. Lucas and 94 from S. João. Tertuliano quotes and comments 925 texts, 310 of which are from S. Mateus, 31 S. Marcos, 407 from S. Lucas, 177 from S. João.

It is almost the entire Gospel.

FIFTH QUESTION

VII - Pretended ignorance

Professor Draper, Davidson, Vidal, Le Clerc, A. Daile and other investigators of early Christian history call theologians and primitive bishops, the only authorities in the history of early Christianity, "ignorant", "credulous", "incoherent", "one-sided", "exaggerating", etc. As this reflects unfavorably on the basis of Christianity, what is the refutation of the defenders of Christianity?

This question deserves an answer only in consideration of the person who transmits it.

What are these would-be sages Davidson, Vidal, Le Clerc, Daile and others, who are nothing more than fanatical Protestants, alongside the effulgent geniuses, as are the first theologians of the Church, who are called S. Clemente, Sto. Inácio, S. Justino, Sto. Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, Papias, Martian of Athens, Tatian of Assyria, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Hermas, Quadrato, Apolinario, Militius of Sardis, Hegesipo, Dionysus of Corinth, Rodon, Caius of Rome, etc., almost all of them bishops and all men of letters, theologians of the first, true sages, whose writings still retain an unparalleled value of doctrine, sound philosophy, and scientific documentation. They are the ones who laid the doctrinal and scientific bases of our modern philosophy, and of eternal theology, so admirably organized today.

And will these men be ignorant, credulous, incoherent?

In this case, goodbye to true science ...

Scientists, then, are such futurists, whose science is nothing more than extravagance, novelty without a basis, with the sole aim of not doing as others do.

What is the scientific value of such critics for censoring those they do not know?

I am sure that the Draper, Davidson & Co. ... do not even know Origen, Tertullian and the other Catholic theologians of the first century; nor do they know them and far from having read their writings.

The historical truth, certain and proven, is the one I expounded above, while detractors prove nothing; they are just: money, praeterea nihil.

SIXTH QUESTION

VIII - Christianity and paganism

Is there any dogma or sacrament in the Christian creed that was not part of it, centuries before the advent of Christianity, the pagan religions of Asia and Egypt?

Such a question, too, should not be answered, as it makes a regrettable confusion between the true religion of Jesus Christ and the erroneous sects of paganism.

There is almost nothing in common between these two terms of comparison, apart from the great truths of the law of nature and common sense.

First, I note that dogma, being a point of fundamental doctrine, begins to exist as long as such truth exists.

Jesus Christ has revealed new dogmas to us, but after him there are no new dogmas, but only proclamation of existing dogmas. Dogmas and Sacraments are completely different.

Dogma is a truth that must be believed; the Sacrament is a means of sanctification.

There are certain common tenets between Christians and pagans, for example: the existence of God, the goodness, the justice of God, the survival of the soul, the reward or punishment in the hereafter, etc.

Outside of these common points that belong to common sense, Christianity has its particular dogmas, ignored by paganism: for example: SSma. Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, Redemption, grace, etc.

As for the Sacraments, only Christianity has them, for the simple reason that the Sacraments are all instituted by Jesus Christ, so that there never was, nor can there be sacraments in paganism, nor in any religious sect: it is the exclusive privilege of Christianity.

The pagan religions of Asia and Egypt therefore have nothing in common with the Church of Jesus Christ, apart from the great truths of natural law, of common sense; while the Church of Christ has many, many things unknown to paganism.

Christianity did not copy anything from paganism, because, in essence, it existed before paganism.

The religion of our first parents, of the patriarchs of the Old Testament, of the Hebrews, was the divine religion up to Christ, bringing in its bosom the figures and symbols that were to be realized in the person of the Savior.

Jesus Christ, as he himself told us, did not come to suppress the old law, but to bring it about, to perfect it. - Non veni solvere legem, sed eam adimplere (Mt 5,17).

Paganism was the deviation, the corruption of Jewish law, so that, departing from the old law, it stayed away from the new law, having no more vital relationship with this new law, whereas Jewish law preserves such relations in the dogmatic part and moral, with only its judicial and ceremonial part being absolute.

IX - Conclusion

Here is the answer to my consultant's six questions. I hope that your doubts will dissipate in face of the simple, but certain and clear exposition of the truths treated and proven here.

In these lines, readers will see divine beauty, admirable harmony, the imperishable basis of Christian doctrine, and will see, at the same time, how the Catholic Church fully preserves the divine deposit given to her by her divine Founder.

The religion of the Bible is not Protestantism (as Luther's adherents say), but the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church.

It alone fully preserves the teachings of the Bible; only she accepts the entire Bible; it alone makes the Bible its rule of faith and life; only it obeys the precepts of the Bible; only she

considers the Bible to be the divine book, the divine word, taking from her her faith, her morals, her sacraments, her traditions and her means of salvation.

Since the beginning of Christianity, the Church has adopted, interpreted and preached the integral Gospel, as it still preaches today.

No changes, no deletions, no additions have been made to the divine word.

This admirable unity, this universal stability, this firmness without hesitation, through time and space, is the great proof of the divinity of Catholic teaching, as the change and vacillation of Protestant sects is the proof of their error and falsity.

Let us conclude by repeating the dignified and sublime cry of the great writer Louis Veuillot: "Catholics of all nations, children of the holy Church, let us be proud of our holy mother, for whom we are children of God.

We, before men, can raise the forehead that we bow before the holy Church, can safely walk the path that it shows us; this path has always been and always will be the path of honor, charity, light and salvation! "

FOURTH CONTROVERSY

The heart and love

PHYSIOLOGICAL-MORAL STUDY ON HEART, LOVE AND PASSION

I received the following letter from a distinguished doctor, which deserves a documented answer, in view of the great scientific questions it raises, and the sincerity with which it appears to be written.

Large and complicated theological, philosophical, physiological and psychological issues are presented in these lines, all of them pulsating today, little explained in other books that do not do so in a clear way and within the reach of all, and, on the contrary, are often upset and distorted by wickedness and debauchery. I could limit myself to a simple and concise answer, but addressing myself to a distinguished doctor and to intelligent and sincere readers, already accustomed to even arduous polemics, I prefer to take all doubts and errors to the front and the bottom, refute them and oppose to them the single and sure truth.

1 - The consultation

A doctor from São Paulo, a specialist operator, writes to me:

Egregious Mr. Fr Julio Maria.

I had occasion to read his well-argued refutation to the work of such a dr. José de Albuquerque, whom I don't know. And I confess to not knowing either the author or the work.

1 - Materialist philosophers see in love only the mechanism of Organs sexual organs.

Bernard says: Love is only the consequence of nutrition. Spiritualists - and this is the category in which I include VS, - see nothing but turmoil in it.

2 - Renan, in his "Examination of philosophical conscience", says: Love is the first of the great revealing instincts that dominate the entire creation and that seem imposed by a

supreme will. Its high value results from the fact that all beings participate in it and that the resulting good is evidently linked to the purposes of the universe.

Schopenhauer says: it is the stratagem, of which nature uses, to reach the most serious scope that can exist in the world, and no being can escape from its action, only violating nature.

3 - It is surprising - says Flamarion in his "Cosmic Fantasies" - that science and philosophy, sharing the frivolous opinion of the mundane, treat (love) - the quintessential cause of the universe - as a simple reason for joking, and do not the main object of his observations.

4 - I do not bring here the opinions that Max Nordau and Salomão Reinach have on the subject, notoriously anti-religious, because they might seem suspicious.

However, they ask why the spiritualists, driven by a disgust that is so explained in the order of philosophical things, do not see that in love we are in front of the law of the organization of the world itself?

The main views are therefore three.

To recap:

5) 1 - Love is a material act of pleasure, from which it is good to abstain (S. Paulo, cited by VS).

6) II - Love is an instinct, often invincible, caused by the repletion of certain organs (materialists in general).

7) III - Love is the fundamental law of the universe, the ultimate purpose of existence (earthly?) (Cited philosophers).

8 - Now, I ask, what does clergy chastity tend to do?

9 - The answer can only be this: "To serve as an example against immorality and excess".

10 - Evidently, one cannot think of an incitement to end the human race.

11 - If so, do you think VS will reach that goal? Or, will not the worst evils be caused by falsifying an act, that is, reducing to a level of turpitude the love that is not an instinct, as VS pretends, but a supreme law, the very reason for existence?

12 - False an act, in which they cannot see the least evil, neither philosophers, nor aesthetes, nor scientists, nor artists, does VS think that this may have an influence on the character of the people, inducing them to hypocrisy? Will this not have a counterproductive effect, healing on the one hand and causing a worse evil on the other?

13 - Does it not seem to you that few clear, precise and honest rules about the hygiene of love (morality is often hygiene) could produce more fruitful fruit than an misunderstood example of chastity in the clergy?

14 - And moving on to another order of ideas: even admitting that love is a superb instinct, VS does not believe that abstinence can severely damage the individual's psyché, as demonstrated by Freud, author of Psychoanalysis, with plenty of examples; if so, does not absolute chastity harm the individual?

15 - I would be very grateful to you if you wanted to give me some clarification on the

subject, because, being completely lay on theological issues, I would fervently wish to be guided on the points exposed above.

From S. am. Att.

Dr. JBC

Having not asked the letter's author for a license, we stopped publishing the name in full.

The numbers are our divisions and correspond to the answers.

II - The answers

Before answering the various questions asked here, it is advisable to make a short study of the subject, to clarify its multiple aspects. Before the light of truth, all objections will fall by themselves, like darkness before the sun.

First, I point out a confusion of terms, which are like the basis of errors in this case, and which my worthy consultant did not notice, perhaps.

There is confusion between chastity and love. These two things are formally different.

Chastity is the refraining from illicit carnal pleasures.

Love is the esteem you have for a person or a favorite object.

São Paulo highly recommends chastity, but does not condemn love. "Teipsum castum custodi: Stay chaste", he writes to Timóteo (1Tm5,22). And he writes to the Colossians: Above all, have love, which is the bond of perfection (CI3,14). And to Timothy: The end of the precept is the love of a pure heart (1Tm 1.5).

To say, therefore, that the clergy, preserving chastity, despises love, is a great mistake ... a fundamental error, as I intend to prove here.

Chastity not only does not harm love, but it develops, perfects it and takes it to the peak of its sublimity. The Doctor. quotes Renan's words (great philologist and stylist, but terrible moralist): "Love is the first of the great revealing instincts that dominate the whole creation, and that seem imposed by a supreme will".

Renan's idea is accurate, although the expression is inaccurate.

Love is not instinct, it is a faculty of the soul. Our soul knows, wants and loves: knowing, wanting and loving are the three elements of the rational man.

Love dominates all creation: it is true; and this love not only seems, but is even imposed by the creator. It is the great divine law: You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength (Lc 10,27; Mt 22,41).

Love is everything in this world: everything, everything; it is necessary to understand well what love is, and not to confuse it with vulgar and low carnal passion, which happens quite often.

To say that spiritualists are loath to love is a complete mistake.

Spiritualists renounce the illicit pleasures of the flesh in order to better cultivate love. I call spiritualists here those who cultivate the spiritual life.

The enemies of love are the enjoyers of life, dominated, as they are, by instincts that pervert their intelligence, will and heart.

Love is everything in life!

Man must love, he cannot live without loving; but it is good to know what love is, where it comes from, where it goes, what is its origin, its thirst, its secret.

And all of this we will elucidate here.

III - Necessity of love

The youth will appreciate this title, and even old age will clap their hands.

All the better! It is a truth, and the truth always deserves applause. Man can live without fortune, without honors, without pleasure, but he cannot live without love.

Whoever does not love is dead, said the Savior: Qui non diligit, manet in morte (1Jo2,14).

Man, being created in the image of God, whose essence is love - Deus charitas est - cannot fail to participate in this essence - must also be love.

Nothing is as great as love, exclaims Sto. Augustine: Magna res est amor!

To be without love is to be miserable and detestable: Detestandi et miserabiles si ni / 1il ametis.

Love, then. Love very much: God wants you!

but, be careful to love what should be loved: Amate, sed quid ametis videte.

There is a lot of fraudulent love, a lot of counterfeiting, a lot of masked love! There! of us, if we love what does not deserve to be loved: Yes! three times there! for a wound in the heart is always deadly.

In man everything depends on the direction of his love. Having free will, we can choose the object of our love; however, the choice being poorly made, we are no longer free to avoid ruin.

Well making this choice is a matter of life or death: Everything is there.

The man is worth for his love. It is always the great Sto. Augustine I am commenting: "Do you love the earth? He says; you are earth: - Terris diligis, terra es; do you love God? You are God: Deum diligis, Deus es!"

Do you want to write the story of a man, a family, a nation?

Study his love, you will never be deceived; the whole philosophy of life is there.

"Two loves, says Saint Augustine, built two cities: the love of God, going to contempt himself, built the city of God; the love of himself, going to the contempt of God, built the city of Satan" .

Loving God is heaven; don't love him, it's hell: - Locus ubi non amatur. Hell is the absence of love. Here, my dear doctor, is the doctrine of the theology of love, the doctrine of the Catholic Church, the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

You are seeing that it is not a matter of underestimating, far from despising love, but of radiating it, of spreading its fire, of burning all hearts, and transforming men through love: -

Charitas a Deo est. God is the source of love - and he wants this love to spread throughout the world. It is his own word: I came to bring the fire (of love) to the earth: and what do I want, except that it be kindled? (Lk 12,49).

IV - Three kinds of love

In general, only one love is known. It's too bad!

There are three kinds of love in man, and very distinct love, both in its origin, in its formation, in its manifestation, in its effects.

We must enter the field of physiology and psychology here; however, readers are not surprised by the philosophical aspect of the name. It's a complicated name to mean a very simple thing.

Man is composed of a body and a soul. This body and soul form one and the same nature, the same compound substance, as the intimate relationships of the physical and the moral, and the admirable unity of the whole person prove.

The human soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, created by God at the time of the formation of the body, but united to this body to dominate and survive it.

Man, being like the crowning of creation, has vegetative life, like plants; sensitive, like animals; intellectual, like the angels. The soul is the beginning of these different operations by the different faculties it has.

Vegetative life refers to the body.

The sensitive life refers to the heart.

Intellectual life refers to intelligence and will.

Such is the triple life that contains human life: the heart occupies the center of this life; intelligence occupies the upper part; the senses form with. lower part.

The heart is one. Love is one, but this love, indifferent in itself, receives its definitive form through the faculty that gives birth to it, guides and directs it; from here a triple love is born, very different from each other. Love itself, natural love, is indifferent, and is called instinct in animals, being natural, instinctive love in man.

When this natural love is dominated and driven by intelligence and will, it becomes sublime love, true love, supernatural love.

When this natural love is dominated and directed by the body, by the senses, it becomes the abject, carnal, bestial love!

The first (natural) love keeps man in his own manhood.

The second (intellectual) love elevates man above nature and brings him closer to God.

The third (carnal) love throws man into the mire of addiction, debauchery and filth.

So we have, through love: man, the saint and the sinner.

This is what is clear, scientific, logical and natural. We will now study, in particular, each of these three loves, or, if you like, the double transformation of natural love.

V - The Heart and Biology

Biology is the life science of organized bodies.

Head and heart, say the philosophers, form the double center of man. It would be better to say that the heart is the central point of the organism, and that the head is its crown.

The physiologist sees in the heart only a pressing pump, charged with distributing blood to all organs.

The psychologist sees, beyond the bomb, and penetrates a new world of admirable secrets.

Life comes from the soul, which is its only source; therefore, all parts of our body must be in contact with the soul.

The soul does not, however, animate, in the same way and in the same order, all the organs of the body; it has its privileged organs to those who communicate most abundantly and to those who inform before others.

Now, the heart is the vital organ, par excellence, closer to the source, and better prepared to receive and distribute the effluvia of the soul.

Biology shows us that the heart is the first living part of our being; the first organ that stands out from the coarse wrapping of the germ, and immediately goes into function. The other organs appear later, each in time and according to the need for development.

Sto. Thomaz enunciates this profound biological principle: The first in everything is, so to speak, the principle and cause of everything that follows.

Cor principium vitae in animali (S. Th1,9,75.a1c).

Thus the heart presides over the birth, development, function and conservation of each of the organs, because the life of the body comes from the blood. - Sanguis pro anima est (Dt12,33). (Lt17,14). - Anima omnis carnis in sanguine est, says the Bible (Lt7,14).

Thomist doctrine is masterful in this regard, and serves as the basis for all biological, physiological and psychological principles.

The heart, he says, includes the principle of life; and the principle includes the whole in potency. Est principium vitae, principium autem est virtute totum (1a, 2a, 9,17).

That is why it is a principle in philosophy that the heart of flesh is the center, the seat, the organ and the principle of inner feelings and the affections of the soul (Sto. Tomás, De mot. Cord. Op.35).

VI - The heart and physiology

Physiology deals with organic functions, through which life manifests itself.

The physiology of the heart is love.

The heart is the proper organ of love - it is like the primary instrument of the soul's activity. Now, the soul, by the beginning of its creation, being the image of God, is above all love.

It is the soul that loves, and communicates its love directly to the heart, which then transmits it to the other organs, directly or indirectly moved by it.

In this way, the heart becomes the beginning of our life.

Such is the language of physiology and Sacred Scripture. The latter always attributes to the heart all that is love, tenderness and affection.

And it cannot be objected that in the biblical steps, the heart is allegorically taken by the soul, because God Himself makes a distinction in the great precept of love: You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and of all your strength (Dt6,5).

God knows the meaning of the words: He distinguishes here a threefold element in complete love: - heart, soul and strength.

The heart: it is the center and the principle of life.

The soul: it is intelligence.

The strength: they are the senses of the body.

Here is the whole man.

"With these words, - says Sto. Augustine, God wants to make us understand that everything in us belongs to him, and that we must consecrate all the affections of our hearts, as well as all the thoughts of our spirit and all the actions of our life "(From Doct. chr. Lib.1, c.22).

The heart is, therefore, physiologically and divinely, the proper organ of love.

VII - The heart and psychology

Psychology deals with the faculties and operations of the soul. Soul psychology is the truth, the good or everything represented by love.

This love is natural to him, and it is instinctive in man as in animal.

In man, it is social love.

In the animal, it is instinct.

The family is the first natural society; it is through it that society is preserved and propagated.

Domestic inclinations are these that bring together several members of a family.

Conjugal love is the principle of all domestic affections, it must be distinguished, as we shall see shortly, from the inferior tendencies that we have in common with animals.

Paternal and maternal love are the extension and natural complement of conjugal love.

Filial love is purely physical in the beginning, but it is refined and perfected by the development of sensitivity and intelligence.

Fraternal love is founded on bonds.

blood. A brother is a natural friend. Such is the psychological function of the heart, an organ proper to love.

This function can be more or less intense.

In the lesser degree, it is the simple exercise of faculty; to a greater degree, it is passion.

This point is generally misunderstood.

Normal exercise of the heart is an activity. Passion is a passive state.

The heart wants to love - it is the activity; he feels his love despised: he suffers; this pain is called passion (pati).

He feels his love returned: he feels the joy. This joy is a passion.

The heart does not act, but suffers the action of another.

Passion is therefore composed of three elements: For good: inclination, · pleasure and desire.

For evil: inclination, pain and aversion.

Love is, therefore, indifferent to its nature, standing between vice and virtue.

It becomes virtue when it is directed by the upper part of man, that is, intelligence and will; and it becomes addictive, when it is dominated by the senses.

The love already described: conjugal, paternal, maternal, filial, fraternal, is a natural, indifferent love, meaning that it is neither virtue nor vice: it is a duty, it is the normal exercise of the heart. This love, being driven by the senses, can become addiction.

VIII - The direction of love

The preceding notions will give us the key to loving secrets.

If man could stay within the limits of the normal functions of his heart, he would love what he must love naturally, and run away from what does not deserve his love.

In this case, there would be neither virtue nor vice.

This state is imaginary, and cannot exist.

Man cannot remain indifferent. He loves...

and must love with passion. The passion of love, like other passions, (philosophers list eleven capital passions) finds exciting inevitable.

In the physiological order, they come from nature and heredity, which deposit the germs that tend to develop in the body. In the physical order, there are numerous occasions that provoke temptations. In the psychological order, there is the imagination, which has a considerable influence on the genesis of passionate love.

Therefore, the heart cannot remain indifferent ...

by nature, he must love; by circumstances, he must love with passion.

In man there is a motor faculty, enlightened and free, distinct from lower appetites: it is the will.

Appetites correspond to the senses that are common to animals, while the will corresponds to intelligence, which is common to us with angels.

In man, the will and appetites meet, combine or fight; so that we are able, successively, to want with intelligence and passion, or, on the contrary, to make violence to our own feelings.

The will depends first on intelligence, which is its principle, but it is only to send it afterwards to it and the other faculties.

The will is free in its own act.

Freedom consists in the difference, not of wanting or not wanting, but of choosing between this good or that other.

What necessarily attracts our will is the good; - she must want an ultimate end.

The indifference between good and evil does not exist.

Man cannot want evil (it would be a defect of freedom), but there is freedom between such and such an act, and freedom to do or to abstain.

The heart, in choosing its love, must, therefore, be directed by intelligence and will: the heart must love good.

And the good, the true good, the only good is God.

IX - True love

God is the necessary, infinite good that our will must continue, focusing on him the love of the heart. This aspiration is called ideal aspiration.

Philosophers define man: a rational animal. Theology could define it: a religious animal.

This religious aspiration, according to his point of view, takes on several forms: It is the respect that is due to God, as authority.

It is the fear of God, as the sovereign judge.

It is love for God, as a loving father.

It is in this supreme love that all human affections are condensed. Undoubtedly, this love does not destroy other loves, but others must harmonize with it, they must be subject to it.

God's love is the only one where excess is impossible. This love includes the love of oneself and that of others.

Through this love the heart rises, rises, rises ... until it is lost in God. Deum diligis, Deus es. Loving God, man becomes God, says Sto. Augustine.

It is the idealization of the love of the human heart.

It is a necessity. Love above, or hate below. Or the love of happiness, or the slope of disgrace.

This is why St. Paul exclaims: If anyone does not love Our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be cursed (2Ch 16, 22).

It is this love that makes the saints. It is this love that transforms men, that inspires heroism, that makes virgins, apostles and martyrs germinate. Without this divine love, man is weak; with this love he becomes a hero.

Give me a man who loves God, and he will be capable of all heroism; he will rise above all creatures: Da mihi amantem et sentit quod tip, exclaims Saint Augustine.

X - False love

It is a pity to be forced to descend from the heights where true love elevates us!

It is so good to love like this and be loved like that! ...

But, unfortunately, if love has wings to fly, it is also flesh to crawl.

If it is of light and ecstasy, when it rises, it becomes, however, turpitude and mud, when it lowers.

Let us penetrate for a moment this dark darkness, where the devil is king, where vice is triumph, where crime is glory.

"Freedom! How many crimes are committed in your name !!", someone said.

And you can also say: Love! how many crimes are committed in your name !!

Criminal relationships are called love, which is nothing but a caricature of love or a debasing parody.

There is neither shadow of love nor of the sacred! They are, first of all, profane or, better, profaned feelings! It is simple lust; and, between lust and hatred, there is often only a thin membrane, a sheet of mica, which quickly falls apart.

Pascal said: Concupiscence is fundamentally a hate.

And Bourget says: Lust, when it is nothing but a physical feeling, is always about to become ferocious. But it is not enough to say: we will prove it.

Below the spiritual faculties (intelligence and will) there are the organic, sensitive faculties common to man and animal in man.

Some allow you to get to know sensitive objects, (inner and outer senses); others allow you to look for them (instincts and passions).

These faculties do not reside in the soul alone, but in the composite of soul and body, each having its own special organ. These bodies can provide great services to intelligence, but differ from it essentially. The spiritual and immortal soul that lives in us cannot be compared with the sensitive, inferior soul that animates animals. The latter ignores truth and morals, and is incapable of virtue, progress and freedom.

Man, perverted by original sin, instinctively inclines to the side of evil. We feel an addicted blood that boils and revolts ... it is a triple lust that St. John defined: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. (1Jo2,16).

Love cannot address itself; need a driver. Now, there are only two drivers: the will and the senses. Not allowing itself to be driven by the will, love necessarily falls into the arms of the senses, in the clutches of lust.

It is meat, and meat wants meat; the meat turns to mud, due to putrefaction.

Love loses its luster and becomes muddy, muddy, smelly!

And evil is sin !. And this is not love, it is punishment!

XI - It is not love it is selfishness

To love is to love the object or the person you love.

Love is essentially communicative: it wants to expand. This is what an old adage expresses very well: Amore, more, ore, re, probantur amicitiae! - It is through love, life, mouth and actions that friendships are proven.

To love is to love others well.

According to the end, there are two kinds of love:

Loving oneself is selfishness that seeks its own good, which sees in the loved object only a means of satisfying itself.

Whoever loves in this way, loves only himself: it is the love of lust, thus entering the category of personal and selfish inclinations.

The only love worthy of the name is one that wants and does good to the loved one. - It's the love of benevolence.

This love essentially consists of leaving oneself, forgetting oneself, and, through a substitution of personality, finding your happiness in the happiness of others. Only man is capable of this love.

To love is to give; in order to give, it is necessary to possess what is the proper of a rational person. The animal cannot forget itself; he is essentially selfish; however, you can cling to someone, but expecting food or caresses ...

You cannot give, you only aspire to receive.

Such are the physiological laws that govern the functions of the senses.

Let us draw the conclusion.

The man who despises the lower part of his being, the animal part, to listen to the voice of his intelligence, and directs his affections towards that which dignifies and ennobles him, God and virtue, is the man who loves with true love.

The man who despises the upper part of his being, his intelligence, and lets his heart follow the impulses of the flesh, of the senses, ceases to have a rational love, he has only an animal love, a carnal love, a bestial love.

And this love is mud.

XII - An example: friendship

An example will elucidate these great principles. Friendship is a love of choice, between two or several people.

What constitutes friendship is an exchange of feelings, based on an exchange of goods.

Now, there are three kinds of goods: the delectable, the useful and the honest. There are also three kinds of friendships: The first wants only pleasure; The second wants the advantage; The third wishes his friend well.

Which of these three is the true friend?

The first is an animal; The second is selfish; The third is the good friend, of whom the Script says: *Amicus fidelis, protectio foris* (Ec6,14), and *Amico fideli, nulla est comparatio* (Ec6,13). A faithful friend is a strong protection, and nothing can compare to it.

All love inspired by any lust - pleasure or interest - is based on selfishness, which does not allow Play to dedication. The pleasure of the senses is nothing solid, and the interest moves with the vagaries of fortune or time. It is the reason why there are many friendships, and few friends.

In love, or friendship of benevolence, on the contrary, the friend lives in the soul of the loved

one, considering the loved person's goods and evils as his own goods and evils, to the point of suffering with him and rejoicing with him, more than because of herself.

A witty word from M. Sevigné to his daughter expresses this friendship. Seeing her daughter suffer headaches, the mother said to her: My daughter, I suffer from your head.

XIII - Bestial depravity

Let us draw a new conclusion: it is horrible, but it is accurate.

The friendship that is dedicated to the creatures, solely for the beauty of their form, for the pleasure, for the carnal attraction, is not love, it is bestial depravity.

To love is to give and such love does not give anything, it only wants to receive.

To love is to want the good of the loved one.

Such friendship does not want the good of the person, but only the good of his senses, the carnal lust, the pleasure, the personal enjoyment - the mud. Ah! do not confuse the beautiful and pure aspiration of love with the low clumsiness of a rotten body and senses in search of mud!

It is a desecration of love. It is to tear the luminous wings out of love and replace them with bat skins.

Whoever knows only love for the flesh and for the flesh, ceases to be a man - he is an animal.

Animality is not part of love; it is the antipode of love.

If not, what would be of the noble and pure love of mother and father for their little children? If they could not love this piece of their heart without the pleasure of the flesh, the family home would no longer exist, it would be an infamous lupanar. Oh! horror! ... There would no longer be the love of children for their parents, without the enjoyment of the flesh, - the love of the brothers for each other would disappear, - the deep and heroic friendships! ...

It is horrible! ... However, it would be so, if there could be no love and friendship, without the enjoyment of the flesh.

There is, therefore, a true, pure, holy and divine love: it is the only love, that which is based on God and which is called virtue. There is an abject aberration, a debasing parody, which has nothing but love for its name, and which is, in the end, bestiality, the perversion of a profaned heart, which feels the rot of the flesh and the drunkenness of the passions, judging it to be love. No! no! It is the degradation of love! and this degradation is the principle of hatred. Whoever fosters illicit relationships, with an accomplice, has no right to tell you: I love you.

There is no true love when only the senses take part in it. It is impossible to love a person, ruining his honor, his soul and being the cause of eternal condemnation! This is not love, it is hate!

XIV - The sensual fever

A great moralist said that sensual love is a passing fever that begins with tremor and ends with yawning.

Such love, says Dr. Dupasquier, is a flower that peels and wilts when touched.

These two comparisons are accurate, and show that, instead of the love that is based on

qualities, sensual passion is based solely on attractiveness; and, as such, it is fleeting, like everything ephemeral. Sensual passion is like hellfire: it burns without consuming.

Passion throws in my eyes one I don't know, that makes ugly faces beautiful, that shows kind people without education, and that admires what should make us run away. Of all the passions, sensual passion is the one that causes the most disorder in the soul and makes you commit the most absurd.

There are no slaves more tormented than those of sensual passion. That is why God commands that the lower appetites be subdued.

Sub te erit appetitus tuus, et tu dominaberis (Gn4,7).

P. Eymieu, the great French psychologist, says it very well: "As soon as madness mutilates the human being, the beast remains, and the beast overcame the angel!"

Addiction is sad. The vicious man asks for pleasure not simply the limited need of the organ, like the animal, but the infinite aspirations of the heart.

But, as the passion rises, the enjoyment diminishes. Desire digs the abyss of the heart, while the organs are spent, like everything material.

The vicious falls like this into his own bond: - he seeks joy and finds only sadness, remorse, annoyance. Sin generates sadness because, says St. Thomas, a conscious being, placed out of order, will inevitably suffer.

My friend, I propose this question to which you will answer me: "has unclean sin brought you happiness?" - Did you find sensual passion another thing after the brief epilepsy, if not intimate, nauseating nausea?

Immense greed, followed by immense nausea.

Eternal attractive, eternal disappointment!

Let's stop it: illicit loves! mud loves!

XV - Conclusion

The conclusion is the answer to the questions asked by the worthy consulting physician.

The presentation, although summarized, is long, because the consultation covered many doubts and questions, which needed to be clarified and answered, and therefore cannot be done except by studying the subject in its bases, laws and development.

The answer will now be short. The numbers correspond to those of the consultation.

1st. - It is a mistake to say that love is the mechanism of Organs sexual organs, or the consequence of nutrition, or even turpitude. Love is indifferent; obeying the spirit, it is the virtue; following lust, it is addiction.

2nd. - Renan says it right, but he doesn't say it enough; love is the great human and divine law, in the direction indicated above, obeying the spirit and not the flesh.

3rd. - Flamarion's opinion is excellent: Love is everything in this world.

4th. - There is unfortunate confusion here. Spiritualists do not profess disgust for love.

They cultivate and cultivate true love, disregarding clumsiness and vice.

5th. St. Paul did not prohibit the lawful act, he forbade sin; it is more perfect to abstain, because this act is not an act necessary for life, but only necessary for propagation.

6th. False, refuted opinion; love is not an instinct, but a faculty of the soul. Only animals have the instinct; man has free will.

7th. Right opinion; however, it is true love that is the fundamental law of the universe, and not bestiality, which is not love, but clumsiness, as I have already proven above.

8th. What does clergy chastity tend to do? - To dominate perverse inclinations and to cultivate the love of God and neighbor.

9th. Mistake; the answer is different; the lawful act is not immoral. Marriage is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ.

So would Jesus Christ have instituted immoralities? What is immoral is the wrongful act.

10th. There is no danger of ending the human race. The world has been populating itself for 4,000 years, without ceasing and with a continuous increase. - What makes the human race dangerous is addiction and abuse, the crime of limiting birth rates, among married people, and other nasty crimes that the doctor, as a doctor, must have encountered.

11th. Contradiction. It is vice that produces such an effect and not virtue.

12th. It is not worth repeating what I have already proved in the refutation of the immoral book "Moral Sexual". Chastity is possible, and even easy, according to the teaching of medicine, philosophy and the millions of tests of pure and chaste souls.

13th. Another mistake. Hygiene is a material science, with the aim of indicating the precautions to be taken to preserve health and prolong life; physical and moral education come into its frame, but love, the faculty of the soul, is above the human sciences! Love belongs to psychology. The example of the clergy is not understood by libertines alone. The Catholic priest's chastity is his great divine halo.

14th. No! abstinence does not harm the psyché (soul of the individual). How can the culture of a soul faculty be harmful to you?

Chastity develops love, and frees the heart from the tendencies of the flesh.

Does the study harm intelligence?

Does energy harm the will?

Does regulated eating affect health?

How would pure love harm the heart?

The debauchery and debauchery do damage the intelligence, the will, the body and the soul.

Mr. dr. you know it perfectly.

Sensual abuse is the source of most illnesses.

Freud has good things, but he also has a lot of invented and baseless things.

15th. I believe I have answered all the questions of my worthy consultant; and I am sure that the doctor, elucidated on these great and important problems that are already partly known to him by the sciences of his art, that is, anatomy, psychology, pathology and therapeutics, will

find new lights in this small study psychological, philosophical and theological, which are the special branches of Catholic priests.

The doctor is the priest of the body, as the priest is the doctor of souls.

Therefore, there should be a union between the two sciences of body and soul, in order to better understand the sublime destiny of man: Loving God and neighbor for the love of God.

That is the great purpose! the only truth!

CONTINUOUS FIVE

The poverty of Christ and the luxury of the Pope

Several Catholics sent me a number from the "Sul de Minas", in Varginha, (Sul de Minas) asking me to respond to an attack by a certain Plínio Moita, from the Academia Mineira de Letras.

The attack is old; the writer does not have the merit of the invention, as it only shows that he is imbued with Masonic doctrine and a mocking spirit. He only reproduced what he read in anti-Catholic publications, without informing whether such a fact exists or not.

Mr. Plínio Motta intends to play stick and stone in the Pope's luxury, taking, as a thesis, "that Christ was poor and that his successor is of fabulous wealth".

In Rome, as Mr. Pliny, everything is gold and silver; everything is nababesque wealth.

Poor Plínio Motta! It intends to describe what you have not seen, tell what does not exist, compare without knowing any of the terms of the comparison.

If we asked the mocking member of the Academia Mineira de Letras for a single proof of everything he wrote, he would reply: say, said, I heard! Now, mr. Plínio knows that this proves nothing: this is the argument of someone who has no arguments; this is unworthy of an academic.

But, let's go to the facts, not the imaginary, but real facts, inviting Mr. Plínio Motta taking a trip to Rome in order to see "de visu" the ridiculousness of his childish assertions and mocking attacks.

I - Objections and arguments

The writer begins by quoting a text he attributes to Bernardes or Vieira: In the ancient Church, the chalices were made of wood and the priests were gold.

Such a text is neither of Bernardes nor of Vieira; is from S. João Crisóstomo; - this is mr. Pliny.

These words show the poverty of the churches, due to the continuous persecutions of that time and the sanctity of the priests. It is a glory for Catholic priests!

But, now, let us see the phenomenal conclusion of the academic: Today, with rare exceptions, he says, one can invert this thought: In the modern Church, the chalices are golden, the wooden priests! "

And this is called an argument!

St. John Chrysostom exalts the priesthood, and our academic extols the chalices.

one can invert, he says, the thought ...

Yes, sir, everything can be reversed in this world ...

I could also reverse thoughts and say, for example: - In the old academies there were gold academics, in wooden houses; in modern academies there are academics who stick in houses of gold: for example, the illustrious Plínio Motta.

It is an example. I do not claim this, as I feel the ridicule of the argument. I believe in the intelligence of mr. Pliny; I only describe it in its religious spirit.

Mr. Plínio Motta remains tearful (crocodile tears): "It is very embarrassing that I dare to air this subject, because I am Catholic, apostolic, Roman, in principle ..."

Poor mr. Pliny! The Catholic, apostolic, Roman Church is one, and if one of these attributes is missing, the three are missing, because they are inseparably united.

VS attacks, slanders and blasphemes the Roman Church; it is enough to show that it does not belong to this same Church, being, therefore, neither Roman, nor Catholic, nor apostolic.

VS protests against this Church, and protests for slander; he is therefore a Protestant, and an authentic Protestant.

It may be that VS does not belong to a particular sect of Protestantism; this matters little, because the generic term of those who revolt against the Catholic Church is Protestant.

The specification of such a Protestant comes from the sect that later embraces, becoming thus: Baptist, Methodist, Weeping, Adam, Knoxist, etc.

VS learned, as he says, from this size to love God over all things.

This is beautiful! Praise be to the holy mother, who taught him so great a thing ... But it seems that the poor son did not understand the teaching of such a virtuous mother, and today he blasphemes what his mother loved.

II - The bad priests

Mr. Plínio Motta is "to see that most priests do not follow the holy teachings of the divine Rabbi of Galilee".

Dear academic, this is a great claim, which a man should not affirm without proving.

Come on, buddy, a little more reasoning and less mockery.

To say this, VS must know most of the priests up close.

There are more than half a million Catholic priests throughout the world.

How many VS do you know? How many have you watched and studied closely? VS already traveled outside Brazil?

There are 2,239 secular priests and 1,999 regular priests in Brazil, that is, a total of 4,138 priests. (Note: data from the year 1935.)

How many VS do you know among them?

I am not talking about Europe, which, of course, VS never saw, as it did not see Rome, because then it would not say so much nonsense.

Now, not knowing even the majority of the 4,138 priests of the Brazilian clergy, how is it that VS has the courage to say that most priests are unworthy, not following the teachings of Christ ?!

It's a child's argument: Ab uno disce omnes!

I know many academics, men of letters, of science, very dignified; and I know others who are nothing more than bohemians; would that be a reason to say that mr. Is Plínio Motta a bohemian? God forbid that assertion.

To formulate a serious opinion about the class, it is necessary to turn to the various Academies of Letters, examine the opinions and the lives of academics, compare them and then formulate the argument.

Mr. Did Plínio Motta do this with Catholic priests? Certainly not.

He hurriedly went through Protestant and Masonic pamphlets, slandering the clergy and citing, as irrefutable proof, the fall of any priest, who may never have been a priest, as has happened recently with a former seminary porter, and, ready, the argument it is irrefutable: 5 slander, 10 exaggerations, 4 lies and 1 reality.

The conclusion is safe with that; there are 20 bad priests ... and knowing badly to badly 22 priests, the academic concludes very academically: "the vast majority of priests are no good".

Here are the distinguished mr. Plínio shedding tears the size of an egg, moaning and writing: "Charity, for them, is now a vain word; almost everyone has Shillock's usury. They think that the coin is the golden wafer of the communion of life!"

Take off your hats, gentlemen, bow your forehead to greet Mr. Plínio Motta, made auxiliary to God, in defense of the truth. - I gave sumus helpers!

Mr. Plínio even knows Latin. Wouldn't I have been a seminarian? or maybe any seminar porter?

I know more priests than you do. Pliny.

I traveled a great part of the north of Brazil, preaching missions in the cities and in the villages, among the Indians and the civilized ones, until Tumucumaque.

I met many Indians. - Fathers, unfortunately, too few - and among them, few rich, almost all poor, living on sacrifices and fatigue; some supporting their parents or siblings, others supporting works of charity, but all of them having not a single crumb in reserve for old age. I saw that, my dear academic.

I ask VS to appoint some academics under these conditions, yes, starting with the one who so crocodilely criticizes the priests.

Show me your charities, mr. Plínio, and I will show you the works of our Brazilian clergy. Let's go to the scale!

III - This, yes, sir. Pliny

Our great academic was even handling the councils of Ravenna, Bruges and London.

Imagine! Why didn't you mention the Petrograd Council, Lenin's and Trotsky's decisions ?!

Mr. did you find the anathema sit in these councils for those who received a spatula for burial?

I didn't know that ... I thought that only the Pope could cast anathema on violators of Church laws, and now I am learning that even private councils can do this.

I am almost 60 years old, and increasingly learning, even from Mr. Plínio Motta, who may not yet have hair on the Samson's chin.

Ah! yes, Mr. Plínio ... Very well, but there is something better.

Mr. Plínio discovered that the priest cannot receive money to confess !?

Mr. Has Pliny ever paid any debt in the confessional? Can be! who knows!?

The priest cannot receive anything by confession, but the thieves sometimes return, in the confessional, the badly acquired good.

It can only be a refund! This yes, sir. Pliny.

And mr. Plínio continues to groan: "The priests forgive their neighbor nothing and make the Church a real pail." Very well! ... Priests are very forgiving, sir. Pliny; they just do not forgive the thief who does not want to return, and so the Church becomes a counter for restitution.

Seen mr. Pliny knew these things so well, certain bad languages would be able to judge that Mr. already been in the case ... of restitution. I think it is slander, but, in the end, mr. Plínio makes the fact believe.

IV - Mr. Plínio Motta

It is to attack the Pope that Mr. Plínio joins in one beam his formidable mocking academic argument.

Listen well, gentlemen ... and with your hat in hand: "The Pope is the richest man in the world. The Roman curia is a dazzle of extraordinary divicias! Switzerland, has the grandeur of a king! The faldistoria, the Pope's magna cape, all gold and purple, is worth a royal mantle ... "

And mr. Plínio ends, always crying!

(What a beautiful and candid soul!) - "And yet, Christ, always kind, wore only a coarse burel tunic, and wore only raw leather espadrilles!"

And mr. Pliny weeping the old days ... and of course, he, so Catholic and apostolic (non-Roman) wearing, like Jesus Christ, "the coarse burel tunic and the raw leather espadrilles".

You haven't seen Mr. Plínio Motta, in his deep humility ... while the Pope wears gold and purple?

Congratulations, dear sir. Pliny. Mr. he is the reformer of universal relaxation. I invite you to pay a visit to my parish in Manhumirim, which needs such an example !.

But, don't forget "the coarse burel tunic, and the raw leather espadrilles".

I am able to have a reproduction done for the Pope! ...

V - The Pope's riches.

The incomparable academic, not satisfied with censoring the Pope's dress, which he never

saw, now throws stones at the windows of the Vatican, in the Roman Curia, at the gestational headquarters, in the clerkship, protonotaries, lawyers, etc.

O terrible Pliny! There is no windowpane, no house to resist so many stones! Imagine what state the Vatican and Roman Curia are in!

What I admire is that Duce Mussolini did not launch a protest against such vandalism by Mr. Plínio Motta, or has not filed a complaint at the Brazilian Consulate in Rome. Terrible Pliny! you are truly an enfant terrible!

Mr. Pliny cannot bear neither wealth, nor luxury, nor gold, nor purple.

Why this? Was he a Bolshevik?

- It can not be. Mr. Pliny is Catholic, apostolic, although anti-Roman.

I only ask if the enfant terrible knows Rome? the pope? the Vatican? the Roman Curia? If you have seen the gestational seat and the falsehood?

If you have not seen any of this, it is better to remain silent, dear academic, as we must not affirm without proving, or at least have reliable witnesses, whose words deserve faith.

VI - What is the Church

But let us be frank and examine the formidable objection closely.

The Church is a divine-human society, that is, founded by God, but entrusted to men. In this last sense, the Church is a natural society, as by its foundation, end and means, it is a supernatural society. In its development, in the exercise of its teaching, the Church must therefore behave as a natural society, insofar as the institutions and teachings of its divine founder allow it.

Therefore, despite the divine promise to never perish, the Church is subject, as a human society, to the point of view of prosperity, to highs, to lows, to fluctuations, knowing days of triumph and days of sadness, like all human things . It is a very important reflection to judge the case well.

The Church necessarily resembles any civil society, well run and managed. It has its hierarchy, in which each is treated according to its quality.

On the other hand, the Church, being universal, containing in its bosom millions and millions of members of all social conditions, the Catholic hierarchy receives, of this fact, a capital importance, and the primacy of interests, which it safeguards, must be worth it. the primacy of honor and splendor.

Thus the term of this hierarchy, the Pope, must appear surrounded by the halo of majesty and incomparable moral power. This aureole must manifest itself in the pomp that accompanies the official apparition of the Holy Father, because it must be so in human things, and at this point the divine Church of Christ is human, because it is made for men.

This is not disputed, and any man of common sense, even if he is not an academic, like Mr. Plínio, understand that.

The president of the Brazilian Republic is a man like any other, however, having the supreme authority of the nation, all Brazilian citizens demand that their president have his palace, his entourage, his official honors ... have education and even apparatus when it appears in public.

This is natural!

And if the President of the Republic walked the streets in espadrilles or clogs, in shirt sleeves, if he rode any old horse, played and drank in the taverns ... everyone - including Mr. Plínio Motta - fados would shout: "it is a shame, it is a baseness! And that Brazil should be more respected and have a leader who respects its dignity and its social role!"

However, the President of the Republic is only the head of 40 million inhabitants.

And how is it then, O illustrious scholar, that the Pope - who is the spiritual head of the world - who has under his authority emperors, kings, presidents of republics, marshals, doctors and academics, geniuses and scholars, artists and simple men, rich and poor, the Pope, I mean, who has millions and millions of subjects in this world, wouldn't he be obliged to present himself with dignity, majesty and splendor?

Why, then, O Pliny?

Why is it that, among us, a President of the Republic is surrounded by honors and a Pope surrounded by barbarities?

Or do you want Mr. Pliny that the world's first official - the Pope - should only be accompanied by a group of beggars, Indians, Africans, Chinese, Zulu and other barbarians and semi-barbarians?

And this is the idea that Mr. of social life, civilization and authority?

And why did Mr. Pliny demands it from others and doesn't do it?

Criticizing is no example; censoring is not being an artist; cursing others is not elevating yourself; saying nonsense is not having common sense!

VII - The Pope of Mr. Plínio Motta

Under the pretext that Jesus Christ was born in a stable, are we all obliged to be born in a stable?

Jesus Christ was a carpenter during his youth, to give us the example of work; will we all be forced to learn the craft of carpentry?

In this case, we must also preach the Gospel, let ourselves be flogged, crown ourselves with thorns and die on a cross!

Start, sir. Pliny, yes? Let yourself be nailed to a cross, die on a Friday ... and be resurrected the following Sunday, yes ?.

If Mr. Pliny knew the answer that Napoleon gave to a flatterer, who proposed to found a new religion, he would certainly give the same answer. To establish a new religion, it is necessary to allow oneself to be killed on a Friday and to be resurrected the following Sunday.

I don't want the first thing, said Napoleon, and the second I can't! Try it, sir. Pliny, because VS is so Catholic and apostolic! ...

But let us continue the argument.

Jesus was born in a stable, lived in a poor hut, chose his apostles from among the fishermen, ignorant and rude people, to be sure; then, it will be necessary that the Pope, legitimate

successor of St. Peter and representative of Christ on earth, it will be necessary, I mean, that the Pope was born in a stable, lives in a straw hut, chooses bishops and priests among the poor without instruction and education, despise the humanities, progress, inventions, walk, sandaled shoes, of coarse burel, eat cassava and beans with your fingers, drink water from the pot in an Amazonian gourd and sleep on the floor? ...

This is what mr. would you like?

VIII - The Pope of Catholics

We Catholics and Romans want something else! We want a Pope who is at least from the Academy of Letters, like Mr. Pliny, but do not embarrass this class for the foolishness you write.

The Pope, in the government of Christendom, the bishops, in the government of their dioceses, must make the world understand that the Church is made for men, and, as such, that she loves and animates everything that favors the progress of the human spirit; that she is the enlightened protector of civilization; that she is the incomparable teacher of intelligences, stimulating everything that ennobles and elevates our soul.

The Church is not a barbarian society, thinking that everything is despicable, apart from the Bible, like Protestants. Our faculties, like the noble passions that are the living spring of human nature, receive an impulse from the Church that allows them to produce the maximum income.

It is, therefore, necessary for the Church to become great, in the person of its highest representative.

In this regard, there is no comparison to be drawn between Jesus Christ, who is God, and his representative, who is man.

God can bend down: he is always God, immense and infinite. - Man cannot lower his dignity; it must rise by virtue and by the social place it occupies. The founder of the Catholic Church had in his hands the power to work miracles, to raise the dead, to impose his will on the elements of nature, so that, in lowering himself in his humanity, the divinity continued to shine as before. These gifts, God did not permanently leave them to his Church, so that, being only a man, the Pope must enhance his dignity before men, by the means that men themselves use.

IX - The majesty of the Pope

The Pope surrounds himself with majesty and honor.

And so it must be. It is necessary, it is logical that it does so.

The Catholic people respect the priest, who is the minister of God ... and bow to him to receive the blessing or kiss his hand.

The people feel and vibrate when they see the priest. But when the priest of priests, the bishop of bishops, the representative of God on earth, the Holy Father, as we say, appears, should he not be received with respect, with honors deserved for being the representative of God?

Then, only the pontiffs of evil, as are Masonic grand masters, heads of sects, etc., would have the right to impress the people by the magnificence of which they are clothed? And wouldn't

the great pontiff of good, truth and virtue have the right to show the greatness of religion, the greatness of God and the greatness of the virtue he represents?

But why that?

So vice and rot deserve a throne, a thirst, and the pontiff of the Catholic world should hide under the pretext that Christ was hiding ?!

No, no! Governments impose themselves on their subjects by majesty: it is necessary that the Holy Father, in addition to the virtue that adorns him, be surrounded by all the honors that the God who represents on earth deserves.

The Vatican is rich, "says Mr. Plínio.

Yes, how rich is Catete where the head of Brazil resides.

The Vatican is rich: it is the Pope's palace, as successor to Saint Peter; it is not his property, as Catete is not the property of the President of the Republic.

It is the nation's palace.

The Vatican is the palace of Christianity.

The so-called millions of Popes are nothing but inventions of wickedness, just as the alleged corruption of the Pope's court is nothing but miserable and low calumny.

X - The history of the Papacy

Our academic, who only writes to slander, shows admirably what he concentrated his studies on.

He does not know the history of the Church. This is true, but he knows all the shamefulness, like all the calumnies and bastions attacked against this Church.

There are two ways to examine an institution:

- 1) see its greatness for the good produced;
- 2) examine your faults, seeing only your spots.

Every work has this double aspect. The Church of Jesus Christ is divine, in the person of its founder, in its doctrine, in its means of sanctification, in its teaching.

This same divine Church is at the same time human, because it is composed of men, although clothed with divine power.

Therefore, the Church can be considered in this double aspect. Our Pliny, who seems to have low instincts, as he has low criteria, does not want to see the divine side of the Church, he only wants to see the human side. Finding stains on this human side, he shouts, cries out, like a possessed person, "that such is not the true Church of Christ, which is fallen, that the papacy is a horror, the priests are devious". Fortunately, the incomparable Plínio Motta, a Catholic of the gem, stands above all and everyone, having received the respect of religion from a pious mother, but now kicking religion and the good mother, throwing drool over everything that she taught him, and, therefore, throwing mud on the grave of his own mother, which he condemns, condemning what she had taught him.

"The history of the papacy, cries the new Archimedes, is too well known. The lust of many priests is still a reflection of the monstrosities of Alexander VI, etc ..." The following is

simply disgusting: "Horrible, concludes Plínio, but it's true! No one can dispute it, that the books are there, as a painful statement! "

It is admirable! ... And notice that mr. Plínio says he is from the Minas Gerais Academy of Letters ...

I know many academics, men of value. I know Minas well - the heart of Brazil.

I know little of the lyrics, but these are from Mr. Plínio are pagodic lyrics that dishonor Academia, Minas and lyrics.

Mr. Plínio would do well to study a little; like a child! A man does not make such arguments.

A book, dear Plínio, is not proof of anything, because there are good, bad, moral and immoral books, etc.

Today the world is full of Bolshevik, immoral, pandegas books ... What does this prove of our society?

Nothing! because, if there are scoundrels, there are also a lot of good people, and beside a blasphemous Pliny, in Minas there are many Catholics who respect their faith and the Church.

A book is only valid when it quotes and proves facts.

Now, I ask Plínio to quote me a proof would be of the bad life of the slandered Popes! ... One, mr. Pliny.

Baba is not an argument, sir. Pliny, it's dirt! ...

We want proof.

Priest and old missionary as I am, I have read and studied a lot, and I know the history of the Church and the Popes, from Saint Peter to the glorious Pius XI; I also know heretical slanderers, from Cerinto to Plínio Motta. I find, in the history of the former, sublime virtues and greatness of soul, as I encounter, in the latter, baseness and misery.

Mr. he copied his slanders from any Protestant or Mason, but he does not know the history of the Church, nor the life of the Popes he seeks to slander, and who slanders out of ignorance.

XI - History of the Popes

The general refutation of Pliny's infamies is not enough; I want to get into the details, because the Church is neither afraid of light nor of science; he only fears ignorance, addiction and bad faith, as seen in Plínio Motta's attacks.

The slanderer only mentions the name of two Popes: - they must be the worst ... certainly, to give more value to the slander argument; well, let's consult the history of these two, which are: Alexandre VI and João XI, who, in fact, were very attacked.

a) POPE ALEXANDRE VI

This Pope has been atrociously slandered, for the very simple reason that, being endowed with an iron will, he knew how to impose himself on all enemies of religion, and was greatly slandered, as only great fighters do.

Alexandre VI is the famous Rodrigo Borgia.

Before his rise to the pontifical throne, history conveys nothing of his life; however, we can

judge the antecedents by the consequences, and say that being Pope, and the history not citing any reprehensible fact about him, we can conclude that before he was also of a correct and honorable life.

What is certain is that Alexander VI demonstrated, in the defense of the Church, as in the defense of Italian freedom, a shrewd spirit and a tireless zeal.

In Florence, he repressed the indiscreet fires of the Dominican Savonarola; pacified Italy divided by the factions; faced the wrath of Charles VIII, king of Naples; he brought all the oppressors of the Holy See back, and with a firm hand he took all the interests of Christendom to heart.

It is understandable that a man of such temper, tough, brave and zealous, has provoked the wrath of the sectarians, the wickedness and the enemies of Rome.

Hence the low calumnies that struck against the illustrious pontiff.

The enemies, defeated and humiliated, could not fail to tarnish, at least, the reputation of the great Pope, and having been unable to defile his life, they had the nerve to accuse him of carnal monstrosities.

It can be seen immediately, by the pontiff's ardor, that his character was not at all effeminate, nor inclined to the lowliness of the flesh, but, for the slanderers, everything serves to achieve what they desire.

b) POPE JOHN XI

The second criminal Pope, say the enemies of Rome, (which our Pliny copies faithfully and servilely) is John XI, who fell in love with his own mother. It is the prose of mr. Pliny.

Let us examine the impartial history in this regard. John XI is older than Alexander VI; he reigned from 931 to 935. We have again few details of the life of this pontiff.

The time was one of general decay. There were intrigues without number of the nobles and the rich, to place one of his relatives on the throne of St. Peter, and thus to ensure the moral strength of the Popes in the world.

Marozzia, widow of Guido de Toscana, for a thousand intrigues, got to elect his son, John XI, who reigned only about 4 years, being stripped of his states by Brother Alberico himself, who took over the pontifical states.

As a result, John XI saw his spiritual functions reduced, and in the same conditions his first four successors lived.

Marozzia, mother of John XI, having been widowed, remarried to Hugo, king of Provence and Italy, and with this marriage retired from Rome, to follow her husband, King Hugo.

The story says nothing about the life of Pope John XI. We only know that the time was one of decadence, and that this state was penetrating the clergy, as it penetrated the entire scale of society.

Was he worthy or unworthy? We have nothing positive; we only know that his predecessors and successors were all men of valor, doctrine and holiness. Benedict IV was a saint; Anastácio III, João X, Leão VII, Estevão VII, left an immaculate memory.

John XI succeeded Stephen VII and has against him the fact that he was imposed by his own mother's ambition.

It is a stain, but a stain that stains the life of the mother and not that of the son, and which does not prove that he was unworthy.

His successors were: Leão VII, (936-939), and Estevão VIII (939-942), equally men of value and doctrine.

Now, as for the infamous accusation that this Pope became attached to his mother, it is immediately apparent that only Pliny's disgusting pen can reproduce such absurdity.

John XI's mother was married, widowed and remarried to King Hugo, moving away from Rome, shortly after this marriage, to follow her husband. It is nameless baseness that can only be propagated by an ungodly or a debaucher, for what son would have the baseness to accuse an already elderly and married mother of falling into such miseries? ...

XII - The Bad Popes and the Church

Instead of seeing only the human side.

of the papacy, mr. Pliny should have considered the institution and the superhuman glory that surrounds and accompanies this institution.

It is true that the poor academic does not write ... he is simply a plagiarist of the hatreds of the enemies of the Church ... but, anyway, dear Pliny, the mud is something that does not reproduce, it is something that is despised ... It is necessary to write serious and founded thing, or at least with a real appearance.

The enemies of religion point to unworthy Popes, and with this they seek to demean the papacy.

It is an injustice, because in every society it is necessary to distinguish society and the people who compose and direct it.

Such a distinction is imposed by common sense.

Brazil is a republican institution.

There were good, honest, progressive presidents of the Republic; there were also bad, perverse, backward, even real thieves from the public coffers.

can it be concluded from this fact that the Brazilian Republic sucks, is it perverse, is it retrograde?

No, because the defects are men and not the institution.

The medical profession is a dignified society, composed of dedicated, selfless and wise men, which does not prevent doctors without conscience, without capacity, true explorers, and even killers.

Can we conclude from this that the medical profession is a despicable institution?

It would be ridiculous to say so. Everyone understands that the medical profession is very distinct, and that the presence of unworthy members affects only the person and not the class. The Academia Mineira de Letras contains men of intellectual and moral value, writers, thinkers and sages, who honor science and the arts. And because there are fools, pretentious

ones, without composure and without preparation, (I don't know if Mr. Plínio is in this category) can it be concluded from this that the Academia Mineira de Letras is negligible?

Absolutely not! Our Plínio is a little personality. I should say that it is nothing, because it is just a common plagiarist of other people's nonsense, while the institution is one of respect and dignity.

But, how is it, my dear Pliny, that the distinction that every man of common sense makes between society and its components ceases to exist when it comes to human divine society - the Catholic Church?

The Church founded by Jesus Christ is divine, it is holy, it is sublime. This society is run by men, assisted by Espirita Santo, in the teaching of truth and morals; however, they are men like others, in terms of their functions, and as such they can make mistakes and even crimes; however, such errors affect only the person and not the authority that this person has.

Admitting, then, that in the Catholic Church there was, among the successors of Saint Peter, any Pope, whose life is not exempt from reprimand, what proves this?

It simply proves against him, against him alone, and not against the institution he represents.

Even admitting that all Popes were monsters, tyrants, lost, what would prove this?

I would prove, dear Pliny, that the Church is completely divine because, despite so bad and perverse representatives, she remains firm, one, holy, civilizing, always fought and never defeated; slandered on the outside and torn on the inside, and yet it does not disappear; it crosses the times, the centuries, the struggles, the hatreds, and it is always equally holy and sublime.

How the finger of God becomes visible in this!

So instead of slandering it, the man of common sense should fall to his knees and say: "Only God sustains such a work! This Church, so badly directed, continues to triumph over everything; it is divine!" This is the conclusion of common sense, even taking things from the worst side.

But God could not allow it to be so. The Church must be a beacon that illuminates the world, and that is why not only is she holy, but her chiefs, for the most part, are saints and men of extraordinary virtue.

Let us consider this point closely.

XIII - Glory of the Papacy

The papacy is the most sublime and most glorious institution in this world: - it is a divine institution.

Popes form the most brilliant and most glorious crown of all the authorities of this land: - it is a crown of saints. No institution has given the Church as many saints as the popes. God's finger is visible, it is palpable.

There are many holy bishops, priests, men and women religious, but the papacy is an almost uninterrupted succession of saints. It is too glorious, it is too divine for this truth to be hidden.

We will go through the history of the Church and then find 60 popes holy without interruption.

It is the most amazing thing possible.

From S. Pedro to S. Silvestre, that is, from the year 42, of the Christian era, until 538, there were 60 popes all extraordinary, venerated as saints, shining with virtues and miracles. What is the dynasty of emperors and kings that can present such a genealogy? It doesn't exist, and it never will.

It proves that the papacy is divine work; and that popes are chosen by the Holy Spirit, forming a genealogy of truly extraordinary men. And that's not all. After S. Silvestre, virtue and holiness did not diminish in the Popes. There are some among them who are not canonized, to be sure, but, with rare exceptions, the same traditions continue.

After S. Silvestre, an immense list of saints shone with extraordinary splendor: S. Gregorio Magno (604), S. Deodato I (618), S. Martinho I (654), S. Vitaliano (672), Sto. Agatão (682), S. Leão II (684), S. Sergio I (701), S. Gregorio II (731), S. Gregorio III (741), S. Paulo (768), S. Leão III (816), S. Pascal I (824), S. Leão IV (855), S. Leão IX (1055), S. Celestino (1294), S. Bento XI (1305), S. Pio V, (1572), etc ... until reaching the Popes of the modern age, known to the public, for their extraordinary virtues: Pius IX (1878), Leo XIII (1903), Pius X, the admirable saint (1913), Benedict XV (1922), Pius XI, currently reigning, a luminous star of first value, both for science, as for prudence and virtue.

This is what the papacy is, and what the Popes are.

Because there is one or the other in this glorious legion, more slandered than guilty, whose life would not have had the nobility of his lineage, would that be a reason to attack the Church?

Oh! shut up, please, mr. Pliny! Mr. or you are a blind, a wicked, an obsessed or an ignorant! There is no other way out. Come on, poor Pliny, quote us the grand masters of your Freemasonry, let us analyze their lives, to see what they are and what they are worth alongside this glorious legion of holy Roman pontiffs!

Comparison is impossible, because the Catholic Church is divine, while Freemasonry is diabolical, as daring is diabolical, the hatred of the slanderers of Christ's work.

XIV - Conclusion

It is time to conclude.

Why argue with a blind man who doesn't want to see or deaf who doesn't want to hear?

But, patience! It is not because of the value of Mr's miserable objections. Pliny I make this refutation; it is for the love of truth and passionate love for the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, as to strengthen the faith and love in the soul of sincere Catholics, eager to see the triumph of truth and the ruin of error.

Mr. Pliny thought that no priest would have the courage to refute his foolishness; in fact, many priests prefer to despise this fetid sludge of wickedness; but, as it is one of the special roles of the Catholic press to crush the snake's head, here it goes, mr. Pliny, the death blow to his childish, lying and infamous assertions.

Above the collection of nonsense by mr. Pliny, I want the throne of the holy elder, successor of St. Peter, to stand, sublime and shining, - the eternal Pope of an eternal Church - because it

is this throne above all that aimed at the slander and hatred of Mr. Plínio Motta, tied today to the pillory of infamy.

From St. Peter to the glorious Pontiff Pius XI there was an uninterrupted succession of 262 popes in the Church.

Among these 262 popes, there are 86 saints; 166 have been men of exceptional virtue, to whom one can apply what Henry IV said of Charlemagne: "If I had no other reason to become a Catholic, I would have liked to do so, to be the son of such a father" The remaining 10 have been incriminated - note that it is 10 out of 262 - however, a judicious criticism authorizes us to fully justify 6 among them.

Two were not popes, but antipopes; two are only accused with a certain appearance, and not yet with full pleas. Here is the complete truth, the glorious and honorable truth, which demonstrates the sanctity of the popes, letting us see, however, that despite the sublimity of which they are clothed, they remain fragile men, but sustained by a divine force to never betray the truth that they are the divine depositaries.

Here is the papacy, here are the Popes, against whom infamy, personified by the enemies of our holy religion, hurls the stones of their hatred.

It's no use!

The Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church is, as it has always been and always will be, the divine Church, the column et firmamentum veritatis, as the apostle says (Tm 3,15), the beacon of faith, the eternal rock, against which nothing can the gates of hell (Mt16,18), nor the stones of all the slanderers of the whole world.

Honor, therefore, the divine and unique Church of Jesus Christ, his glorious pontiff, his incomparable bishops, and the heroic legion of his more than half a million priests.

Continue, O priests, your luminous path, despising the drool of wickedness, the stones of atheists, the calumnies of the miserable, the hate of addicts. Continue, for you are an elected race, a holy race. - Et vos eritis milu in regnum sacerdotale, et gens sancta (Ex19,6).

Continue to bring the truth to all nations, the truth of faith, life and love.

The truth is eternal; wickedness has only a few days to live. Pray for your slanderers and persecutors, but keep the treasure that the divine master has entrusted to you, for virtue and for the answers to the audacious makers of slanders and infamies, who call themselves "Adi helpers", but who are nothing more than imitators of Satan.

SIXTH CONTROVERSY

The development of dogmas

CATHOLICISM, SPIRITISM AND PROTESTANTISM

I received the following consultation, brief in its form, but extensive due to the questions it presents.

Giving you a short and clear answer could be enough for scholars, familiar with the metaphysical sciences; however, such an answer would be almost incomprehensible to those

who, although serious science practitioners, know little about the history of the Church and the development of its doctrines.

For this reason, as usual, I take the difficulties, from the front and from the bottom, trying to illuminate the interesting and little-known issues of our holy religion.

I - The consultation

Rev. Father Júlio Maria.

I am a frequent reader of your incomparable writings, because I am passionate about the human or divine sciences.

V. Revma. there he has dealt with matters, with the hand of a master, and with admirable clarity, which dispels all errors and brings the light of truth to the most hidden folds of the subject.

The difficulty I propose to you. is as follows:

In my Catholic readings I have found, many times, the following two theses, which I think are correct, but which I do not know how to combine: 1 - Catholic doctrine, being revealed by God, is immutable.

2 - Dogmas develop over the centuries, until they reach full solidification.

How to combine this fundamental immutability with the mutability that all development supposes?

What grows, increases.

What increases, acquires new proportions.

What takes on new proportions changes.

What changes is not immutable.

And yet, I believe in the immutability of Catholic dogmas, as I believe in their growth.

I believe in these two Catholic theses, but I want an explanation to see how they harmonize. I am sure that one of your irrefutable answers will solve the case, and will give light and conviction to me and others.

I thank you in advance for your finesse.

Reader and sincere admirer.

MV

II - Answer and answers

The difficulty is not as great as the worthy consultant assumes. Two Catholic theses can soon solve the case, fixing the meaning of the words.

To arrive at a combination, it is absolutely necessary that the contenders agree on the meaning of the expressions to be used.

In the case that concerns us, the errors taught by Protestants, rationalists, modernists stem, in large part, from the lack of understanding of the terms used.

This is what Catholic theology teaches in this regard: The divine revelation of dogmas has been complete since apostolic times, so that there can be no more new public revelations.

The proof is the following, indicated by the apostle: The change of movable things is finished so that those that are immobile remain. Therefore, receiving us, an immutable kingdom, we have the grace, by which, pleasing God, we serve him with fear and reverence (Heb 12,27,28).

Despite this immutability, there is, however, a real development in dogmas, in the sense that the revealed doctrine is more clear and completely understood by men.

Dogma, as revealed truth, is immutable; however, through study and discussion, men gradually penetrate these dogmas, and gradually understand certain aspects of these dogmas, which were initially hidden from them.

For example: Astronomy does not change; one can say that it is immutable, because it belongs to the organization of the world.

Science does not change, but the knowledge of this science changes continuously, through the studies of astronomers. The ancients knew only the sun, the moon and some groups of stars, which rose to 4,146. They invented the telescope, and today, just in a corner, in the constellation of Gemini, where, with the naked eye, only six stars can be seen, the telescope discovers 3,000 accumulated there. What, then, will be of the immensity of the firmament? Arago, Lalande and others recognize a total number of nearly 75 million stars visible on Via Lactea, which looks just like a flake of cotton, in the vastness of the sky.

Does this mean that the firmament has changed in recent times? No, absolutely not!

Nothing has been changed from the stars; what changed, what developed, was the vision of men through the telescope.

The stars existed, but they were invisible to the naked eye. The study was developed, and, due to the invention of the telescope, it came to penetrate beyond the horizon of habitual vision. So it is with Catholic dogmas.

Such dogmas are immutable; but we are changeable. What we didn't understand yesterday, we can understand today or tomorrow.

Dogmas, as being divine, are of infinite height and depth. The first look sees only the surface; a second penetrates further and discovers new treasures; a third, a fourth look will penetrate even deeper, revealing, each time, new horizons.

Dogma is objectively immutable, but it changes subjectively, according to the degree of intelligence and penetration of the person who studies it.

In the beginning, the great mysteries of Trinity, Incarnation and Redemption were only partially understood; today, through study, we penetrate further, and we can, not understand them, but fix the possibility, the *raison d'être*, the analogies of the mystery. Nothing has been changed in dogma, but our intelligence has developed and, due to its development, brought in full light what in the beginning was mist and uncertainty. This is what is meant by the development of dogmas.

It is not dogma that develops, it is the knowledge of this dogma.

It is a subjective development.

Such a development, taking place progressively, has a true history, like everything that develops. This story is what is usually called: History of dogmas.

III - Dogmas and Spiritists

What we must see here is the systematic refutation of Spiritist and Protestant assertions, accusing the Church; the first accuse it of not accepting new dogmas, the second accuse it of proclaiming new dogmas, and thus depart from the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Such an accusation is born out of ignorance of what dogma is, and what the history of dogmas is.

Let us try to clarify this point.

The foregoing shows what is called the increase or development of dogmas. As always, the truth is in the middle, between two extremes: some sin by excess, others sin by defect.

It can be said that, in general, Spiritists sin by excess, and Protestants by default.

The former admit a new revelation, new dogmas, a new moral, which they call the third revelation. For them, the first revelation was made to Moses; the second, through Jesus Christ; the third is made by mediums (nephropaths, unbalanced, if not crazy).

For spiritists, there is revelation in all corners and in all classes. It does not matter who speaks, as long as he makes trembles, falls into a trance, makes faces, and gives his oracles in the night darkness: the talker or (as it is almost always), the talker, is a prophet, a seer, who serves as a channel, or rather, a transmitting tube to the spirits of the other and this world, to communicate news to humanity, old women of 10 centuries, or old age, renewed at the present time.

Man, woman, child, and even goats serve as mediums and instruments for the new revelation.

It is understood that this is nothing more than a pagodeira and that a serious man can only have compassion and contempt for such revelation.

I refuted all this in my book "The secrets of spiritism"; there is no point in lingering over this ridiculous excess of revelations.

Opposite the Spiritists are the Protestants. Spiritists and Protestants want each other like a dog and a cat, before a fragrant roast.

Tooth in one, and tooth in the other, take the piece.

IV - Dogmas and Protestants

The Protestant is more sensible - let's say better - less senseless than the Spiritist.

He does not accept spiritist revelations.

It does very well; but a difficulty: Protestantism, being the denial of Catholic doctrine, since the Catholic Church affirms something, the Protestant friend denies it; and the Church denying it, he says.

In the case of dogma, the Church is firm: it does not accept new revelations or dogmas; for her, the last revelation was closed and completed by the death of the last apostle, who is Saint John the Evangelist.

The Church is finished with the revelation and the evidence it adds is:

1) The declaration of Our Lord: I have told you everything I heard from my Father (Jn 15,15).

2) The promise made to the apostles: After the Spirit of truth has come, he will teach you all the truth (Jn 16:13).

It can and must be inferred that the apostles received the complete deposit of revelation. The Church does not, therefore, admit new dogmas, new public revelations, but it concedes that the revealed dogmas are subject to being better known, like the firmament, being better known, although it does not change, it allows to glimpse its immense beauties.

Objectively, that is, considered in themselves, dogmas are immutable; but considered in the people who study them, they are susceptible to increase, in the sense that, being better known, they appear brighter, clearer and more accessible.

Such an assertion is certain, it is indisputable. What will the Protestant do? He doesn't want to be a spiritist, but even less does he want to be a Catholic; it then seeks a third position, and decrees that dogma is not only immutable, but incapable of subjective increase; as it is, as it is, because, concludes the good Protestant: - "The Bible is the word of God. - The word of God is always clear. What is clear is understandable to all. - What is understandable to everyone, is understood by all. Dogmas, being in the Bible, are therefore understood by all equally".

And ready! For the Protestant everything is bright. Even the darkness of the night; everything is biblical: even hatred and slander; everything is holy: even Luther and Catherine. The only hateful things in this world are the Catholic Church and the Pope; and on the other: the Virgin Mary and the saints!

This, indeed, is horrendous idolatry!

The spirit sins by excess; the Protestant sins by default.

For the former, everything is revelation; for the second, there is neither new revelation nor new knowledge of revealed dogmas.

Protestants claim that everything is in the Bible clearly and positively exposed, and deny the Church the right to authentically explain dogmas, failing to pass all the definitions of corruptions, falsehoods, news and fraud.

According to this principle, they accuse the Catholic Church of inventing new dogmas, as for example: the dogmas of immaculate and Immaculate Conception, not wanting to understand that such dogmas have always existed, but, having been more studied, they appear today in all their brightness. In view of this, in view of the positive tradition, the Church defined and proclaimed the dogma of Infallibility and that of the Immaculate Conception, as it will shortly proclaim - it is the hope of the Catholic world - that of the Assumption of Mary SS. to heaven, in body and soul; and that of its universal mediation in the distribution of divine graces.

Such dogmas have not been invented lately, but they are contained in the Bible, not being, at first, quite well understood, but letting appear, little by little, the sublime depths of divine words.

V - Example of infallibility

In order to fully understand the theological side of the issue, it is advisable to make a brief presentation of this doctrine.

God can reveal dogmas in different ways, that is, formally, when he manifests dogma, directly and immediately, in his own concept, or virtually, when God reveals dogma using other dogmas (immediately and indirectly) and that such dogma must be deduced from another formally revealed truth.

Such a formally revealed truth can be either explicitly or implicitly revealed, as it has been revealed by God in its own terms or in equivalent terms.

An example will elucidate these rules: The pope, teaching as such, with regard to faith and morals, is infallible.

It is a dogma of faith: Note that the Pope is not said to be impeccable, but infallible.

Sin is committed by the person; doctrine is taught by authority. It is necessary to distinguish the person from the authority with which that person is vested.

It is not as a man that the pope is infallible; he is the supreme head of the Church.

and the pope is infallible, by the divine institution.

Christ said to Peter, and only to Peter: I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her (Mt16,1).

And yet he said, again, only to Peter: Simon, Simon, I prayed for you, that your faith may not fail, and you, once converted, confirm your brothers (Lk 22,32).

And yet, always, only to Peter: Simon, son of John ... feed my lambs, feed my sheep (Jn 21,17).

Three passages that express the full power that Jesus gave Peter: The power to instruct, to govern and to sanctify.

The first step makes Peter the foundation of the Church; the second gives you infallibility; the third makes him the head of the subordinate chiefs and the faithful of Christ's flock.

All of this is simple, of course, it is positive, it is formal. Do not fail, do not faint, do not miss: the word expresses all this: *ut non deficiat fides yours* (Lc22,32), is to be infallible.

Here, then, is the infallibility of Peter and his successors proclaimed by Jesus Christ formally, but implicitly.

Our Lord did not use the word infallibility, but did use the indefectible word: *Non deficiat*, which is an equivalent term.

If he had said *infallibilis*, such dogma would have been revealed formally and explicitly; having used an equivalent term; such disclosure is formal and implicit.

Now, all the truths revealed formally, whether explicitly or implicitly, are dogmas of divine faith, because there can be no doubt that, by using an equivalent term, the Savior intended to express the truth of faith, or dogma, meaning by expression.

As for the truths revealed virtually, also called theological conclusions, the Thomist school does not admit them as objects of faith, or dogma of divine faith, but of ecclesiastical faith.

For a truth to be a theological conclusion, or a truth that is virtually revealed, it is necessary that this conclusion be logically drawn from two premises, of which the first must be formally revealed, and the second naturally known.

So is the dogma of infallibility, which can serve as an example, to show how dogmas grow and develop, although they are immutable; growth or development is purely subjective, that is, in the knowledge that we acquire from the revealed truth.

VI - Bible and Church

Such is, moreover, the clear expression of Sacred Scripture. These two truths exposed here, namely: the immutability of truths and their increase are formally indicated in the Bible.

São Paulo, comparing the New Testament with the old, writes: If the first covenant had been immutable, one would not have sought to reach for a second ... Calling it new, he considered the first old-fashioned (Hb8,7,13).

The first was figurative and moral, the second is immobile. Moving things are changed to establish buildings ... we receive divine grace, continues the apostle (Heb 12,27,28).

The deposit of faith, being immutable, cannot therefore be increased; It's complete. That is why the Savior sent his apostles to teach them to keep all things that he sent (Mt 28,20).

It is for this reason that São Paulo recommends to Timóteo that he keep the deposit (of faith), avoiding profane novelties, words, and the contradictions of a science of false name (1Tm 6,20).

We can deduce from these words that the heads of the Church, successors of the apostles, must teach the things they have learned from Jesus Christ, who must keep them as a sacred deposit, to which nothing is allowed to add and nothing to take.

The order to gather nothing, nor to remove it from the sacred deposit, is so strict that São Paulo does not hesitate to cast the curse on the one who would have the audacity to do so, be it even an angel.

Even if we ourselves, he says, or an angel from heaven, announce to you a Gospel different from the one we have announced to you, be anathema (IG1,8).

Another proof that nothing new can be introduced into the teaching of the faith.

Such has always been the practice in force in the Church - although Protestants, out of ignorance, teach the opposite.

Since it is a matter of defining a dogma, (not creating it) the Church looks in the Bible or in the Apostolic Tradition to see whether such dogma is formally included there, as can be seen in the acts of the councils.

The Vatican Council gives this fundamental rule: "Not even the successors of Peter were promised the Holy Spirit, so that, under his revelation, they would patent new doctrine, but so that with his assistance they would keep holy and faithfully expose the revelation announced by the apostles, or the deposit of faith.

VII - How dogmas grow

Despite this immutability, dogmas develop, grow, and have a real history of growth.

I have already explained in what sense this growth is taking; all that remains is to indicate the biblical basis for this growth. *Secundum quid*, as theologians say, and not *simpliciter*.

Dogmas can develop in three ways:

- a) By explicit proposition of the truths that were implicitly taught before.
- b) For the clear explanation of truths obscurely contained in the deposit of faith.
- c) By the continuous preaching of truths that had only been noticed in passing.

It should be noted, in fact, that all divine truths, by a permission of God, pass through three states:

1st. - The simple truth, often implicitly contained in any more universal principle.

2nd. - The challenge, objections and attacks of enemies of religion.

3rd. - The refined study or the controversy in refuting the attacks, which highlight all the faces of the contested truths.

The dogmas of faith, although revealed by God, are gradually presented to our spirit, as the human sciences are presented to us.

Our spirit cannot embrace, nor understand at a glance, deep truths and sciences. Only angels know intuitively, while men proceed by analysis, comparisons, analogies and syntheses.

Now, such operations are progressive, going from the known to the unknown, from light to dark, from the explicit to the implicit, to discover, through already known principles, others that are still unknown.

All of this is a development, a growth, a subjective "*secundum quid*" progress, in the person who dedicates himself to this study.

This is how Christ proceeded by teaching his apostles: "I have many things to say to you, He says, but you cannot understand them now; when, however, that Spirit of truth comes, He will teach you all truth" (J16,13).

The apostles received the whole truth, but progressively and as they were able to understand it.

The truth existed entirely, objectively, but it grew, subjectively, in the spirit of the apostles. This is so clear and logical, that Protestants themselves attribute to themselves what they deny to Catholics.

Why do they apply to Bible study?

Is it not for the purpose of knowing explicitly the things that are only obscurely contained in it?

And why do they deny this right to Catholics?

Will they have the exclusive privilege of the intelligence and assistance of the Holy Spirit?

They boast of the doctrine of justification, saying it was ignored by Catholics for many centuries, and because it was finally found by Luther in the Bible!

But, if they discover a secret in the Bible, ignored for so many years, how do they say the Bible is so clear that everyone can understand and interpret it?

Why do they deny Catholics the right and sagacity to discover in the Bible the infallibility of the Pope, the Immaculate Conception, the seven sacraments, the cult of the saints, the greatness and the power of Mary Most Holy ?.

Why that? Do we not have the same right as them? Do we not have the same intelligence?

All of this is contradictory ... it is illogical ... it is absurd.

Protestants admit to them the development of dogmas, and deny it to Catholics!

It can not be. There are no two rules or two measures; or accept such growth for all, or deny it for all, that is, Protestants and Catholics.

VIII - Conclusion

It is time to draw the conclusion. It has already been taken several times.

Catholic dogmas are immutable because they are truths revealed by God, contained both in Tradition and in the Bible. And the word of God does not change: *Verba autem mea non transibunt* (Mc13,31).

Human intelligence, being created, limited, cannot fully penetrate divine truths at a glance: Intuition is a privilege of angels; men must reason, compare and analyze, in order to arrive at a complete understanding of a truth, so that the first understanding is incomplete, partial; repetition increases, not the truth, but the understanding of this truth.

It is called the development of dogmas.

The Church received from Jesus Christ the mission to teach the faithful of all times the revealed truths, and to defend them against the attacks of the adversaries.

Now, this mission necessarily includes certain developments in the exposition of the revealed doctrine.

New dogmas are not, therefore, recently revealed truths, but simply recently proposed to our belief by the Church.

Among others, the Immaculate Conception and the pontifical infallibility, which were proclaimed one in 1854, the other in 1870, as articles of faith, were already contained, latent, in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition.

The Church, in defining these two dogmas, limited itself to removing them from the bosom of Revelation.

In short: when, in the course of the centuries, new dogmas come to inscribe themselves in the symbols of faith, the Church will always draw them from a double source: from the Bible and from Tradition, where they are already found, whether explicitly or implicitly.

Dogmas are, therefore, immutable, simpliciter, as theologians say, and grow *secundum quid*. In other words, they remain, as they are, objectively and grow subjectively, due to the expanded knowledge that is acquired from them.

This exhibition serves as a refutation to the two extreme errors that surround Catholic teaching: the Spiritists who admit new dogmas, and the Protestants who neither admit new proclamations of existing dogmas.

Both are wrong; while Catholic truth remains clear, positive, certain and eternal, as the rock on which the Church is founded is eternal and indestructible: the rock of St. Peter.

This is what my consultant wanted to know.

I have tried to satisfy you in the best way possible.

SEVENTH CONTROVERSY

Divine foreknowledge

AGAINST DETERMINISM AND FATALISM

I received the following letter from an illustrious Catholic lawyer, which I respond with satisfaction.

Such consultation raises doctrinal and philosophical questions of the first order, which will interest scholars of any creed, and whose solution will be a dim light for Catholics themselves.

Ilmo. and Rt. Father Julio Maria

I have known him for a long time as a fervent and tireless polemicist, always skilfully handling his quill and distilling his brilliant spirit and his beautiful teachings on paper.

Therefore, I turn to you at this moment, offering you a great opportunity to clarify the growing number of your readers, explaining to them, in the light of Catholicism, the delicate issue of "determinism", facing it from all points of view. and responding to the attacks that a "fatalist" would address to him, if, perhaps, he succeeded.

How can "free will" agree with "divine foreknowledge"?

Rest assured that it will benefit your readers greatly, with the satisfactory answer you will give.

I am a sincere friend and admirer.

1 - Answer.

The answer is practically simple; however, going into the details and the theoretical explanations, it presents great difficulties.

Human intelligence can search, understand and expose the human sciences, because what one man understands, another man can also understand.

When it comes to divine sciences, the human spirit can understand its *raison d'être*, its necessity and its practice; but the bottom, the top, escapes him, because divine truths surpass man's intellectual capacity.

In the mystery to be dealt with here, one of the most difficult and impenetrable of our holy religion, because it concerns the way of God himself, we encounter difficulties at every step;

and the moment we think we have solved the problem, it escapes us to plunge into the infinite.

But even so, let us try to shed a ray of light on the mystery of divine foreknowledge, and if the mystery is impenetrable, in itself, it will reveal to us, however, the sublime object that it reveals, which is the paternal providence of God.

Therefore, I take the question from the front and from the bottom, so as not to allow any obscure corner to remain in the part that can be understood.

Five major questions are grouped around the central theme - divine foreknowledge, which we can order as follows:

1^a - divine foreknowledge is a necessary, logical, indispensable attribute;

2^a - what it consists of;

3^a - man is entirely free;

4^a - there is no disagreement between God's prediction and man's freedom;

5^a - determinism and fatalism are errors, unworthy of God and man.

Catholic doctrine is clear and positive on the various points to be discussed. It teaches that God knows all things, present, past and future, infallibly, whether future things are necessary, free, or conditional, or possible.

On the other hand, the Church teaches that man is a rational being, that is, a being who governs and directs himself by reason and not by instinct.

In directing himself, man is therefore free.

Determinism and fatalism, which many people confuse, both deny man's freedom; but for this denial they rely on different things.

Determinism is based on inner needs, and fatalism is based on outer needs.

The first teach that God marks in advance the necessary destiny of each man, without there being any change.

The second attribute everything to the destiny of nature, which necessarily manifests itself, through the second causes that man cannot free himself. It is the axiom of Muslims: It was written.

Determinists do not understand divine foreknowledge, and make it an anticipated law. The second don't even admit divine foreknowledge, but they see nature's luck in everything.

Catholic truth rises against both, showing the divine foreknowledge and the freedom of man, thus showing the goodness of God and the greatness of man.

Before expounding these truths doctrinally, let us see for a moment the possibility and necessity of this foreknowledge in God, that is, the attribute of encompassing, in the same perspective, the present, the past and the future.

II - Need for foreknowledge

God's vision must be a perfect vision, because everything that belongs to God is perfect.

Now, a vision that is limited only to the present and the past without the future, is incomplete, it lacks one of the constituent parts of time.

Man is an incomplete, imperfect being; therefore, his vision is limited to the present and the past.

There is a law in nature itself that shows us the need for foreknowledge in God.

Following the scale of living beings, the following law is discovered: As the living being moves up the organic scale of beings, its vision expands.

It is a physiological fact, which no book mentions yet, but which will one day enter into the laws of the development of the living.

From the smallest we go up to the most perfect; and then, passing through man, through the angel, we come to God Himself, who is the perfect prototype of creation.

The lower animals - zoophytes, mollusks, worms, articulated, ringed, fish and reptiles - have only the perception of the present.

More developed animals, such as vertebrates, birds and mammals have, in addition to the present perception, a certain memory, by the sensitive memory, of the past. Among them there are certain categories, such as the dog, the horse, the donkey, etc., which keep almost a lifetime a clear memory of the past.

Coming to man, the rational being, we see that, in addition to the present and the past, he begins, by reasoning, to partially and conditionally penetrate the future.

The horizon keeps its secrets, but certain men already know how to unravel a part of these secrets, due to their perspicacity in reasoning.

Angels, pure spirits, in addition to the past and the present, intuitively perceive the necessary futures, escaping, however, the free future.

Above all creatures is the creator, the prototype of all creation, the perfect, integral, infinite Being, who possesses in the fullness and in an infinite degree everything he has shared with his creatures.

It is, therefore, logical that he possesses the fullness of the vision, both of the past and the present, as of the future, not simply by intuition, but by essence. he knows the future, more than man by reasoning; more than the angel by intuition; but, like God, he knows the future that is free and necessary, conditional and possible; and all this in an infinite way, that is, without limits.

For God, it is necessary that the past, the present and the future are confused in a single point, because God is simple, it is a pure act, that is, without composition and always in action.

Simplicity requires foreknowledge; the pure act demands that it be all at the same time.

This is how we come by the creatures to know the creator, and through the knowledge of these creatures, we come to know the divine foreknowledge, which is like the summary of all their divine knowledge.

Higher animals, by instinct, unite the past with the present.

Man, for reason, not only unites the past with the present, but foresees a certain conditional future.

The angel, by intuition, joins the past, the present and the necessary future.

God, by foreknowledge, brings together in a single simple point the past, the present and the future.

In God, foreknowledge is an essential attribute, by which he knows himself and knows all of his work.

Without this attribute, God would cease to be God, as he would be limited by time and space.

Now, time and space are the work of your hands. God cannot be limited or dominated by the works of his hands.

We say that God predicts everything: it is a term of analogy: God does not predict. He sees.

III - Extension of divine foreknowledge

Having well understood the need for such divine foreknowledge, we can now examine it closely in God, and then see how it combines and completes admirably for the freedom of man. Divine foreknowledge consists in the fact that God knows the future, foreseeing the future, as we say.

God knows everything, because everything is the work of his hands; a worker cannot carry out a work without knowing it; it's impossible.

To make a house, the mason must know the plan of the house; to make a table, the joiner must know the table; every work, before being carried out in matter, must be calculated in the spirit: *Nihil volitum, nisi praecognitum*, say the philosophers: One cannot want to, without knowing.

God knows everything without exception: his science is universal. Sacred Scripture says: The Lord knows all science ... There is no creature invisible in his sight, however, all things are naked and evident in his eyes (Heb 4,13).

And not only do you know the present, but you know what we call the future.

Behold, you, Lord, knew all things, the newest and the old ... you knew the past and judged the future. From a distance you understood all my thoughts ... and foresaw all my ways. (Ps138,3-5).

The future necessarily covers four points: the necessary, free, possible and conditionally free things. All these things are infallibly known to God.

São Paulo says, in fact, that he calls things that are not, such as things that are (Rm 4,17).

Here's what's right; but in what way, or how does God know all things?

This, as the mystery itself is, because existence, object, possibility, etc., are only difficulties for those who do not penetrate the bottom of Catholic doctrine, so that the difficulty is more apparent than real.

IV - How God knows the future

A being is perfect when he knows himself, and knows all the things in which his action extends.

Man is an imperfect being because he is limited, both by the inner knowledge of himself, and by the outer knowledge of his action.

God, being the perfect and infinite being, covers everything in an infinite way, that is, until the end of things.

Notice now that there is only one thing for God - it is the infinite; the rest is all the work of your hands. Time and space, which we compute and calculate, are works of God and exist only in this created world; however, time and space exist only for men; they do not exist for God, or rather, they exist outside God, as the work of his hands.

Therefore, God is not limited, neither by time nor by space: he is eternity, without time and without space.

Now, God being eternity, everything that is or will be is present to God from eternity, because eternity is a unique and immobile point that is called: the present.

God, creating time for the use of men, divided it into present, past and future, while He, eternal, was above and outside this succession of time, in his immovable eternity.

There is therefore no future for God; everything is present to you.

When we say: God knows the future, foresees, etc., we use a tropological figure, adapting to our way of seeing what we cannot express in our own terms.

God does not foresee: he sees all things as gifts, which have been or will be.

Eternity existing in its entirety, simultaneously, surrounds and gathers all time in a single present moment.

Men foresee (predicting is: seeing before) and predicting necessarily implies a future that does not yet exist. Predicting for man is an imperfection of limited nature.

God, the perfect being, does not foresee, but sees; God does not penetrate the future: he sees the future created, present in his eternity.

It is the heart of the matter.

Saint Thomas, in the commentary on Aristoteles, expresses this truth excellently (lib. Arb.1,14) although in a somewhat abstract way.

"God, he says, is entirely out of the order of time, as if constituted in the fortress of eternity, which is *tota simul*, to which the entire course of time is subject, according to one and simple intention. seen, sees all the things that are done following the passage of time, and each according to what is in itself, and not as if it had to happen, but thus sees *omnino aeternaliter* each of the things that are.

God knows perfectly and infallibly all the things that are done in time, and yet those that happen in time are not and are not done out of necessity, contingently".

V - Free will

Man is free because he is rational. - *Totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta*, says São Tomás (De voluntate).

A being without freedom, dominated by necessity, is not a rational being: it is an animal.

The animal does not reason: it follows its instinct; man reasons and judges what he should do, and this choice comes from freedom.

Without freedom, there would be no more will, and without will there would be no more but an animal.

There are two kinds of freedom: psychological freedom and moral freedom.

The first directs the acts of the faculties of the soul.

The second is a release from all need, which gives the act a moral value.

The human soul has three great faculties: it knows, it wants, it loves.

Intelligence seeks the truth; The will seeks good; The heart seeks love.

Truth, good and love, is all man: his end, way and means.

The soul being free, of moral freedom, each of its faculties is free.

Intelligence and the heart have only relative freedom, as long as they depend on the will; the will, however, has an absolute, inviolable, spontaneous, independent freedom.

Intelligence is not always free to think about one thing before another, to remember or forget; how the heart is not free to love or to despise what is lovely; but it cannot force the will, imposing a consent that it disapproves.

In other words, thoughts, memories, imaginations, passions, inclinations, desires, movements of the members may be involuntary, but consent cannot be.

All man's actions can be coerced (from outside), apart from the will. - It's psychological freedom.

Moral freedom is distinguished from psychological freedom.

As a moral faculty, this freedom is liberation, it is indifference.

It is liberation from all need.

A necessary act, although spontaneous, is not a moral act. If spontaneity were enough to constitute freedom, we would need to consider animals and even plants as free. · Moral freedom is contingent: it is a possibility to consent or not to consent, to want one thing or to want another; hence three kinds of freedoms that theologians call freedom from contradiction, opposition and specification.

The will must always tend to the good, it is its essence. Moving away from good, it falls into evil ... and evil, not being the object of the will, no longer belongs to its essence, it is the fall, it is a defect of freedom, it is its ruin: - it is slavery, slavery to sin, as S. Paulo says (Rm 7,23).

Man is not free to choose between good and evil; the good is the object of the will; sin is the object of the deviation of the will; it is not the use, but the abuse of the will.

Of course, although the will is free, each act of the will is not equally free, as there are things that influence the act, decreasing or increasing freedom, such as ignorance, lust, fear and strength.

VI - Foreknowledge and freedom

Here, then, are two proven truths, and - I hope - clearly understood: God sees everything in

the present moment, he currently knows the future of man, he knows everything that will happen to him in the future, and meanwhile, man keeps all his freedom of action.

It is the knot of difficulty; let us try to undo it and throw a ray of light on this mystery, if not to understand it, at least to see clearly the object that the mystery reveals to us, and which has its importance, both in the search for the truth and for the good .

This asset, above all, as the object of our will, must appear to us luminous, kind and attractive.

This good, the object of the mystery of divine foreknowledge, is the Providence of a loving father, who directs, sustains and consoles his son on the road to salvation.

How to combine these two certain and apparently contradictory truths?

They must combine, and they do combine, admirably, although we are not given to penetrate the mode of this combination.

Divine foreknowledge does not harm man's freedom; and man's freedom does not depend on divine foreknowledge, as the effect depends on the cause.

The rationale is as follows: Things do not happen in this or that way, because God foresaw them, but He foresaw them because He knew they were going to happen freely.

Man acts freely ... God is seeing this action free, as for the present, there is no difficulty ... but, for the future, we find the barrier of our ignorance. God knows what will happen a hundred years from now. We say it is prediction; and for us it is, indeed, but for him it is a current vision: the future is confused for him in the present.

He sees what happens, so that man's freedom is complete, as God's vision is complete, without one disturbing or destroying the other.

St. Augustine clarifies this dogma by the following comparison: The infallible memory we have of the past does not in any way affect the freedom of past acts; thus divine foreknowledge does not in any way impair the freedom of future Delib acts. arb. II lib., 3, c.4, n.11).

To understand this comparison well, it must be remembered that eternity encompasses all times; God sees the future before him, as we see the past and the present.

Another illustrative comparison: Let us represent a circle. The central point is God. Humanity is the circumference that goes from bottom to top over the circumference in a vertical plane. From the center God sees everything, those below and those above, those who descend and those who ascend; while those below see with their eyes only the part they travel, and by memory they see the part traveled.

For them, there is an unknown, a future; while for God, who forms the center, everything is visible, everything is present.

The comparison is material and incomplete, to be sure, but it allows us to form an idea of the simultaneity of the three parts of time: the present, the past and the future.

VII - Reconciliation between the two truths

We already understand that the simultaneity of divine foreknowledge and human freedom is

possible. Let's go ahead, and say that it is necessary; so that one is the proof of the other, that is: God foresees the act of man, and for this reason this act is free, because God foresaw it.

Each term is a true philosophy thesis. It is as if we said: of the existence of man, I conclude the existence of God. It would be right, because there is no effect without a cause; man is an effect: there must be a cause that is God.

On the opposite side, one can also reason and say: The existence of God concludes the existence of man, because there is no efficient cause without effect.

God is a pure act and an efficient cause of all that exists; he is, therefore, the creator of men, and man exists because God exists, and without God he could not exist.

The same is true of divine foreknowledge and human freedom.

God foresees (always in the tropic sense) the events as they will be, and for this reason they will be free, because God foresaw and wanted them to be free.

The free acts of man, which God knows in advance, unfailingly, but not necessarily; for God foresaw not only the act, but also the freedom of the act, so that his foreknowledge, instead of destroying man's freedom, is the cause of this freedom.

For example, I see someone lying on the floor: my sight does not force him to be fallen, but rather what is fallen forces me to see him.

This man did not fall because I see him; but I see it because it fell; so man does not act because God sees or foresees him, but God sees him because man acts.

And since what God foresees must happen infallibly, it follows that this foresight is the cause of man's freedom.

In short: God foresees events because He knows that they will happen freely, and events must happen freely, because God foresaw that it would be so.

Saint Augustine illustrates this doctrine with another example: Just as you, with your memory, do not compel past things to be done; so God, with his foreknowledge, does not oblige us to do the things that will happen.

VIII - Objections and responses

After these doctrinal considerations, we come to the objection proposed by the worthy consultant: determinism and fatalism.

These errors can be summed up in the following objection: God predicted from all eternity whether I should be saved or condemned. I can do whatever I want, I cannot change my destiny.

Such an objection is nothing more than sophistry.

The first part is certain; the second is completely wrong.

No, no, God did not foresee things this way!

He foresaw and decreed that you will be reproved if you live and die in sin; or that you will be saved if you live and die in his grace.

Reproof or salvation is the consequence of good or bad life and not the consequence of divine foreknowledge; so that anyone who wants to be reprobate; and whoever will be saved; depends on the will of each one. We are the cause of our eternal destiny; which does not prevent that, since this future destination is known to God in the present, he knows beforehand how we will use our freedom, whether for good or for evil.

We are free and God respects this freedom, to the point that he does not allow it to be violated.

With this freedom, we put the cause of our salvation, which is good; or the cause of our doom, which is sin.

Another sophistry is to confuse infallibility with necessity and fatality.

If God predicts that I will be saved, salvation will be accomplished infallibly: such a consequence is necessary, because divine foreknowledge cannot be subject to error; however, my salvation is not a necessary or fatal thing, because it will not be accomplished except through my own cooperation.

For example: when I see a boy running, it is clear that he cannot sit at this moment; the consequence is necessary and in the meantime the race remains an entirely voluntary and free act on his part.

So it is with God: he is seeing man running to perdition: it is manifest that he cannot be seated in salvation.

God sees it, or predicts it, as we say; however, such a race to perdition is an entirely voluntary act of the one who runs: he runs because he wants and God sees that he runs because he runs; but as it is in the future, we say allegorically that God foresees.

IX - Conclusion

Let us finish these considerations, somewhat abstract, at first sight, but which are illuminated by a divine light, when well understood, allowing the object he hides to appear through the veil of mystery: the sweet, the vigilant, the paternal providence of God, who follows us with her eyes and heart, like a mother following her child through the crowd.

The denial of these truths constitutes determinism and fatalism, which are simply ridiculous, depressing and contrary to common sense errors.

God foresaw whether I should be saved or condemned. Do what I want, it will be, says the wicked.

If the wife said to her husband: My friend, God predicted from all eternity whether you should have dinner today or not. Do what I want, what God has foreseen will happen. I'll go for a walk, and have your dinner arranged as you can.

If the son said to his father: Daddy, God predicted from all eternity whether or not I should miss school today. Whatever I do, I cannot change my destiny. So I'm going to play instead of reading or writing.

If I said so, I think that the person being questioned would have no great difficulty in answering, and even calling him to reason.

Well then; it is this same answer that must be given to anyone who makes such an objection.

God's foreknowledge does not take away our freedom and, although our weak reason cannot probe the bottom of this mystery, we can nevertheless understand it enough to be certain of its existence and its exercise.

Above all subtleties, we feel perfectly that we are free in our determinations - intelligence

tends to the truth, the will wants good, the heart wants love - the will is the dominating, inviolable faculty.

Man is not free to choose between good and evil, because good is the proper object of the will, while evil, sin, is a deviation from the will, but in good the will can choose, either by contradiction, as to love or not to love and hate; either by specification, like walking or reading.

At this moment, I feel that it is up to me to write this study or not to write, to prolong it or to shorten it; as afterwards, when reading this work, the reader will feel free to read or stop reading. We are both free.

Let us finish, trying to retain the great principle already stated, which solves all difficulties: God knows the future, as we know the present and the past.

Our view of the present, our remembrance of the past, does not change the nature of things. Thus the science of the future, in God, does not destroy or alter the contingency of facts.

Therefore, let us use our freedom well, before the sight of that God, who will give to each according to his works.

EIGHTEEN CONTROVERSY

Divine Providence

IN RELATION TO THE GOOD AND EVIL IN THIS WORLD

In the second elucidation, I dealt with divine foreknowledge, refuting errors: determinism and fatalism, at the request of several people who were studious and willing to know these great and sublime mysteries of our holy religion.

I have received several letters of congratulations on the exhibition, saying it is the most luminous they have ever encountered.

Other people write to me, asking me to go into more detail about the consequences of divine foreknowledge.

Such consequences can be reduced to two major problems, which are: Divine Providence and the predestination of men.

1 - The consultation

I received several queries that refer to each of these respective points.

An employee of Banco do Rio de Janeiro wrote to a friend, who transmitted the letter to me, from which I extracted this part: "I read Father Júlio Maria's article on determinism and I was completely convinced of the truths he said. Father Júlio revealed, through this article, a great culture, rare intelligence and a way of expressing himself that convinces anyone. I was satisfied with what I read. One thing, however, was left unanswered. I shouldn't be doubting the truths of the Church, but to accept them incontinently, but, since I have some doubt in certain points and I meet those who clarify it, I must not leave it out. "How can God, being infinitely good, allow man to suffer the eternal punishment from hell? You would say: if he is infinitely good, he is also infinitely just, otherwise he would not be God; and, to do justice, he must give heaven to the good and hell to the bad; but I say: if he sees that man, willingly, will

fall into sin and therefore suffer eternal punishment, he should not allow that man to be born or else he should give death to that man while he was a child and innocent " .

I take back what I said earlier, saying that he should not consent to birth, because it is known that God made man so that he participates in eternal happiness. But let him die, as I said, as a child, because that way he would avoid offending God later and, after death, suffer the punishment of hell. This way I would not stop being fair "

II - The answer

The consultant enters the realm of the most arduous problems of divine works, and raises many points of doctrine, which are generally poorly understood.

It is a reason to shed a ray of light on these admirable and almost terrible mysteries, both to publicize the beautiful and harmonious teachings of Catholic dogma, and to dispel the errors that misrepresent the truth.

They are mysteries, but it should be noted that if the how of the mystery eludes us, because it is above our intelligence, the object of the mystery, being a reality, the object can be studied, and our intelligence can come into contact with the harmonious and luminous truths that the mystery reveals to us.

This is the case with divine providence.

There are, in this truth, impenetrable secrets; there are also truths of great doctrinal scope that only scholars can scrutinize; and there are practical, comforting truths that are available to everyone.

Let us try to enter into the arcana of these truths, and show above and despite the vicissitudes of this world, the paternal providence of our Heavenly Father, who directs and governs everything.

III - What is providence

In order to fully understand the answers given to the queries made, it is necessary to have a clear idea of what divine providence is.

It can be said that providence in God is what prudence is in men.

Prudence, in fact, is the virtue that makes a man, having to reach an end, anticipates and disposes, in advance, all the means necessary to achieve it.

providence is an admirable word that comes from two other words that express its two great functions: *praevidere*, *providere*: to foresee and to provide.

God is the end of everything. As such, it indicates the end proper to all creatures, provides the means necessary to achieve this end. This is what is called God's providence.

In this measure, two things must be distinguished: the plan and the execution.

The plan is eternal; execution is temporary.

This is clear.

The plan of order, or the ordering of beings for their purpose, belongs to providence itself; while the execution belongs to the divine government.

Providence is eternal, because God predicts and provides, from all eternity, what must unfold in the course of time.

Government is exercised in time and exists only in time, since beings, which it must govern and move, only exist in time.

Providence is natural, when it directs beings in the order of nature; it is supernatural when it leads men on the path of salvation.

In this particular aspect of the supernatural order, providence is necessarily divided into two parts: It is general and special. The general providence foresees and provides all men with sufficient aid to save themselves.

Special providence assures the elect effective graces to infallibly achieve eternal glory.

It is this special provision that is called predestination.

IV - Evidence of providence

This dogma is denied by atheists, deists, materialists and fatalists.

I do not want to dwell here to thoroughly prove God's providence. It is a certain truth, it is a dogma of faith, proven by Sacred Scripture and common sense.

There is no other God but You who takes care of all things (Wis 12,13).

God has an end to end, strongly, and arranges all things smoothly (Wis 8,1).

Two birds are not sold for one real, and yet not a single one of them will fall on the earth without your Father's permission (Mt 10,29).

That is why I say to you that you are not asking in your soul about what you will eat or what you will wear ... because your Father knows that you need these things.

All the hairs on your head are numbered; do not be afraid, for you are worth more than many birds (Mt 6,25).

These texts, and many others, of Sacred Scripture clearly show us the ineffable divine providence, which extends to all created beings, to the least as well as to the greatest.

Indeed, simple reason convinces us of this truth.

God's providence must extend as far as his action; now, divine action extends in this world to all beings: to genders, species, individuals, substances, faculties and even the movement of these faculties.

Therefore, divine providence, eternally, should take care of all this.

There is, therefore, a providence, a heavenly Father, as the Gospel says, who foresaw everything, who provided for everything, who ordered everything, in an eternal plane.

And this plan is immutable and is carried out unflinchingly, because what God decides does not change.

Sto. Augustine says it very well: "God wants changes in his works, He constantly innovates everything, but his plans do not change: Mutat opera, non mutat consilia" Whoever does not reflect, thinks that such a conception of providence is like fatalism .

There is an abyss between the two.

Providence is an intelligent and good Father who foresees, prepares and arranges everything beforehand; fatalism is a blind destiny, without guts, that pushes everything, without respecting neither created freedom, nor causality, not even good and evil, virtue or vice.

V - Good and evil

After these notions of divine providence, let us now resolutely enter into the heart of the objections made by the worthy consultant.

As we have just seen, all that happens is the realization of a plan formed from eternity, in divine thought, whose execution presides over an infallible, immutable will, to which nothing escapes.

And yet, looking around us, we find evil in all forms.

Evil has penetrated all parts of good, into higher beings, as in the angel and man; as in the lower beings, in the animal, in the plant, in the mineral: everything is spoiled, loses its shape, becomes corrupted, disappears. As Virgílio said, it seems that even inanimate objects have tears.

Sunt lacrimae rerum!

But evil is found mainly in man.

Here are the querent's objections.

How does God let evil enter his work?

I showed above that nothing escapes, nor resists the divine will.

But then did He want this evil?

In this case, the responsibility goes back to Him first.

And how to say, in this case, that God is good and just?

Even supposing that God did not want this evil, how did He allow it then?

You must have foreseen it ... I mean, must this evil have entered your divine plan?

How is all this possible?

Can an intelligent worker allow a defect to add to his work?

This problem, as it turns out, is extensive, and I even go beyond my consultant's objections, to make the answer more luminous, and to show that there is no contradiction in all of this.

The subject has its obscurities ... but it also has bright horizons.

Let us penetrate these obscurities with a firm step, leaning on the infallible doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ.

VI - What is evil

Evil is the opposite of good.

In this respect, evil is not a being, but it is also not an absolute non-being.

In fact, if it were an absolute non-being, the consequence would be that everything that does not exist would be evil, which is absurd.

In this sense, man would be an evil because he does not have the agility of the deer, and the deer would be an evil, because he does not have the strength of the lion.

Evil is deprivation, nothing more.

Evil exists in things; your subject is the good.

Evil is, in the existence of a being, the deprivation of a perfection, of a quality that it should have.

Blindness, deafness, for example, are evils, because it is the deprivation of sight, or hearing.

Every being is good. Good is the subject of evil.

There are two kinds of evils in this world: physical and moral evil.

The first affects nature and is found, properly speaking, only in the irrational.

The second affects the will, and is found only in men.

The reason is that the irrational always tends towards a particular good, and with such a tendency, it can only be subject to a particular good.

On the contrary, man can know and seek the general, absolute good; hence it comes that evil, while affecting intelligence and will, takes on a particular character, which we call: moral evil.

This evil is twofold: it is a fault, or it is the penalty of a fault.

In the first case, it is sin; in the second, it is the penalty of sin.

Physical and moral evil is widespread in nature.

A body becomes corrupted, loses its shape: it is an evil.

Moral evil has a wider range than physical evil.

Sin and penalty are everywhere. Sin began in the heights of heaven, through the rebellion of the rebellious angels, continued in paradise, through the disobedience of our first parents, and goes through the centuries, staining everything with crimes and horrible works.

Sin carries the penalty everywhere.

The penalty of sin is all that torments: it is death with its retinue of diseases and ills.

The wages of sin is death, says the apostle. *Stipendia peccati mors* (Rm 6,23).

VII - The cause of evil

We now know what evil is and the penalty of evil; let us now look for its cause and what is God's part in the production of evil.

The first root of evil is the very nature of the created being, because the created being and the created good are essentially defectable. In fact, the created being and the created good, being neither the Being nor the Good (which is God) by themselves, must be deprived of a part of this being or this good.

Hence comes the evil.

Death is an evil; but where does death come from? It comes from the created being itself, which is mortal.

Sin is an evil; where does it come from first? it comes from the defectibility of the human will.

Here is a lightning bolt in the darkness that surrounds the horrors of evil.

Let us try to know how God allowed evil to enter this world.

It's very simple.

The first and fundamental reason is the very essence of things.

The moment God decided to make creatures, He had no choice: he had to make them necessarily defectable. For He alone is, and can be, indefectible; so he must necessarily introduce the possibility of evil into his work.

For evil to exist, good must exist. and it is good that is the cause of evil.

Good causes evil in two ways, says Sto. Thomas:

1 - While this good itself is essentially defective.

2 ° - While accidentally doing evil 1).

1) A bonum mode is bad! in quantum est defficiens; all the way per accidens (Sum. q. 1; From May, a1).

Any good that exists in this world is imperfect, in this sense that it could be even better. The only perfect Good is God.

Hence the word of Our Lord: A bad tree cannot produce good fruit (Mt 7,18).

In this way, evil is universal to good, as is the effect on its cause.

The fruit is not guilty of being bad; the cause is the tree, although this tree is an asset; but it is a defective good.

Good can still produce evil accidentally. For example, a fly lays its egg on a fruit, and corrupts it.

The egg, or the good (since a fly egg is not an evil in itself) accidentally produces this evil.

In man things are more or less the same. The human will is vitiated by itself, because it is defectable. Morality, or the goodness of a human act, comes from its conformity with the supreme rule that governs this act: divine law.

The law that must direct the human will is reason. If the will, in a particular act, deviates from the law, it is the will itself that is the cause of this deviation. In fact, being the free will, it has the power to act or not to act, to follow or to move away from it.

And so, even a good will, if willing, can do evil. Again, the first cause of evil is good itself.

VIII - Evil in the world

Let us now see how God allowed evil to enter this world.

As I said, God should allow evil to enter the world, but the first root of evil is the defectibility of beings.

I say that it should, because it is of the essence of things to be defectable, or else it should stop creating beings; there was no middle term.

God alone is the unfailing perfection. His works, however perfect they may be, cannot equal himself, and are necessarily inferior or defectable.

Creation, even imperfect, is an asset.

Because there could be certain evils in this good, God should not fail to create it: It would be sacrificing a greater good for the sake of a lesser good. It would be like saying to the sun: Stop your rays, because on the one hand they produce fertility, on the other hand they can produce droughts.

But God, by his providence, conducts all things, from evil as well as good, so that no evil happens, with no view to a greater good.

God does not want evil directly; He wants good; but it happens, at times, that evil is connected to this good, so that one cannot want good without accepting evil; in this case, God allows evil, without wanting it.

If evil exists in nature, it is because it is linked to a good, and it is produced only for good, and this good must be real or apparent and, in the estimation of the one who acts, greater than the evil that follows it.

Man can deceive himself in the pursuit of good, it is true, and for lack of judgment or consideration, he can pursue a good that is less than the evil that is connected with that good.

Man can make mistakes, but nature does not make mistakes; so that, generally speaking, it can be said that evil does not occur in the world, but for a higher good.

Such is God's dogmatic rule in the direction of this world.

it can and must allow evil, but to achieve a higher good.

And so it happens.

The evil we witness is not accidental; it is the divine providence that allows it, but that, by its divine foreknowledge, has everything, in order to bring out a greater good.

This good often escapes our view and perception, but it exists and will inevitably take place.

For physical evil it is clear and palpable.

The mineral, by its destruction (it is an evil) gives life to the vegetable, (it is a good); the death of the plant (evil) gives life to the animal (good).

The destruction of the animal (it is an evil) allows man to feed himself (it is a good).

The inferiors serve as food for the superiors; the weakest are eaten by the strongest ... An evil results in a greater good.

The same law governs men.

Death is an evil, but it is a necessary evil to give way to the living.

Nature exchanges old and worn beings for new and strong beings; and so it makes mortal creatures pass through time, assuring them of the perpetuity of the species.

All of this is admirable, it is divine !.

The inferiors serve as food for the superiors, and when the latter die, their remains fall into the lower kingdoms, which go back to what they had given.

The mineral feeds the plant, the plant feeds the animal, the animal feeds man; the body of man, after death, falls into the mineral kingdom, to restart the same circle.

You see that there is no evil there, but a germ of a greater good.

Once again: It is admirable ... it is divine!

IX - Moral evil

It is time to rise to the moral or immaterial order. It is the same divine providence, they are the same wonders that take place.

Moral evil is twofold. He understands the penalty or punishment of sin; and sin.

It is called the penalty of sin everything that afflicts men in this world: illness, suffering, death, hell.

The reason for these evils, the goods that communicate to us are multiple. And this must be noted, because goods are like the end of these evils.

First of all, they aim to avoid sin by the fear and fear they inspire.

Penalty is a dike opposite to crime; without it, sinners would no longer feel a brake.

Second, such evils are done to punish the sin committed. They are there to guarantee justice, and to make this justice shine on sinners.

In fact, just as justice shines in the reward given to the good, it also shines in the punishment inflicted on the bad.

Punishment therefore produces countless benefits.

And what about sin itself? ... the great moral evil? .. the only moral evil? The source of all other evils. What do you say about him?

Here we will still find the same paternal providence of God.

God, being able to stop him, why didn't he stop him? It is my querent's question.

What is the highest good, for which God has allowed such an immense evil to penetrate his work?

Here the man must bow his head and exclaim with the apostle: Oh! depth of God's riches, wisdom and science; how incomprehensible are his judgments, and his ways are inscrutable. Why, who knew the thought of the Lord? Or who was your advisor? (Rm11,33).

We cannot penetrate the mystery, but we can, however, lift a corner of the thick veil, which covers the divine designs.

Let's try it.

X - O happy guilt

In the corner of the Exultet, on Holy Saturday, the Church has a mysterious but divinely profound exclamation, of tenderness and loving audacity. She sings: O Adam's sin, truly necessary, for Christ erased him with his death!

O happy guilt, who has earned us such a great Redeemer!

In this sublime passage, through sin above, infinitely above sin, the radiant and merciful figure of the Redeemer appears.

Behind the creature's disobedience - which is moral evil - I perceive Christ's obedience - the great good.

I see the fall in paradise, the sufferings, the disorders, the struggles, the death: but, above all this, I see the stable of Bethlehem, I see Nazareth, Jerusalem, the lake of Genesaré, the temple, the Cenacle, the garden of Olive trees, the scourges, the crown of thorns, the Way of the Cross, Calvary, the glorious tomb, the Ascension, Pentecost, the triumph of the Church, the blood of martyrs, the purity of virgins, the heroism of love. And before this divine picture, I feel my knees tremble, and, prostrating myself, I want to repeat the cry of Exultet: O happy guilt!

O happy guilt that such a Redeemer deserved!

Evil is always evil, but evil eclipses before the good it has brought to humanity.

And this good, which is the Christ, is infinitely greater than the evil caused by sin. Evil cannot be done to bring about good; but God must respect man's freedom, and take away the good from the evil that man does.

XI - The figure of the Christ

God, creating man in his image and likeness, knew, by divine foreknowledge, what would happen to this man's race.

While forming this body, and animating it with its divine breath, the world unfolded before your eyes.

he saw everything ... everything ... earthly paradise and, in addition to paradise, the centuries accumulated with everything that ended with good and evil.

He saw the degradation of the work of his hands, he told under his forehead that he drew the rebellious intelligences that would outrage his name, so many proud looks that would rise up against his power; he saw on these discouraged lips the laughter of shameful pleasure; he heard the words of lies, passions, impiety.

And in this heart, where pure blood was going to circulate, he already felt all lusts boiling.

In all these organs, so nobly sculpted by his hands, he found not a single vein, which would not be open to murder, murder, all poisons, all revenge.

He saw this dominating head, which would rise to the sky, turn violently towards the earth, abdicate its royalty, and complain that it was not made similar to animals.

God saw all this, heard all this, knew all this, and did not break the statue before him, as an artist disgruntled with his work.

Why that?

Tertullian gives us the answer: Higher than the ingratitude of men, he says, God saw the merciful figure of the Redeemer of men.

Christus cogitabatur homo futurus!

It's a great word. It is the solution to the problem of evil.

Ask me: why did God let moral evil penetrate this world?

- Why?

- Because it was inevitable, being man a defectable being, and having the freedom to do or not to do, freedom that God must respect, under penalty of making man a simple machine.

- But, allowing the invasion of evil, divine providence has everything, so that this evil results in a greater good.

Not being able to avoid evil, he allows it, but takes good from evil.

God is very good, he only wants good.

Man is defectable and he is essentially; he should do good, but by not doing it, God uses evil to accomplish a greater good.

How beautiful, how harmonious, what a sublime disposition of divine providence.

It is impossible to imagine anything more tender, more merciful, more divine than the divine stratagems of the God of love.

The figure of Christ dominates everything, supersedes everything, reforms everything, elevates everything to God.

Evil descends, but the good resulting from this evil rises!

See the image of the crucified, glorified Christ!

XII - Conclusion

There is no need to answer each of the queries made. The answers are developed on the previous pages.

One last point was left unanswered, and that is why I want to end.

The querent speaks of hell, saying that God should not allow anyone to fall into it.

Hell is the punishment of evil. Evil does not come from God, only punishment comes from Him. God created punishment to keep men from evil. Now, whoever does not want punishment, do not commit evil - whoever does not want the effect, do not put the cause. It is logical.

It is not God who throws men into hell; they are the ones who rush there.

God warns us, shows us hell, as the tremendous punishment of sin, asks, pleads that men turn away from it; what could He do more?

What can He do if one says: "I see hell, I know it is terrible to fall into it, but I don't want to avoid it. I don't care if I end up in its flames !".

God can do nothing else; did everything. He warned, threatened, pleaded. The man does not want to listen. God must respect man's freedom, because he created him free, and he cannot portray this freedom.

This is what divine providence is in the government of this world, and how and why God allowed evil to enter his works.

There was no other way.

God is one, and He alone is unfailing.

The creature cannot be the creator, it must be below the creator, and as such it must be essentially defectable.

God made available to him the means not to fall; but man is free, and falls freely, not using the means not to fall.

The good, all the good comes from God.

Evil comes only from man.

God made man for happiness.

It is the man who falls into disgrace.

Perditio yours, Israel ... in me auxilium tuum (Os13,9).

Our loss comes from us. Our help is in God, said the prophet.

Let's take advantage of the lesson and the warning.

NINTH CONTROVERSY

Predestination of men

OR HARMONIES OF THE DIVINE PLAN

This is a subject that is too much ignored, although of paramount importance for the direction of our life.

The darkness that surrounds this tremendous mystery is the reason why the mystery of predestination is under-studied.

However, how many errors and misunderstandings there are in this regard.

Predestination, like divine providence, is like the consequences of another mystery already studied in the seventh polemic: divine foreknowledge.

Providence, set out in the previous chapter, has two phases, or two distinct aspects.

It is general, when it refers to the government of the world in general, and it is particular, when it concerns each man in particular.

It is this particular providence that is called predestination of men, and it is this mystery that I want to address here.

1 - The consultation

What compels me to address the difficult and astonishing subject is the consultation of an illustrious professor, who writes to me like this:

Rev. Padre julio Maria.

I read your incomparable study of divine foreknowledge with great interest and profit.

Its exhibition is luminous; but, behind the truths exposed by V. Revma., how many other truths are hidden! ...

Would it be reckless to ask your admirable insight to penetrate even a little behind the veil, and reveal to us what exactly the predestination of men consists of?

I have read a lot about it, but I am not satisfied .. I always see a cloud and I feel several doubts, which I cannot resolve, such as:

1st. Does God predestinate the elect to heaven and the reprobate to hell?

2nd. Why does God allow reprobate men?

3rd. - Doesn't the loss of some and the salvation of others seem almost an injustice on God's part?

4th. - At least it's cruel.

5th. - Being able to save men because God lets them get lost?

6th. Isn't the existence of hell a barbarity? etc., etc.

II - The answer

In a nutshell, I could answer the questions of the distinguished consultant, however, finding such short answers in any book of doctrine, I prefer to take the subject head-on and from the bottom, answering all the accidental questions that the subject raises, and solidly proving the stated thesis.

In this way we will have a solid and new study, which can satisfy the inquirer and interest all souls desiring to know religion in depth.

Predestination is one of the deepest and most impenetrable mysteries of religion, but this difficulty is not a reason for not studying it, it is only a warning, to penetrate its depths with prudence and precaution, without departing from the teaching of great doctors.

Predestination can be defined: The act of mercy, by which, from all eternity, God loved freely, freely chose and effectively directed those who must be saved to the supreme beatitude.

The predestined are chosen, loved, because this choice supposes love. And choosing God this elect, he will infallibly reach, although through his free cooperation, the end of salvation.

Predestination is more than ordinary providence, more than supernatural providence in general; it is a special measure, which assures the elect effective graces for time and glory for eternity.

Predestination is an effect of love.

Its triple graduation is: to love, to elect and to predestine (1) from where it says St. Thomas: all the predestined are chosen and loved (2).

All beings are not predestined; there is an election, and every election presupposes a choice among several, of which some are taken and others left.

It is love that makes this election.

Our love does not cause our friends; on the contrary, it is the qualities of our friends that cause our love.

1) Predestinatio secundum rationem presupponit electionem et electio dilectionem (Summ. P.1.q. 13 to 4).

2) Unde omnes praedestinati sunt electi et dilecti (ibld).

Li These are the qualities that determine our election and provoke our love, so that, among men, election precedes love.

In God it is the opposite. It is because God loves one being, that that being exists, and exists in preference to another; so that your love is the reason for election and predestination.

III - Existence of predestination

The preceding notions, although still general, make us get to the heart of the matter. Let us show here that such predestination is a certain, absolute fact, an indisputable truth.

First of all, we have the word of Jesus Christ: Come, blessed of my Father, you have the kingdom of heaven that has been prepared for you, from the beginning of the world (Mt 25,34).

God therefore prepared beatitude and glory for all his eternity; and this preparation is an election, a special predestination, since it has not been granted to all men, not even all Christians.

São Paulo is the doctor of predestination: It is necessary to mention in its entirety this sublime step of the apostle, which condenses the whole theology of predestination: We know, he says, that all things work together for the good of those who love God, for the good of those who, according to his design, are called saints, because those whom he knew in his foreknowledge, also predestined them to conform to the image of his Son, so that he may be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called them; and those he justified, he also glorified them (Rm 8,28-31).

This text needs no comment; it has an entirely theological rigor and exposition: love, election, predestination, justification and glory.

The apostle attributes to the act of predestination three great effects:

- 1 - The vocation to salvation;
- 2 - Justification by grace;
- 3 - Glorification in heaven.

Theological reason admirably confirms the sacred text.

The unchanging perfection of God, whose infinite science descends to all the minutiae, requires that He will order and regulate, from all eternity, what He will perform in time.

Due, by His grace, to perform the beatitude of his elect one day, He wanted it and decreed it from all eternity, and allocating this beatitude beforehand to such and such, he determined at the same time the means that must effectively ensure them your possession.

Seeing this end and these supernatural means, surely preparing the means for the end, this is what we call predestination.

In divine intelligence it is the work of profound wisdom!

In the divine will it is the work of a free and infinite mercy!

IV - Effects of predestination

These effects are the ones that S. Paulo indicates in the quoted text, which can be summarized in the following three terms:

1st. - Vocation.

2nd. - justification.

3rd. - Glorification.

It is the direct, supernatural effects that lead man to his ultimate destination.

Indirect, natural effects constitute a set of facts, circumstances or realities, coordinated by the providence for salvation.

They are, among others, health, wealth, prosperity, etc., which can become auxiliary to virtue and ways of loving God.

In the same order, illness, unhappiness, misfortune, suffering, etc. ; while permitted by God as an occasion for patience and merit, all of this comes from infinite love.

It is the application of the word of St. Paul: For those who love God, everything competes for the good (Rm 8,28).

Regarding the indirect effects, there is no difficulty; just a little spirit of faith in divine providence.

Let us study here the direct, supernatural effects, which are immediately related to predestination.

First, the vocation, which is the beginning of life. It is graces that solicit intelligence and the will to lead souls to salvation; they are also external aids, such as preaching, good examples, etc.

God calls for salvation. - Those whom God predestined, he called them (Rm 8.30), says the apostle.

The first divine decree is, therefore, the vocation.

Are all men called?

No! All are called to glory, but few are elected (Mt 20, 16).

Glory is a reward that is offered to all, but that only a small number achieve: How narrow is the door and how tight is the path that leads to life, and how few are the ones who get it right (Mt 7,14).

All who are therefore not called. But, why doesn't God make this call to everyone? It is the knot of the mystery.

What is certain is that God wants the salvation of all men (1Tm2,4) and ours in particular, since he made us be born in true religion.

It is also certain that God is infinitely just and good, and as such gives us all the means of salvation to the point that this salvation is in our hands.

Now, having admitted these indisputable principles, we can say that it is our fault if we are reprovved instead of being saved.

Let us now try to clarify this basic doctrine, with justification and glorification as the consequences of this first election. God, in fact, chooses, justifies and glorifies.

V - The divine decrees

Let us follow God's way of working in the work of predestination for an instant.

God predestines to glory, regardless of the merits of men.

Divine decrees in this regard can be placed as follows and summarized in the following principles:

- 1 - God sincerely wants the salvation of all men, and does not predestine anyone to sin and perdition.
- 2 - Before any prediction of man's merits, only for his goodness He chooses such and such for eternal glory.
- 3 - By virtue of this choice, He prepares the help and the graces that will make them arrive unfailingly, but through their personal cooperation, salvation and beatitude.
- 4 - Likewise, before any prediction of human acts, he allows other men, through his own fault, not to reach glory, and to be reproved.
- 5 - To the latter, however, he prepares all the graces necessary for salvation, so that, if lost, it is not a lack of grace, but a lack of good will on their part: - It is a negative reprobation.
- 6 - After having predicted that men, abusing grace and free will, will surrender to evil, God decrees to punish them. It is positive disapproval.

This doctrine can be solved in this text, of the Council of Kiersy: That such men are saved, is the gift of God; that such others are lost, it is your fault (Denzinger).

In this exhibition, I remain at the margin of all controversy: Catholic theologies criticize the different systems.

What is certain is that predestination, taken as a whole, is entirely free, it is a pure gift from God, an act of his infinite goodness; for it is by faith that no one can prepare himself for grace by his own strength: grace is essentially a divine gift that surpasses all human forces.

Here, a more apparent than real difficulty is presented, which should be resolved, since it is the great objection raised by the consultant.

VI - The divine choice

Why does God prefer each other?

Since predestination is an effect of the divine will, it is necessary to look for the cause in this same divine will.

Now, this will has no cause. God is essentially free and independent. God wants why he wants: it is his pleasure, his pure will, nothing more.

If there is no cause of the divine will, in this very will, let us see if it will not be in the effects of this will.

The effect is eternal beatitude. This effect can be seen in its parts.

These parts are vocation, grace and glory.

Now, one is the preparation of the other.

The vocation is free: - it is divine goodness.

There is nothing in the creature that can deserve this vocation to glory.

Admitted the gratuitousness of this first step, it is easy to solve the others, because one is the cause of the other.

Once called by God, man receives the necessary and superabundant graces to save himself: - divine election is the cause of justification - as justification is the cause of glorification.

Glorification, the final term of predestination, is, therefore, directly the work of God, and indirectly the work of man, by correspondence, so that it can be said that in glorification God crowns his own work.

In this profound mystery, everything thus refers to the pure and simple divine will; at your pleasure, your free love, without anything having been able to influence your determination.

And is there no clearer and more positive explanation of this preference?

None, absolutely none.

Who are we, so that God can account for his administration?

Who was your advisor? says the apostle: Did you consiliarius ejus fuit? (Rm11,34). We are not the ones who choose Him; but He who chose us. - Non vos me elegistis (Jn 15,16).

VII - The elect and the reprobate

Speaking of providence, I showed that, beside the good, God had let in certain evils, taking from these evils superior goods.

In the choice of the elect and in the reprobation of the wicked it is the same law that directs God.

It would be impious to say that God wanted, from eternity, and that he accomplished, in time, the loss of men.

God allows sin, but he does not want it, and even less so, so that he does not want to, nor does he reprove, which is the consequence of sin.

The responsibility for these things rests absolutely with the sinner, who freely sins and freely condemns himself.

What I say! Not only does God not cause sin or damnation, but He gives the sinner the overflowing grace of not sinning.

It is what we are seeing in the natural order.

In the same way that the same sun rises over the good and the bad, so the divine word is also announced to everyone; the sacraments that are the source of life are available to everyone.

In this march that leads the sinner to his loss, God's conduct is purely negative: - he lets it be done, because he must respect man's freedom.

Such a divine will can be mysterious, but it is not unfair.

No one can accuse God if he refuses his gifts to those who freely despise them.

All the honor of the elect's salvation rests with God, but all the responsibility for the reprobation of the wicked falls on himself.

This is what made the prophet say, speaking of Israel: - Perditio tua ex te, Israel, tantummodo in me auxilium tuum (Os13,9).

São Paulo has an unparalleled page of light on this, exposing with its usual logic and vigor the great dogma of God's freedom in predestining to some, and in letting others be lost.

Let us read and meditate well on this sublime page: I loved Jacob and I hated Esau, he writes.

What shall we say, then? Is there an injustice in God? Far from it.

For he said to Moses, I will have mercy on whomever I choose to have mercy; and I will have pity on whomever I choose to have pity.

Therefore, this does not depend on what you want or what is running, but on God, who uses mercy.

Because the Scripture says to Pharaoh: For this I have raised you up in order to show you my power, and so that My name may be announced throughout the land.

Therefore, He has mercy on those who want and hardens those who want.

But you will say to me: What does He still complain about? Who can resist your will?

O man, who are you, to reply to God? Perhaps the clay pot says to the one who made it: Why did you make me like this?

Doesn't the potter have the power to make a vessel out of the same mass for honorable use, and another for vile use? (Rm 9,13-21).

It is impossible to say better, as it is impossible to say more. God freely chooses whom He wants.

VIII - The superior good

The end of God's designs in the government of the world and of souls is to take good from evil: - it is the superior good.

As we have seen, evil is inevitable; God must allow it, to safeguard the freedom of man, but evil does not become evil, it becomes good, through divine providence.

We find in predestination the same reversibility of evil as good. Not only did God prepare for all means of salvation, but also the means of suppressing evil and not letting it triumph.

He represses him, arming His justice against him.

The kingdom of justice is immensely good over the wicked. That is why He created hell himself.

And it is not simply your justice that inspired you. creation of hell, but they are also his goodness and his love, thus putting a brake on evil.

With great accuracy, Dante wrote about the door of hell: - Who did me was the first justice and the first love!

God makes evil compete with the manifestation of his attributes and the harmony of his work.

This is easy to understand.

Good is a light. Evil is a real shadow. The shadow serves, in a picture, to make the light stand out; a dissonance serves as a symphony to prepare harmonious chords: evil, such a shadow, such a dissonance, highlights the gifts bestowed on the good.

In fact, the comparison is from São Paulo: God, he says, wanting to show his wrath and make his power manifest, suffered with great patience the vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction, in order to show the riches of his glory over the vessels of mercy, which he prepared for glory (Rm 9,22).

Elsewhere, the apostle also says: In a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also wooden and clay vessels, and some for honorable uses, others, however, for vile uses (2Tm2,20).

Yes, at the bottom of the double purpose of predestination and reprobation, there is an end to beauty and harmony.

It is Sacred Scripture that says it; we can therefore repeat it: God is a simple being, containing in the unity an infinity of different perfections.

The world is made to manifest them, it is their image.

Now, this divine unity cannot be manifested by a single species of beings; there is a multitude of them.

It is the reason for the great variety of creatures in the universe, in the underworld as well as in the overworld, from the hidden violet to the mountain cedar; from the brook that murmurs, to the ocean that roars; from the dust of the road to the mountain that penetrates the clouds.

Thus, in the spiritual order, evil is on the side of good, revolt on the side of obedience; the sinner elbows the just, the devil tempts man.

It is necessary for divine justice to be known as your goodness, for your justice to shine in punishment, as your love shines in reward.

It is a perfect, harmonious picture, made of light and shadows, of majesty and simplicity.

Similar to certain spectacles of nature, which we cannot contemplate without a kind of vertigo, these truths amaze our imagination; however, they are realities.

Divine work owes its harmony, not only to heavenly radiations, but also to the shadows of sin and reprobation.

This divine work must be illuminated, not only by the glory of the elect, but also by the terrible and sublime horror of hell.

The first is light; the second is the shadow that makes this light stand out.

IX - Solution of questions

After these doctrinal notions, we can now safely give a direct answer to our querent's questions.

1 - Did God predestinate the elect to heaven and the reprobate to hell?

God predestined the elect to heaven, yes; but the evil did not predestine to hell.

There is no predestination for doom.

The bad is lost because he wants to. God did not predestine him to glory because he knew from foreknowledge that he would not respond to graces, so that he gets lost, not because God predestined him to perdition, but because he himself wants to lose himself.

2 - Why does God allow reprobates?

He must allow reprobates, because man is free; and being free, he can do or not do what God commands as a condition of salvation.

3 - The loss of some and the salvation of others does not include any injustice on the part of God, for God owes us nothing; salvation is God's free gift, and He can give this gift to anyone.

Can't the owner of an object freely dispose of it? See the comparison of São Paulo, of the worker making the same clay into a luxury vase and an unclean vase.

4 - There is also no cruelty, because man is not saved because he does not want to use the means for this. Note well that man is not lost because God did not predestinate him, but on the contrary: God did not predestinate him because he knew (from foreknowledge) that this man would abuse graces.

5 - Being able to save men, why does God let them get lost?

God lets them get lost because they want to - and God must not suppress man's freedom. Freedom is the great gift of God, made to man; violating this gift, God retracts himself, changes his plan, which he cannot do, because his works are extensive and his designs immutable.

6 - Isn't the existence of hell a barbarity?

Absolutely not; as I proved, it is a necessity: it is the work of your justice and your love.

If God is to reward the good, he must, for the same reason, punish the bad.

Heaven is the manifestation of your love; hell is the manifestation of your justice.

The picture of divine greatness is completed by light from above and darkness from below. The first is the drawing of divine majesty; the second is the shadows that give relief to this drawing.

Such is the great mystery of predestination.

It's a mystery. We cannot penetrate its essence, but we can understand its accidents, the object that hides its harmonies, its greatnesses, terrible and fulminating, no doubt, but just, merciful, loving.

It is enough for our intelligence and for our love.

X - Conclusion

I do not want to end this great subject, on certain sides so terrible and disturbing, without showing how many stimuli for our will and how many consolations for our piety we find in it.

Let us not think with fatalists that, since God has predestined us and the decree of this predestination must be carried out infallibly, we have nothing to do. Such an idea is a very

serious mistake. The works of men do not change the divine decree, it is certain, because they are included in this decree, they are part of it, they are the effect of it and not the cause.

In the plan of predestination, in fact, they are predestined and included, not only the end to be reached (salvation), but also the means (good works).

Considering the effects of predestination, we note that one effect is the cause of another. Prayers and good works get us the argument of grace; grace obtains glory for us. Glory, therefore, being the fruit of a holy life, prayers and good works are absolutely necessary; its purpose is not to cause predestination or to change its order, but to fulfill it. This is what made St. Peter say: Therefore, brothers, be more and more careful to make your vocation and election certain, through good works, because, in doing this, you will never sin (2Pd1,10).

This is the stimulus for the will. Let us now see the consolation for our piety.

Our salvation is in the hands of God; it is the truth that dominates all the others.

Now, we must remember that God is a loving, merciful Father, who cannot deceive us.

If our luck, instead of being in such safe hands, were in our hands, ah! so, yes, we should be afraid of everything; but as it is in the hands of such a Father, the fear is unjustified.

The just can rejoice in this thought; for he is sure of his salvation. I know who I put my trust in, and I am sure that God is able to keep my deposit until that day (2Tm1,12).

The sinner himself finds reason for hope in this thought.

The sight of his falls could discourage him, if he had his own strength; but thinking that his destiny depends on God, he has the right to wait while he is in this world.

As can be seen, in the same way that at the bottom of an abyss a pure and delicate flower grows, the most beautiful of the flowers that can embalm the human heart comes naturally as if from the bottom of this mystery and this abyss, which is the predestination of man.

Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum (Rm 8,28). - Everything works for the good of those who love God.

- Hopefully, then; we have confidence in our heavenly Father, we serve him with love and perseverance, and salvation will be a fact, eternal glory will be ours!

TENTH CONTROVERSY

The vocation

OR DETERMINATION OF A STATE OF LIFE

The vocation ...

This is a subject that deserves to be treated with great affection, as it is like the lighthouse that illuminates our life - a lighthouse, the absence of which opens an abyss before our feet, in which so many unfortunate people precipitate, who ignore or do not appreciate the designs of God.

This subject comes admirably to its own place, after the issues dealt with foreknowledge, providence and predestination.

What invites me to address the matter is the consultation of a distinguished and intelligent daughter of Maria, who addressed me the following letter:

1 - The consultation

Being an assiduous reader of your articles and observing, through them, your scholarship on all points, I decided to address you, but trusting only in your noble mission that is missionary and therefore charitable, in order to ask you to clarify me at one point, for me quite confused, a consequence of various opinions.

I am certain in your clarification and sure of such elucidation.

Such is: I want to know if there is fatality, or better, if things have to happen there is no deviation. So, for example, death: Will your day be set?

And so everything else! Is a state, for example, to be taken already noticed? Will it have to succeed?

Well trusted in your kindness and not in my appeal, I say farewell very gratefully and very sensitized.

Give me your blessing.

II - The answer

There is no one who does not understand the importance of the question of vocation.

Souls enlightened only by the principles of faith recognize that the choice or state they make depends on the happiness or unhappiness of life.

Parents who rightly reflect and care about their children's vocation, like all directors of souls, know that in this business it is not possible to deviate from the rules of prudence and Christian wisdom.

But, where to find these rules?

Where to get a fair idea of the states of life?

It cannot be, of course, in the maxims of the world, but in Sacred Scripture, in Catholic Tradition, in the writings of the Holy Fathers and the teachers of spiritual life. Nowadays, it is true, there are many books and brochures that deal with the subject; however, because they hide the truth - they do it with a superficiality that baffles and, at times, with serious deviations from the theological, bookkeeping and patristic truth.

There are many errors regarding vocation, because writers sometimes do not want to displease their readers, or want to adapt to current opinions.

It's an evil.

The truth does not adapt, nor does it bend. We must adapt to it.

We are the ones who must bend and bend the knee and the forehead before its immortal sense.

- Veritas Do mini manei in aeternum (Ps116,2).

My aim is not to urge this or that state of life; not even to protest against certain ideas

contrary to true doctrine, which run the world, but to simply and conscientiously expose the Catholic doctrine taught by the great teachers.

Sto. Thomas; Suarez and Santo Afonso will provide us with the doctrinal basis of the matter.

III - Is there a specific vocation?

As usual, let's get to the bottom of the issue and head on.

What is the vocation? will there be a determined vocation for each person? is there an obligation to follow this vocation?

Three far-reaching questions, which already correspond to my consultant's questions.

Vocation is a reality, and part of divine providence.

As we saw in the study of providence, God takes care of all creatures, small and large; nothing can be removed from its domain, its government, its care.

And not only does God take care of all beings by general providence, but he takes care, in particular, of every man, of every faculty of this man, and as a result of the path that this man must follow.

If God is concerned with the inner direction of man, his destiny, his happiness, it is natural for him to mark the path that he must follow for each one, so as not to break the admirable harmony that shines in divine works.

Going through Sacred Scripture, we are amazed to see the affection with which God predicts everything, provides for everything, and indicates to each one the way forward.

He chooses his priests, the judges, the princes of the people, strictly punishing those who dare to usurp functions that are not their own. "It was not you who chose me, but it was I who chose you, he says (Jn 15,16).

In a single sentence, the divine Master clarifies this doctrine: - The whole plant, which my heavenly Father did not plant, will be uprooted (Mt 15,13).

When, after the ascension, the apostles tried to elect a substitute for the traitor Judas, they addressed this prayer to God: You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show us, of these two, what you have chosen (Acts 1,24) .

Proof of this special vocation is the example of Cyrus, announced by Isaiah (55: 1-3), before he appeared in the world, naming him by his own name, and predicting his future triumphs.

It is a striking example of how God predestines men to their own careers, and to the works they must perform.

This is what the Lord says to Cyrus, my anointed, whom I took by the hand, to subdue the nations before him, and to turn my back on kings, and to open the doors before him, without any being closed to him. .

I will go before you, and I will humble the great ones of the earth; I will break down the bronze doors and break the iron bars.

And I will give you hidden treasures and bound riches, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who called you by your name (Is55,1-4).

This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter by the founder of the Persian empire, Cyrus, 400 years before Jesus Christ.

IV - Will there be an obligation to follow it?

Strict obligation, under penalty of deviating from the path set by God, and depriving himself of the help there predisposed by Him, and even, perhaps, exposing his eternal salvation.

In fact, believing in divine providence, we must believe that God traces for each man the path he must follow on earth.

It is not necessary that there be a particular revelation that reveals his destiny to him, but God, by the inclinations that he has in his soul, and by the external conditions with which he surrounds him, makes him feel clearly in which ways he must direct his steps.

It is the set of these inner attractions and outer circumstances that constitutes and manifests the vocation.

The essential for a creature is to be in its place in the world, as it is essential for a clock wheel to occupy its proper and destined place.

Hence it follows "that vocation is a capital business, and this business is the beginning of a happy or unhappy life.

On the path of life, we encounter obligations, dangers, suffering; at every turn of the road, God prepares the light, strength and consolation we need.

Taking a wrong path, which is not the one that prepared providence for us, we are left to our weakness, our darkness and loneliness.

Before running, says Santo Ambrósio, choose the path well.

Saint Paul warns us, like Saint Ambrose, to examine our road well.

Brothers, examine your vocation well, he says (1Ch 1:26).

It is necessary, he continues, that each one perseveres in his vocation, to which he was called (1Ch 7,20).

Having proved this basic truth, that God marked our place in this world, we can draw two conclusions from it, which should be examined carefully.

V - Happiness and salvation

This obligation can be summarized in the following two principles, both being the negation of the affirmative assertion.

Outside of our vocation, we will be unhappy in this world.

A simple comparison will make us understand such an assertion.

A person takes a false step, falls and dislocates the arm: - it is a dislocation.

The consequence is inevitable. Impossibility to move the arm without excruciating pain; and so it will stay until you send the bone into its own cavity.

There is nothing broken; it is a simple displacement.

It is the image of a person who is outside his vocation: - it is a spiritual dislocation. There is

no breaking or destruction; it is a simple displacement. God had prepared his own login; he left this place, he is out of his vocation.

Such a person is, like the arm, in a false and thus painful situation.

She has talents, but she cannot use them.

She has duties, but she is not prepared to do them.

She has temptations, but she is not armed to overcome them.

She suffers for not being in her place, and she does suffer.

It is disorder, it is malaise. it is unhappiness.

How many people are unhappy because they are not in their vocation.

The second principle is even more terrible: Outside of our vocation, our salvation is seriously compromised.

Our life is the preparation for eternity.

There is a necessary relationship between the two: Such a life, such a death, such an eternity.

Being in the place marked by God, we find in it, alongside the duties of the state, adapted to our talents, the graces for fulfilling them, and grace facilitates everything, softens everything.

Outside of this path, we find duties, perhaps not proportioned with our talents, and God is under no obligation to give us the proper graces to fulfill them.

Let us not exaggerate. In any honest condition, man can be saved, since prayer is always available, which can communicate the necessary graces, and the sacraments that are sources of strength and generosity.

A person outside his vocation has these resources; however, it is not enough to have them; it is necessary to make use of them; and here how many difficulties arise!

Whoever does not have the generosity to follow the path that God marks him, how will he have the courage to ward off dangers, to react against the opposite environment that surrounds him, to resort to the means of sanctification?

The experience is everyday. Outside of his vocation, salvation is possible, because God never leaves those who turn to Him; but this salvation is in danger, it is difficult, it is seriously compromised.

VI - Means of knowing the vocation

It is, therefore, clear that each one must follow the vocation for which God destines him, both to achieve happiness in this world and to obtain eternal salvation.

It is a fundamental question.

To embrace such a vocation it is necessary to know it.

In order to know it, it is necessary to reflect, consult, and, above all, pray.

There are three elements necessary to know the divine will regarding us.

Prayer is the first necessity. Being God who calls us, it is God who must still show us the way.

Lord, teach me to do your will, because you are my God, said the psalmist; show me the path that I must take, because I have raised my soul to you (Ps142,10,11).

We must consult those who can guide us in choosing, and clarify our doubts.

Here, however, there is great danger. The Holy Spirit warns us not to consult the foolish, as they can only love what they please (Ec8,20), nor deal with holiness with an irreligious man, nor pity with an ungodly one (Ibid.37,12).

"When asking for advice, says Santo Ambrósio, it is necessary to address a person who recommends himself for the probity of his life, for his virtues, for his benevolence in the trial, and for the practice of sobriety ... because who does not know manage your own life, how can you manage the lives of others? "

Third, we must reflect.

It is only this point that I want to address here. Reflection is the proper exam to know the will of God.

In order to know the vocation, it is necessary to focus attention on two points, which are the touchstones of every vocation: aptitude and attractiveness.

God manifests his vocation to each one through these two elements.

Fitness is a very complex factor, which depends on the family, temperament, intelligence and heart.

The attraction, in turn, is, at times, difficult to ascertain, because it presents itself in variable steps and is accompanied by several secondary inclinations that sometimes supplant or at least stifle the true attraction.

Let us try to shed a ray of light on these important and ignored questions.

Perhaps these simple notions will serve to guide some souls on the path of life, and thus assure them of happiness and salvation.

VII - Fitness and attractiveness

In many souls, there is an insoluble doubt.

They cannot decide.

Before them, the horizon opens their paths, but they, inexperienced and timid, hesitate and are always hesitating.

Hesitation, daughter of doubt, is a rodent worm that paralyzes, and often cuts the tree of peace and happiness by the roots.

What does God want from us?

The three known Christian states of life open up before the eyes: marriage, virginity in the world, religious life.

It is time to choose.

Let's choose!

Let us first examine the attraction.

It is a part of God's voice, conscience and duty.

What is attractive?

The attraction is a kind of unfolding of our moral qualities, finding its own object.

Every quality is a strength.

Every force seeks, by itself, to take action.

The attraction is the feeling of this need, the tendency for the object, which can correspond to it.

A certain satisfaction accompanies the attraction; satisfaction gives perfection to the act, and development to the faculty: - it will be the last evolution of our being in heaven.

This attraction is not the sensitive inclination, or feeling, that one can experience in the face of the material advantages of a state; but, rather, the reflected inclination, which can be called the attraction of reason, before an ideal of holy life, which will take us to heaven with more security.

It is, therefore, neither the enthusiasm of piety, nor the longing of a sensitive soul, nor the delight of a loving heart, nor the ardor of an ardent imagination; it is the firm, stable conviction of the reason that he sees the state as embracing a means of acquiring happiness on earth and in heaven.

This attraction must not be limited to worldly interests, because, in this case, it would be nothing more than gross selfishness.

God, in his infinite wisdom, giving the attractive, at the same time grants the required qualities, so that the attractive and the aptitude must necessarily correspond, complete each other.

It may happen, no doubt, that God sometimes asks for things that are completely contrary to our tastes, even supernatural ones, but in this case, He deposits in the depths of the soul the holy passion of sacrifice, which is more than a natural attraction; it is the heroism of love, heroism that goes beyond attractiveness, as the love of God goes beyond the feelings of nature.

The attraction, then, is the rational inclination that presents us with happiness in a state of life.

Aptitude are the qualities needed to exercise the duties of the chosen state.

If one feels the attraction to a state, for the exercise of which he does not have the necessary skills, according to the judgment of a prudent person, he must consider this attraction as a simple effect of the imagination.

And if someone, having the necessary skills, does not feel any attraction, he must also resort to the judgment of prudent people, to examine whether the lack of such attraction, in the particular case, is an impediment.

It should be noted, in fact, that love surpasses simple attractiveness and can, as such, replace it.

So, for the martyrs.

Perhaps they felt unattractive to the sufferings of martyrdom; but the love of God, replacing and elevating the simple attraction to a higher order, communicated to them a strength and an enthusiasm that the attraction could not give them.

In the things of natural life, the attraction, however, must not be lacking, since without it the acts, instead of being directed to the end by the living forces of nature, would be ordered acts; and such acts are not sustained, but by continuously renewed forces.

And where would they find these forces?

The practice of religion can give them; nature cannot. It would, therefore, expose oneself to heartbreak, boredom, annoyance and, at times, despair.

VII - The two paths

After these considerations, we must look up and fix the ideal of our life head on, as this ideal must form happiness for us on earth and happiness in heaven.

Let us look closely at an important point in the Christian life, which is generally quite misunderstood.

I want to address the states of Christian life here.

Let us turn to the Gospel, which will give us all the explanation we want.

We read in the Gospel of St. Matthew the following fact: And, behold, a young man approaching Jesus, said to him: Good Master, what good should I do to attain eternal life?

Jesus answered him: why do you ask me what is good? One is good: God; however, if you want to enter life, keep the commandments.

Which are? he asked.

And Jesus said to him, Thou shalt not kill; you will not commit adultery; you will not steal; you will not say false testimony; honor your father and mother and love your neighbor as yourself.

The young man said to him: I have observed all this since my youth; What do I still lack?

Jesus said to him: If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you will have a treasure in heaven and then come and follow me (Mt19,16-19).

Here is a divine page that should be better known than it is, because, opening the horizon of the Christian life, it shows youth how far it can rise, and where it should place the ideal of its life.

This passage shows us the two ideals of Christian life, in other words, the two paths:

1st. - that of salvation.

2nd. - that of perfection.

The word of Jesus Christ is positive and luminous.

The young man asks him what he must do to save himself.

The answer is simple: Keep the commandments.

It is the only way of salvation.

It is the path of the simple faithful. His life is designated under the name of ordinary life, or Christian life, because, by itself, it does not elevate souls above the ordinary and does not require of them anything other than the strictly necessary to be saved, or the observance of the commandments.

Now the young man of whom the Gospel speaks was good, pious, and since childhood he had observed the law of God.

He aspires for the highest thing, and therefore asks the divine Master if, in addition, it is not possible to do more.

Jesus will give you the desired answer, no longer in the form of a commandment that strictly obliges you, but in the form of advice, of invitation, that does not oblige in all rigor, but that is the great path of perfection ... the means of achieve holiness.

If you want to be perfect, he says, go, sell what you have, and give it to the poor and then come and follow me.

The first question Jesus answers: If you want to save yourself.

The second consultation he replies: If you want to be perfect.

Simply saving oneself and being sublimely perfect are the two paths that extend before the eyes of all men.

The first is precept.

The second is for advice.

Christian life and religious life

Here are the two lives that Jesus Christ proposes to those who want to follow him:

1. - The Christian life, by observing the commandments.
2. - Religious life, due to the observance of other conditions that Jesus Christ enumerates and which are called evangelical councils.

These conditions are:

1. - The contempt of earthly things: Go, sell what you have and give it to the poor.
2. - Obedience: Come, follow me, obeying.
3. - Chastity. It is the consequence of the first two councils. Indeed, how can anyone sell everything he has and follow Jesus Christ, being committed to his marriage, and having a family obligation? It would be impossible!

Here, then, are the three pieces of advice given by Our Lord, as being the way of perfection.

The institution where you are obliged to practice these three councils is called religious life, or life consecrated to God.

This institution, whose essence is the practice of these councils, given by Jesus Christ, is, therefore, a divine institution.

In another passage by the same evangelist the Savior lists the sacrifices that such a life requires, and the rewards that are reserved for him: Anyone who leaves the house, or the brothers, or the sisters, or the father, or the mother, or the woman , or the children, or the

fields, for the sake of my name, will receive a hundredfold, and will possess eternal life (Mt 19,29).

For the Christian life he requires only the observance of the commandments, in any condition or state, whether as a young man, married, poor widower, rich; - it's for everyone.

When it comes to the life of perfection, the divine Master is more demanding, and his advice goes far beyond the commandments, as the rewards go beyond the promises of simple salvation.

The requirements are:

- 1 . - Leave your home and family to consecrate yourself to God.
2. - Renounce marriage: leaving a wife and children, to live only for God.

As for the reward of this sacrifice, it is unique; Nowhere in the Gospel did Jesus Christ formulate a reward like this: the hundredfold in this life, and eternal life in the next.

Notice these distinctions, made by the Savior.

For the people of the world, salvation consists in strict observance of the commandments. Religious souls, flying higher, must first be: perfect Christians; and then seek the greatest glory of God for the practice of the three great councils: poverty, obedience and chastity.

The faithful in the world are in a state of Christian life; religious souls are in a state of perfection, that is, in a genre of life established and organized to practice evangelical councils officially and regularly.

A state of life necessarily presupposes a stable life, which cannot be revoked.

The religious state requires, therefore, a bond that continuously obliges to live religiously and perfectly. This tie is the vows to practice these three councils.

Jesus Christ gave lots of advice; undoubtedly, however, the three mentioned here close and summarize all perfection, as they are opposed to the threefold lust of which St. John speaks: lust of the flesh, eyes and pride of life (1Jo2,16).

Poverty detaches from land goods.

Obedience requires dependence on our will.

Chastity requires renouncing sensual pleasures.

X - Conclusion

Let us finish here the considerations on the vocation. There would be much to say on the subject, but it is more a matter of a book than of answering queries.

The considerations now allow us to give a clear and precise answer to the questions of Mary's worthy daughter.

Whether there is fatality?

No! fatality does not exist; everything in this world is guided by divine providence, to the point that not a hair falls from our head, without the will of the heavenly Father (Mt.10,30).

Is there a deviation in events?

Not again. Everything happens as planned and marked by God. It should be noted, however, that things happen, not because God marked them - which would suppress man's freedom - but God marked things, because he knew that they would happen.

Predicting is our way of speaking.

God does not foresee; he sees; everything is present for him, with only, for us, past and future, that is, time.

Time is created by God. it is above and beyond time, because it is the infinite, unchanging Being, while time is a continuous change, it is an uninterrupted succession of moments.

The death.

Death is marked for each one of us, and we will die that day, infallibly, because God cannot be deceived.

We will die, not because God foresaw it, but because God knew that at that time we would die.

And so everything else?

Yes, without exception.

Is a state to be taken already noticed?

Perfectly. At birth, all men have their destiny marked, because this destiny, future for us, is present for God. He sees everything, the use and abuse of freedom, and seeing, marks the result of everything, without contradicting our freedom. Even before we are born, God knows us. He has known us from eternity, and he assigns each of us to his own vocation.

Some follow this vocation. others deviate from it. others lose it ...

God sees everything, and knows the result of everything, with weight and measure.

And so it will happen!

Hence the importance of seeking to know the divine will ... our vocation ... by attractiveness and capacity, as I explained above.

And once our vocation is known, let us embrace it firmly, persevere in it until the end, to receive the eternal reward.

And God has already marked this reward.

It is up to us to deserve it and conquer it.

God, calling us to a state of life, prepares us all the means necessary to fulfill the duties of this state and to find salvation and holiness in it: - the end of every vocation.

TEN FIRST CONTROVERSY

Salvation and sanctification

OR CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT STATES OF LIFE

I thought I had quite elucidated the case of the vocation, but behold, right after the publication of this matter, another consultation reaches me, relating to the same truth, and

asking that, from the basic point already explained, draw the practical conclusions for the guidance of souls.

1 - The consultation

Another daughter of Maria writes to me, asking:

- 1. - Which is better: getting married, being single in the world or entering the convent?*
- 2. - How can you know that someone has a vocation for one of these types of life?*
- 3. - In what and why is religious life superior to the life of a mother of a family?*
- 4. - Is there an obligation, in conscience, to follow the vocation to one of these states?*
- 5. - Isn't it selfish or pusillanimous to withdraw from society in order to lead a calm and peaceful life in the convent?*
- 6. - Are not all states equally pleasing to God, with holiness depending only on the person's fervor?*

Please V. Rvma. excuse my insistence, but I appreciated your luminous response so much to a worthy colleague of mine, daughter of Maria, who wished to have some more notions about the same truth, both for my own government, and for my little friends, who I know, and also aspire solving these questions.

II - The answer

I willingly answer this query, in front of many others, who are waiting for the solution.

The consultation is, in fact, the logical continuation of what was discussed in the question of vocation.

Let us, therefore, fully enter into the subject, and examine it thoroughly, even if it contradicts certain contrary ideas and opinions, which run the world and find shelter in the spirit of youth.

The truth is one; and it is this truth that I want to shine in all its brilliance and majesty.

Regarding salvation and sanctification, there are many misconceptions, poorly understood, that should be straightened out and explained in this answer. I will try to do it with simplicity and clarity.

Save yourself and win heaven, and don't lose your soul; it is to flee from evil and to practice the good strictly imposed.

To sanctify oneself is to rise above the ordinary; it is not just running away from evil, but acquiring positive virtues, not strictly required.

In this way, two states of life can be distinguished.

- 1. - The common state, of the simple faithful who observe the commandments of the law of God and the Church.*
- 2. - The state of perfection, of those who consecrate themselves to God, applying, in addition to the above observation, to the practice of the Christian virtues and works of their vocation.*

The former intend to save themselves.

Seconds aspire to be saints.

The former are good workers.

The second are artists.

The former are good Catholics.

The latter are fervent Catholics.

The difference between these two categories is immediately understood.

III - The way to heaven

The general plan of salvation and perfection is outlined and well indicated; it is now necessary to go into the details and practice of life in each of these states.

An old missionary, preaching to youth, used to say picturesquely that there were three ways to go to heaven: On foot, on horseback, by car.

And he explained the comparison in the following way: Go on foot: the journey is certain, but through a thousand obstacles and difficulties, under the heat of the day and in the cold of the night, under the rain, and, sometimes, in the mud of the way.

The end is reached, but the walk is slow and tiring.

Go horseback: the journey is faster, there are fewer dangers; road mud, dangerous animals are avoided. There are dangers, it is true, you can fall, the animal may crash, it may even fall, but out of the inevitable dangers, the journey is less tiring, less leisurely, more pleasant and safer.

Go by car. It is ideal for travel. If there are good roads, the trip is fast, being sheltered from the sun, rain and mud. one can even fall asleep from time to time; the automobile continues its march; the driver goes up, goes down the mountains, penetrates the valleys, borders the precipices, while the traveler is carried to the end of his destiny.

There are, of course, holes in the path that give the traveler a jolt, a jump, but without consequence and without danger.

These three ways of traveling are the image of how to make the great journey of salvation.

- Traveling on foot is marriage.

Traveling on horseback means keeping chastity in the world.

- To travel by car is to enter the religious life.

These are the three states of life that present themselves to the aspirations or tendencies of youth.

We have to say a few words about each of them.

IV - The wedding

Legitimate marriage is a holy state, blessed by God, and raised by him to the dignity of a sacrament.

Being a holy state, you are allowed to embrace it.

The word of São Paulo is known: He who marries his daughter, does well. No ... sin (1Ch 7,37). It will be saved by the education of the children, if it remains in faith and charity and in holiness, together with modesty (1Tm2,15).

This mystery is great, but I say it in relation to Christ and the Church (Eph 5,32).

Marriage, then, is good, because it keeps man on duty and keeps him from falling into sin.

St. Thomas reduces the great advantages of marriage to three: children, fidelity, the sacrament.

The birth of children, continues the angelic doctor, makes marriage a holy state (Suppl. Q.49. A, 4) - The woman will be saved, says the apostle, through the education of her children.

Faithfulness is the bond that binds the husband to his wife and the wife to her husband, by which they give each other a right that they promise never to violate.

The sacrament is the indissoluble conjugal bond, which can never be broken.

Since marriage is a sacrament of the living, it would be a sacrilege to receive it, without being in a state of grace, hence the need to confess and to commune before receiving it, to receive with it the divine blessing, so necessary for the home happiness.

It is not useless to remember that marriage is one: one who is hired before the minister of God. What they call civil marriage, is not marriage or marriage, it is a mere contract, civil, before civil authority, having exclusively civil effects. It is a guarantee, a condom of great use for the goods of the married, but it has no value before God and before awareness.

It is necessary to distinguish divine law from human law, and in the Savior's saying: Give to God what belongs to God, and to civil authority (Caesar) what belongs to him.

The moral law depends on God; material goods are safeguarded by civil law.

V - Mandatory marriage?

A few questions and answers will complete this brief answer.

Is marriage a precept?

Theology teaches that marriage was a natural law obligation for our first parents after the fall; however, this precept did not oblige except in the case of the need to propagate or preserve the human race, as the precept of alms does not oblige except in the case of the need for an individual: Such is the teaching of Suarez (lib.IX.De cast. c.1).

The catechism of the Council of Trent says that race, having multiplied, today there is not only no obligation to marry, but chastity is sovereignly recommended, and advised by Sacred Scripture (De matr.14).

They will say, perhaps, that marriage is a means of preventing falls.

I do not say otherwise, but I note that, in addition to this means, there are many other ways to avoid weaknesses.

Suarez is of the same sentiment.

I do not admit, he says, that a man may be exposed to such a moral danger of falling into faults against chastity, that he is forced to marry, since he always has the means to escape

from occasions, to overcome temptations by prayer, fasting and other remedies of this kind (lib. IX, c.2).

Are a son or daughter forced to obey their parents, who want to force them to marry?

The common opinion of doctors is that they are not obliged, because parents, (outside of an urgent cause) exceed their rights. Parents must guide, direct, advise their children on this important step, but they must not compel them, since it is the children who must then bear the burden and consequences of the marriage and not the parents.

For this reason, children are under no obligation to obey them at this particular point.

Santo Afonso says that a father cannot, in any way, compel a son to marry, if that son intends to choose a higher state, as are chastity in the world or religious life (Teol. Mor. 1.6-tr. 6).

Apart from particular cases, marriage is not, therefore, a precept.

The teaching of S. Paulo, in this respect, is of a meridian light. Let us quote just this excerpt: If someone thinks that it seems to be dishonorable, as for his maiden daughter, the passing him the age of getting married, and that it is thus appropriate to make him the marriage, do what you want: do not sin to get married.

But what he resolved firmly, within himself, not forcing him to need, but being able to dispose at his will, and determined in his heart to keep his (daughter) virgin, is good.

Therefore, he who marries his virgin does well, and he who does not marry does better (1Ch 7,36-38).

São Tomás makes the following reasoning: Nobody has the right to a reward for violating a precept.

Now, a special reward, the halo is due to virgins.

Therefore, marriage is not a precept (q.41, a, 2).

VI - Marriage advised?

Will the marriage be of advice?

I let Santo Afonso answer this question. The saint writes to a young man who had consulted him about the choice of a state: "As for the marital status, I cannot advise, since S. Paulo does not advise anyone, the slightest need as a result of the usual falls, which certainly does not exist for you. "

Saint Paul, inspired by God, actually said: I say to singles and widows that it is good for them to remain so, as I also; but if they do not contain themselves (keeping chastity) they will marry; because it is better to get married than to burn in the fire of turpitude (1Cr7,8,9).

Saint Augustine makes the following reflection on this text: "The apostle does not say that it is better to marry than to keep chastity, because chastity is better, but he says that it is better to marry, than to fall into sin, in the way he advises absolutely continence, as being better, and says positively: I wanted you all to be like me (1Ch 7,7), but he prefers marriage to sin.

But, perhaps someone will say, I feel a vocation for marriage, it is God's will, I must obey!

Really? Perhaps!

But such a vocation is not a precept; one can, therefore, follow or contradict it. There is no commandment from the law of God or the Church that imposes it.

It is not advisable either, since the apostle advises the opposite and only advises marriage as a means of avoiding sin, thus proving the superiority of chastity over marriage.

Such a vocation is, therefore, a simple, or rather complicated, natural inclination.

Marriage being a holy state, it is generally permitted to follow such an inclination, provided that an honest end is proposed, however, it is convenient to distinguish between a natural inclination, between a precept, or a council.

I don't want to depress or diminish the marriage; it is a holy state, it is a sacrament; but this does not prove that among the various states there are no higher states, even more holy and more pleasing to God. It is this truth that I want to emphasize here.

The state of sin: it is a muddy state.

The state of marriage: it is a holy state.

The state of chastity: it is a most holy state.

The religious state: it is an even more holy state, it is the school of holiness.

The priestly state: surpasses others by power and dignity.

The episcopal state: holiness must be acquired.

There is a natural, logical and fundamental gradation between these different states, which no one can deny.

VII - The ends of marriage

The subject dealt with would be incomplete, if we did not mark the ends of the marriage.

It is not enough to feel the inclination towards marriage; it is also necessary to consider the proposed end and the reasons that determine this inclination.

It would be a crime to be bound by marriage excluding the essential ends of this state, or with the resolve not to respect serious duties and sacred laws.

Now, marriage, says Santo Afonso, has two essential and intrinsic ends, which are:

1. - The mutual right that spouses give to each other.
2. - The indissoluble bond that unites them.

Whoever married, excluding these two ends positively, would not only sin, but his marriage would be invalid (Theol. M.1.VI).

Marriage also contains two other intrinsic but accidental ends, which are: the generation of children, and the remedy against lust.

Such ends are honest, and at least one of them must be desired by those who intend to marry.

Other reasons, such as beauty, wealth, position, not being intrinsically bad, do not prevent the sanctity of marriage, as long as they are not contrary to the end of the sacrament.

Sacred Scripture does not blame Jacob for having preferred Rachel to Leah, because of her beauty.

It is said that one day someone consulted Themistocles, to find out if it was better to marry the daughter to a poor virtuoso than to a rich man without virtue.

The Athenian general replied, "In your place, I would prefer a man without money, than money without a man."

Today's youth does not always know how to rise to the wisdom of this pagan.

VIII - Celibacy

It is the second state of Christian life. Sublime state, slandered by addicts, because they do not know how to practice it or understand its greatness.

To avoid misunderstandings, it is necessary to declare immediately that, in the Christian sense, celibacy is synonymous with continence, chastity; celibacy without chastity is a utopia.

Continence is, therefore, complete abstinence, in the normal individual, from the exercise of sexual functions.

This continence includes the removal of bad thoughts, the desecration of life and the sexual act.

Such abstinence is possible. I no longer want to prove it here, physiologically and psychologically, which I have already done in another book (1).

Let us deal with the case here, before the law of God, the Scriptures and conscience.

Celibacy is amenable.

There can be no doubt, from a physiological point of view; it's proved. There is a sexual stimulus in man, but there is no sexual need.

There being no need, man is free to do or to omit, and being free, he is driven by the will, not the sensual inclination.

It is true that, without the grace of God, man, due to the original decay, is unable to keep chastity for a long time, however, through prayer and the removal of dangers, man can rise to this height. And God does not refuse this grace to anyone who asks it.

1) Cf. The Angel of Darkness, 15 ° Flash, where the subject is treated with all its minutiae and applications.

God cannot give unrealizable advice.

It would be a contradiction.

Now, Sacred Scripture is full of advice of this kind.

The Savior said clearly: There are people who are necessarily virgins; but there are also people who voluntarily embrace this party, to reach the kingdom of heaven with more certainty (Mt 19,12).

And S. Paulo, interpreting the Master's word, concludes: It is good that a man does not touch a woman (1Ch 7,1).

I say. to singles and widows, which is good for them if they stay like me (1Ch 7,18).

If someone marries your daughter, don't sin ...

but if you keep her virgin, she does it better (1Ch 7,36,40).

Here is what is very clear; but it is not given to everyone, because everyone does not use the necessary means to preserve chastity, which are: prayer and avoiding dangers.

Jesus Christ said: It is not everyone who understands this word, but only those to whom it is given (Mt 19,11).

Jesus Christ recommends chastity, continence, celibacy, as these terms complement each other. Christian celibacy requires the practice of continence, and this latter quality is essential to religious significance.

IX - Advised celibacy

Continent celibacy is therefore possible with the grace of God; but is it a precept or an advice?

It is not a precept, because legitimate marriage is a permitted, holy state, and there is no divine precept that prohibits marriage, as there is no precept that requires marrying.

But outside the precepts we have advice, and celibacy is advice, as an effective way to avoid sin and to please God.

Listen to St. Paul: Each one, brothers and sisters, stand before God in the state in which you were called. As for virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give advice, as one who has obtained mercy from the Lord to be faithful.

I understand, therefore, that this is good because of the instant need ... are you connected to a woman?

Do not seek to disconnect.

are you free from women? Don't look for a woman.

But if you take a woman, you will not sin.

And if a virgin gets married, she doesn't sin; nevertheless these will have tribulation of the flesh; and I wanted to spare you from them.

Now, I want you to live without concern. He who is without a woman is careful of the things that belong to the Lord, as he will please God; but he who is married is careful with the things that are of the world, as his wife will be pleased; and it is divided (1Cr7,24-34).

And São Paulo ends this long statement with the following words that summarize everything: Marry whomever you want, as long as it is in the Lord, (not only in the civilian), but you will be happier if you remain so, according to my advice (in celibacy)) and I think that I too have the spirit of God (1Ch 7,40).

These texts are clear and positive. Marriage is permitted, but in the Lord; celibacy, however, is better, it is more perfect, it is more pleasing to God.

Marriage is allowed, without being advised, unless necessary; celibacy is highly recommended, belonging to the evangelical councils, and having on marriage the prestige and merit of a positive virtue, while marriage, although being a holy state, cannot figure as a virtue.

Celibacy, in addition to being also a holy state, falls into the category of virtues, as long as

the essential conditions mentioned above are observed, which are the removal of dangers, pleasures and sexual and sensual acts, by the practice of perfect chastity. or virginity.

This doctrine, often misunderstood, seems almost new to some people; however, she is of faith. solemnly defined by the Council of Trent.

X - The doctrine of the Church

It will not be useless to prove this last statement well, to immediately put a barrier to Protestant, modernist and materialist ideas, which combat this dogma of the Catholic Church.

The catechism of the Council of Trent clearly states: Virginity is sovereignly recommended and recommended to everyone, in Sacred Scripture, because it is more advantageous and includes in itself more perfection and holiness than the state of marriage (De Matrim. No.1).

The same council even launches the anathema against those who maintain the opposite: If someone says that the conjugal state should be preferred to the state of virginity or celibacy, and that it is not better and happier to keep virginity or celibacy, than to if by marriage, be anathema (Sess. 24, Can.10).

"To sustain this truth, says a lot about St. Jerome, is not to discredit marriage and prefer virginity to it (1).

Silver is still silver, because gold is more precious than it.

It is not to injure the tree, to prefer its fruits to the leaves and roots.

"In the same way that the tree produces fruit, so marriage produces celibacy", says the same S. jerônimo (Contr. Jovin.1,1) "and the more celibacy is esteemed, the greater honor is paid to marriage, which gives origin to virgins (Ad Eustach. 1,22).

S. João Crisóstomo compares the spouses to two fugitive slaves, which the same pair chains closely. They can only take a few steps, because the movements of one make people uncomfortable with those of the other (De virgin. C.41).

"It is true, says Santo Afonso, that the married woman could deserve a lot, by depriving herself of the happiness of praying to the Lord, patiently enduring the servitude to which she is reduced ... She could, but in the midst of so much concern, be- it would be difficult for him to have this resignation, but that the married women would not deserve any censure other than that of being prevented from fulfilling their desires for devotion.

From the above, one can already understand why the Church demands that its ministers or priests solemnly promise to keep continence or perpetual celibacy.

1) Ad Eustochium, 1.1, e. 7. - Nor can they accuse us of this disrepute, because what we wrote in the book "Light in the Darkness", proves in what regard we have this Sacrament, defending its sanctity and indissolubility against the aggressors of Christian morality.

The virtue of chastity is, therefore, a highly meritorious act; the vow to keep it is even more meritorious, because, in addition to the merit of the virtue of chastity, there is this other merit of the virtue of religion, which comes to sanction and sign the chastity.

Virginity is a glorious halo, made up of seven unique privileges, each more glorious than the other. Let us quote them without comment:

1. - Virgins form the angelic family that Jesus Christ came to found in this world.

2. - Virginity went to look for the model in heaven that it wants to imitate on earth.
3. - Virginity is a perfect holocaust, consecrating the body and the soul to God.
4. - The virgin is the wife of Christ; and nothing can match this dignity.
5. - The virgin is the Lord's favorite, because the Lord loves those who love him; the virgin, preferring Jesus Christ to all men, the Lord must love her above other creatures.
6. Virgins are the glory of Christianity. Only Christianity has virgins; no religious sect was able to cultivate this state.
7. - Virgins will have a reward and a special crown in heaven, forming the divine Lamb's own purpose.

These are the admirable glory of virginity.

It is enough to elevate the thoughts of those who have not yet chosen a state of life, and to show them that above the common state there are states more beautiful, more meritorious, more pleasing to God; and, among these states, it is important to play virginity to the fore, kept for the love of God, as a simple virtue or with a private vote, the public vote being reserved for religious life.

XI - Conclusion

As a conclusion, I want to simply answer the questions of the worthy daughter of Maria who wanted to consult me on these questions.

I do not leave, in this chapter, the complete solution of all the questions, reserving the rest, due to its importance, to the next chapter.

1. - What is better? Marriage for those who simply want to save themselves, without great sacrifices.

Single or chaste, for those who wish to please the Lord.

Religious for those who want to be holy.

2. - The signs are indicated: rational inclination, aptitude and consultation with a prudent priest: what constitutes the vocation.
3. - For now, I will just say that celibacy is superior to marriage, because it takes more away from danger, makes virtue practice better, unites God more fully, and receives more beautiful rewards from God.
4. - Yes; there is an obligation to follow your vocation.
5. - No; chastity and convent life are not meant to lead a more peaceful life, but rather more perfect and holier.
6. - No; all states are not equally pleasing to God. The state is a great means of sanctification.

The various paragraphs in this chapter fully resolve the various questions asked.

We can summarize everything by saying that: - God assigns to each man the path he must follow, preparing him, in this path, the necessary help to save himself.

- Man must therefore follow this path, under penalty of being deprived of this aid.

God's vocation or will is manifested by the attractiveness, the ability and the advice of a prudent priest, as a minister of God.

- Man must not blindly follow the simple natural attraction, but the rational, religious attraction, which dictates his conscience and which confirms the minister of God.
- The common state is marriage, being lawful and permitted because it is a holy state.
- The most perfect state is chastity kept in the world, without or with a vote; this state is of advice.
- The state of perfection to be fulfilled is religious life, which, in addition to chastity, offers all means of sanctification, through the removal of dangers, the practice of virtues, union with God, through the sacraments and through prayer.

We can only explain this last state, so that our explanation of the great subject of vocation is not lacking.

TWELVE CONTROVERSY

The religious state

OR SCHOOL OF PERFECTION

For the answer to the worthy consultant to be complete and able to guide those who sincerely seek the perfection and glory of God, it is necessary to address here the religious state, unfortunately very unknown or known only through the prejudices and attacks of the enemies of the Church.

Some clarifications in this regard will be highly instructive and practical, since there are grotesque and depressing errors in this regard.

Let us therefore study this matter with all impartiality, but with all firmness, taking as its sole basis the official doctrine of the Church and its doctors.

1 - Origin of the religious state

The religious state, in what constitutes it essentially, was instituted immediately by Jesus Christ, so that it is of divine right, not in the sense that God compels him to embrace him, but advises him.

Jesus Christ, in fact, as we see in the Gospel, instituted two classes of Christian life:

1. - Ordinary life, to fulfill the commandments of God's law.
2. - The religious state, to be observed the great evangelical councils.

We have all this clearly indicated in the Gospel, in the passage already quoted.

The Savior says: If you want to enter life, keep the commandments (Mt 19,14). It is ordinary life.

If you want to be perfect, go, sell everything you have, and give it to the poor. then come and follow me (Mt19,21). It is the religious state or state of perfection to be acquired.

These are clearly indicated the Christian state, to enter life, and the religious state to reach perfection.

These two states do not suppose that the respective end has already been acquired: life and perfection, but they are the means to acquire it.

Keeping the commandments is the means of acquiring eternal life; observing the councils is the means of achieving perfection.

This distinction is essential, in order to understand that the state does not give eternal life or perfection, but that they are necessary means to acquire them.

there may be, in the ordinary state of Christian life, souls more fervent and even more perfect than in the state of perfection, because people are distinct from the state, which does not prevent such a state from being more appropriate and more useful for acquiring the end of the world. than the other.

Religious life is a state of perfection for those who embrace it, but it will only give perfection to those who fulfill all the duties of this state.

The religious state is one of advice and not of precept (at least as a general rule) and to embrace it one must have a supernatural vocation: that is, the rational attraction, the capacity and the invitation of divine grace.

It is called the religious state and the state of perfection to be acquired (*status perfectionisquirendae*) to distinguish it from the episcopate, which is a state of perfection to be communicated (*status perfectionis exercendae*).

By virtue of his office, the bishop must work to improve others, which implies, on his part, great personal perfection. The religious works to acquire perfection and the bishop works to communicate it to others.

II - Divine institution

It is worth pointing out here some fundamental errors that are made regarding this institution.

Certain authors believe that the religious state is a human work, dating back only to the third century.

It is a very serious mistake.

The religious state is of divine origin.

It is easy to prove it.

The essential part and the accidental part must be distinguished in every organization.

Now, everything that was essentially instituted by Jesus Christ is divine work, although the Church, depository of divine authority, gave these institutions an accidental, more expressive and more determined form than it had at the beginning.

No one disputes, nor can they dispute, that the seven sacraments are of divine institution. It is dogma of faith.

However, Jesus Christ did not indicate accidental ceremonies, neither baptism, nor confirmation, nor penance, nor any other sacrament.

He indicated the matter and the form, or essential part, leaving to his Church the care to frame this part in accidental ceremonies, which best match the dignity, the effects of the institution and the disposition of the people.

Holy Mass is essentially the reproduction of the sacrifice of Calvary and the Last Supper; but in its accidents, as are the rites, the prayers, the ceremonies, it is an ecclesiastical institution.

We must make the same distinction in the religious state.

The essence of this life is to strive for perfection through the practice of councils of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Now, these advices were given by Jesus Christ in person and constitute the essence of religious life; therefore, religious life is a divine institution.

Life or practice, however, is distinct from the state.

The divine institution of councils, as a means of perfection, cannot be discussed unless the Gospel is rejected.

The discussion is about the state that forces you to practice the councils.

There are discussions here, but it is not difficult to resolve them, as they stem from the lack of distinction between life and state, applying this division to the words of Jesus Christ.

Let us look closely at this important point.

III - Religious life and state

Not only did Our Lord give this advice to be practiced in isolation and privately, but He gave it as the basis of a state of life.

There is a big difference between an act and a habit: The act is transitory, the habit is permanent; the repetition of the act produces the habit.

There is the same difference between the practice of a council and the state to practice that council; the practice can be transient; the state is permanent; the practice continues and perseveres produces the state.

Practicing the three evangelical counsels in the world is not a state of perfection, it is an act of perfection.

Every state presupposes a bond that binds and forces you to remain in that state.

Marriage is a state, because such a union is indissoluble.

Chastity in the world will be a state if it is upheld by the promise to keep it forever.

Perfection, in order to be a state, requires vows, by which someone is obliged to persevere forever in the practice of councils.

Jesus Christ instituted the practice of the three councils, not simply as a transitory act, but as a state of life, as can be seen from his own words: If you want to be perfect, go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and then come and follow me (Mt19,21).

After having sold everything, and given the price to the poor, it becomes impossible to recover these goods, so that such an act of renunciation is not a transitional act, which can be portrayed, but constitutes a permanent, stable state.

If it were not so, the Savior would have said, as St. Paul later says: that those who use this world, do as if they did not use it (1Ch 7,30).

he would preach detachment, but he would not demand renunciation, which is completely different.

He does not claim to have no attachment, to hand over the management of goods to others, or to place funds in a safe or productive place, none of this; He takes away all property, all use, all enjoyment, leaving nothing, thus constituting the candidate for perfection in a stable state of poverty.

Who can be poorer in the state than the one who sells everything and gives the price to the poor?

Therefore, there can be no doubt.

Jesus Christ laid the foundations of perfection, through the three great evangelical counsels, and determined, himself, the state in which these counsels should be practiced: he therefore founded life and the religious state.

It is regrettable that there are authors who affirm that the religious state is an ecclesiastical institution, from the third century, taking only its constitutive principles from the Gospel, so that the Savior would be the founder of life and not of the religious state.

Again: it is a mistake ... and a very serious mistake, which no theologian or exegete can accept.

And what is said of poverty, can be said of the two other councils: chastity and obedience.

It is clear that the advice given by Our Lord, in the expression of his terms, determines not only the religious life, but perfectly fixes the state in which this life must be spent: the religious state.

IV - State and Religious Institutes

There is a new distinction to make. The religious life and the religious state are distinct, forming two components of the divine institution.

The religious state and a religious institute are also distinct.

If the religious state is a divine institution, this or that religious institute, canonically governed and approved by the Church, is an ecclesiastical institution.

Institutes, congregations or orders, are founded by men with the approval of the Church, and such institutes are a means of realizing the religious state: they are a means, but they are not an end.

The institute is a means of realizing the religious state; how the religious state, in turn, is a means of practicing evangelical counsels, and how the practice of councils is a means of acquiring perfection.

The ultimate end, then, is perfection.

All religious institutes therefore have a common basis: the practice of the three evangelical counsels; and each has a particular feature, according to the purpose for which its members are destined.

Thus, some are missionaries, others are preachers, others are contemplatives, others are teachers, others are hospitable, others are penitents, etc., etc.

The religious state, in its particular end, encompasses all branches of human beneficence, but in its general end, each seeks perfection, through the practice of evangelical counsels.

The religious state, through the difference in habit, ministry, life and customs, therefore preserves, in all institutes, the complete unity of ideal, which is perfection.

This complete unity is one of the proofs of your divine institution. Only divine works are immutable.

Protestantism is divided into nearly 1000 sects (in 1935), which have no common bond in interpreting the same Bible and achieving perfection.

The Catholic Church forms hundreds and hundreds of different religious institutes by the way of dressing, living, working, but closely united by the same essential law, the same ideal, the same obedience that binds them to the supreme authority of the Church. Everyone wants to achieve perfection by practicing the same evangelical counsels, interpreted by the same authority as the Pope.

V - The Christ, the first religious

From the irrefutable principles that precede I must draw some equally irrefutable theological conclusions, which will shed a ray of light on other errors, regarding the religious state.

For some it will be almost heresy, for others it will almost be a revelation.

What to do? It is always like this: the truth lies between two extremes.

Neither heresy nor revelation, but the truth.

The Acts of the Apostles bring, in the first chapter, in the first verse, a truth of the first importance: - *Caepit jesus facere et docere*: - jesus began to do and to teach (Ac1,1).

He didn't teach anything he didn't do; his teaching was an echo of his actions.

He practiced to later teach.

Now, it is he who taught the three evangelical councils.

He is also the one who taught the need to let go of everything, to renounce everything, to leave father, mother, house, etc., to renounce yourself, to carry the cross, to teach people, etc., etc. .. all these things that make up the essence, the substance, and even the accidents of the religious state .. He taught all this.

Therefore, He practiced it too.

Not only did He found the religious state in general; he even founded the first institute; the first religious community.

Jesus Christ was the first religious; his apostles were his first companions.

He was the first superior; the apostles were the first subjects. they formed the first religious community!

Who knows if they will accuse me of heresy, of exaggeration, of idealism, of utopianism?

So much the worse!

The charge will not fall on me; but, rather, about those saints and theologians who spoke such a truth, long before me.

They are to blame, or rather, the revelators are them.

Let's see it: Jesus Christ, says Suarez, established a private religious institute, bringing together some men and outlining a religious way of life.

They truly took the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; and they did it as referring to the state of perfection.

Jesus Christ called them to mixed life, that is, to a contemplative and active life at the same time, and gave them the special purpose of preaching the Gospel (Suarez1.III. e.2,9).

Here are two proofs of value.

The first, evangelical, founded directly on the word of the divine Master; the second, enunciated by a theological authority that no one knows.

A third proof comes from the perpetuity of the religious state, which, since the apostles, has been kept in the Church, up to the present day, and will be kept until the end of the world.

It is the fact confirming the doctrine: - Ab esse ad posse valet consecutio.

VI - The apostles and successors

But such an assertion, which completely contradicts those who claim that the religious state was born in the third century, from an ecclesiastical institution, requires further proof and comments.

We prove them, because such evidence must exist.

A fact of such importance cannot be overlooked or questionable.

There are renowned theologians who make this truth a doctrinal thesis that is not contradicted. Among them are the formidable Father Alberto Weiss, in his *Apology of Christianity* (Tom.10), the admirable Father Eduardo Hugon, in his theological studies (the brotherhood of the priesthood), the popular Father Berthier, in his *"Etats de vie chrestienne"*, etc.

Let us limit ourselves to summarizing a few pages of Father Hugon: "Jesus Christ should not, nor could he properly make vows. Vows are made to God; and Christ is God. Even as a perfect man, his will was immutably fixed in good; enjoying the beatific vision from the first moment of his mortal life, he could not deviate from God or virtue, but he practiced, in a very prominent way, what makes the background of religious life, and all that is excellent in the three he was the great CONSECRATED to God: - the perfect religious.

It is true, says Father Hugon, that after Our Lord the apostles were the first priests and the first religious. The testimonies of the Holy Fathers in this regard are innumerable.

"The apostles started what the monks of today do," says S. João Crisóstomo (Horn.67).

The primitive Church, adds St. Jerome, was what the monks still try to accomplish today. (From *virile* III. C.11).

"After the apostles, says Saint Epiphane, how many souls led the monastic life in the world?" (Hoeres58).

Cassiano's text is celebrated: "Cenobitic discipline began with the preaching of the apostles" (Coll.18, c.5).

Sto. Thomas is no less expressive: "The apostles, he says, offered the things that belong to the state of perfection, when, leaving everything behind, they followed Jesus Christ" (2a.2ae.q.88, a4).

Then, the bishops with their presbyterium constitute a kind of religious community, since it is certain that the institution of the parish priests, vicar, cures, does not precede the fourth century, and the new Christian centers, more and more numerous, are proving it. they needed priests.

The saints of the following ages sought to resurrect the primitive state.

Saint Athanasius introduced monastic institutions among the clergy into Alexandria.

S. Basilio, S. Gregório de Nazianzo, S. João Crisóstomo were bishops and religious; they lived in a religious community with their priests. So also Saint Eusébio, in Verseil, S. Martinho in Tours, Santo Hilário, in Poitiers, S. Cesário, in Arles and many other bishops formed religious communities, formed community with his clergy.

In the Church of Africa, St. Cipriano in Carthage, St. Augustine in Hippo, and others lived in community with their priests, following the monastic rule.

In the Latin Church the same organization: Saint Ambrose joined religious life to episcopal functions, as Baronius says (Annal ad ann.-374).

St. Gregory the Great, Pope, was a monk of St. Andrew and continued his monastic life in the Vatican.

S. Crodegando, in the Gauls, organized religious life among his clergy.

The National Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 816, made this reform mandatory in all the Gallic dioceses.

Later, S. Pedro Fourier, S. Carlos Borromeu, S. Caetano de Tienna, the venerable Holzhauser endeavored, and with some success, to restore regular life among the secular clergy.

It is useless to prolong these quotes. Let us close them with a word of authority that eclipses all theologians, that of the Holy Father Pius IX, taken from a brief of March 17th, 186th.

"We see, writes this Pontiff, that the ancient laws of the Church not only approved but ordered the priests, deacons and subdeacons to live together, putting in common the religious state of everything that came to them from the ministry of the Churches: and it was recommended to them with all their might to reproduce apostolic life, which is common life. We can only praise and recommend all those who come together to lead this kind of ecclesiastical life "- It should be noted, in fact, that there are two priesthoods: secular priests and regular priests, all have the same character, the same divine physiognomy.

Brothers by ordination, they must remain brothers in the practice of perfection; and for that they must come as close as possible to the priestly ideal - Christ Jesus, who was the great Consecrated to God and the model of all perfection.

VII - The work of Jesus Christ

In the Church there is a hierarchy established by Jesus Christ.

This hierarchy comprises three essential, indestructible elements, which are:

1. - The Pope, as supreme head of the whole Church, independent of all created authority.
2. - The Episcopate, with the fullness of the order, showing legally the full jurisdiction of the Roman Pontificate: *Posuit Episcopos regere ecclesiam*. (Act.20.20).
3. - The Priesthood, or auxiliary of the bishops in the administration of the sacraments and in the preaching of the divine word: "*Sacerdotem oportet praedicare*" (Pont. De Ord. Presb.).

This hierarchy is essential in the Church, so that the Pope cannot destroy either the Episcopate or the Priesthood in general, although he can dismiss such or such in particular.

The priesthood is composed of two categories: the regular priest, linked to God by the evangelical counsels, and the secular priest, linked by one of these councils, mainly by chastity.

As belonging to the same priesthood, regular and secular priests in the Order are on the same line: they are ministers of God.

As consecrated to God, with the obligation to strive for perfection, the regulars take the first place, because, in addition to the sacrament that gives them spiritual power, they are in the state of perfection, which compels them to work for personal holiness.

They are more closely united to God through this new bond, which tightens the bond that is common to them with the secular priest.

It seems that this is simple and logical.

The religious state, in itself, is certainly not the essence of the Church, but it is a constitutive part of its integrity, and as such it is a necessary indestructible part.

The glory of God requires that there be, on earth, Christians entirely consecrated to his service, whose life is like the official recognition of his supreme authority over creatures.

And this title, says Sto. Tomas, is reserved, by antonomase, to those who consecrate themselves to God, as a holocaust: - *Et ideo antonomastice religiosi dicuntur illi*.

It is the *raison d'être* of the religious state, on the part of God.

The Church's economy demands it too.

The Church must revive, as far as possible, the ideal perfection of Jesus Christ, his role as a sanctifier and his personal holiness.

His role as a sanctifier is entrusted to the priesthood.

Your personal holiness must be reproduced by religious life.

The brilliant halo that the true Church manifests, the magnificent note that characterizes it, requires that there be in it not just saints, but a state of holiness; not only a common holiness, but an eminent, perfect holiness that can be noticed and that adds to the observation of the commandments the brightness of the councils (Pius IX. Enc. *Quanta Cura*).

In this way there will be a permanent state of perfection in the Church, an official school, where holiness is taught, learned and acquired.

The religious state, says theologian E. Hugon, thus belongs to the integrity of the Church, being necessary to make the halo of holiness shine.

Like the priesthood, the religious state was instituted by Our Lord, and ordained by Him, who is the eternal Pontiff, at the same time as the Religious of the Eternal Father.

The Church without religious institutes would be an incomplete body, painfully amputated, lacking what most exalts and glorifies it: the glorious legion of its men and women religious.

It would always be the Church, but the Church without a halo, without the most beautiful and most gentle fruit of its doctrine, selflessness, detachment from the things of the world, practiced not accidentally, but obligatorily in the Religious State.

VIII. - Excellence of this state

Here we are fully in the supernatural, in a divine region, where we don't penetrate enough.

God comes to this world to regenerate, restore, elevate ideas and life.

And, in fact, it elevates the world to a height that ancient paganism ignores, and that modern paganism despises.

Jesus came to this world, lived in this world, and as a man can only live in a certain state, He chose, as befits his dignity, the most perfect, most holy state that can be.

I cannot say the holiest that existed, because the religious state did not yet exist, and that is why Jesus Christ founded it, embraced it, and made it adopt it by his apostles.

So it is the holiest state that exists today. This doctrine is irrefutable.

If there have been, at times, errors and doubts in this regard, it is for lack of reflection and understanding of the distinction that exists between the three great states of life: the marital state, the celibate state, of chastity, and the religious state.

It is Suarez who will confirm this doctrine with unanswered logic: "The essential perfection of every state, says this great theologian, requires that man be willing to fulfill all the Lord's precepts, it consists in the life of grace" (Sweating. 1.1.4.4).

"The profession of Christianity is made so that man at least attains this perfection, and that it provides him with the necessary and sufficient means to acquire it.

The state of perfection is also in keeping with the commandments. After the remission of sins, it is above all necessary to preserve grace and avoid mortal sin.

As this is very difficult for fallen nature, Jesus Christ instituted a state, where there were fewer occasions for sin and less danger of losing grace, and this is one of the ends of the state of perfection "(Suar.1.1, c.11.9 "Finally, the perfection to which the religious state tends consists in the desire to fulfill the will of God, not only in what it manifests by the commandments, but also in what it makes us known by the councils" (lb.11), The doctor angelico, Sto. Tomás, is no less expressive in this respect, he speaks as an incomparable master. now, one of the main acts, is to offer sacrifices to God; and the most perfect of sacrifices is the holocaust, whereby not only a part of the victim is offered to the creator, but the entire victim.

The practice of the three evangelical councils, or the three vows, makes man a complete holocaust.

Man has three kinds of goods: fortune, which he sacrifices for poverty; the body, which sacrifices for chastity; of the soul, which consecrates to God by obedience.

In making this holocaust complete, man performs the most excellent of religious acts, and must be called religious par excellence "(Sto.Tom. Sum. 2.2, q.186, a7, Opusc. 18, c.11).

Here, then, is a solid, unassailable base, which completely abates those erroneous opinions that make one believe that the religious state is only an ecclesiastical institution or vaguely appointed by the Savior, without having been practiced by him and his apostles.

Such an error, which is found in many books, is absolutely condemned by the Church, by theologians, as by simple common sense. But let's go ahead, we have other horizons to reveal.

IX - Essential part of Christianity

To give its religious status its fair value, it is not necessary that there were convents in the time of the apostles; there were not even churches yet; without going back to Sto. Elias and Saint John the Baptist, as historians once did (Sozomeno: Hist. Eccl.1,12) all of this is useless, since the greatest glory of religious life is that it was instituted and practiced by Jesus Christ.

The glory of the religious state is in the Gospel, both in its principles and in its form.

It is the reason why the Holy Fathers do not hesitate to call it "the true life, the only evangelical and apostolic life" (1).

"Those who chose the religious life, says Sto. Augustine, are the soldiers, the chosen troop that Jesus Christ opposes to his enemies". (2).

These are his true disciples who fully observe the law and seek to live in such a way that Christ is in their midst, as he once was in the midst of his apostles "(3).

"His life is nothing but the imitation of the life of the apostles" (4).

1) Basil: Ep. 295. - Cassiano: Collat. 21 - Rupert: Tuit, Vita. vera a.postal.5,14.

2) S. Aug., C. Faust., V, 9; Ep. 220.12.

3) S. Aug., In Psa.lm., 132.9.

1) S. Bern., Dlv. Serm., 22.2; 27.3; 38.7.

What to conclude from that?

That such a life is not of human invention, but it is a divine institution, as the great means necessary to reach perfection.

Now, the Church does not simply have to save men; it also has, and above all, to elevate them to holiness.

Such is its essential end.

And to achieve this end, an absolutely necessary means is the religious state, which has for its own purpose, by its divine institution, the perfection or holiness of souls.

Hence it must be concluded that the religious state is an essential part of Christianity.

Here I go against many prejudices and popular ideas. It does not matter; the truth is one, and the errors are many.

There are many people who admit that the religious state is of great use in the Church, which

has done great good in the evangelization of the world, etc .; but that, if the Church did not exist, it could very well pass away from it, and continue its civilizing and sanctifying work.

Ah! if so, tell me, why do the enemies of Religion concentrate all their hatred against convents and religious, whether by the press, by words or by violence?

Is it because they think these convents are the least part of the Church they hate?

And the devil will be so badly warned that, wanting to destroy the Church of Christ, he will start by defying birds and killing flies, as being a harmless part of the kingdom he wants to conquer?

Or has Satan become so stupid that he just wants to be worshiped as a god of flies and birds, making war on them first?

can there be Catholics who believe that?

The world also has eyes, and even eyes of Argus, to see reality.

The world knows, as Satan does, that the living force, the militant force, the conquering force, the heroic force, the invincible strength of the Church is hidden behind these convent doors, where you live, where you fight, where you die for the triumph of the holy Church.

He knows it, and that is why he directs all the batteries, all the machine guns of the pen, the tongue and the brute force against the religious state.

Does he know that there is the strength of the Church, and that strength would be just an adornment, an ornament, an accident of the Church?

No, not a thousand times. The religious state is a main, substantial and essential part of the Church, it is one of its foundations (1) is its heart. (2).

He who attacks the religious state does not simply remove an accidental part of the Church, arbitrarily invented and superfluous, but removes from him the most essential thing, the marrow, the flower, the cornerstone (3).

This is what he said to a distinguished canonist, who was not religious: - "It is false to pretend that only the secular clergy is necessary for the Church, and that it could very well dispense with the regular clergy.

It is the opposite that is the truth, namely, that the secular clergy is not necessary for the Church and that it could very well exist, even if there were no secular clergy in the whole world "(4).

1) S. Bern., Apost. ad Guilh .. 10.24.

2) S. Bern ., ad part. in Syn. V, 76, d.

3) S. Jeron .. Epist. 46.10.

4) Bonix, De jure regularium (2), l.174. See Brandere, Jus Can., 1,445. - Cresson, Ma.n. Jur. Ca.nn2,508. - Thomassin, Vetus and new Eccl. disc. 1.1.3. - Hugon, Fraternité du Sacerdoce, and. II. - Alb. Weiss, Apol. du Chriet, conf. XV.

The Church could - although it never made it suppress the secular clergy and compel all its members to become religious, as did Saint Eusébio de Vercell, and other bishops (1); but he could not, without going against the Gospel, suppress the regular clergy and force him to

become secular; because it would be to deny the divine word, the divine institution, the life of Jesus Christ, and to suppress what is essential to the life of the Church, the state of perfection, represented by the religious state.

1) Bonix, De jure regaul (2), I, 176 sec.

X - Modern novelty

Such a doctrine seems almost new.

Yes, it is a novelty in the midst of false ideas propagated by wickedness and ignorance, as the Gospel of Christ is a novelty for those who ignore it.

It is said of Luiz XIV, who, having heard of the great popularity of a missionary who preached in Paris, who had aroused a general enthusiasm, he asked one of the princes of the court what was particular about the sermons of the religious.

- It is a novelty, replied the courtier, and your majesty knows that the French people like novelties.

- And what's this news?

- This priest preaches the Gospel.

We are a little bit in the same case.

So many calumnies have been published against Jesuits and friars, there have been so many persecutions, that the people, without believing in the calumnies, believe, however, that there are many absurdities, many extravagances, and thus they appreciate the religious state, through the prism of these slander and persecution, and he no longer sees in the religious state but a form of life, like any other, without distinguishing people and the state, the doctrinal truth and the personal fact ... and in this way the religious state becomes a novelty.

And my elucidation will participate in this novelty, although it is old, of an old age of 19 centuries.

Old, forgotten thing becomes new when it reappears in public.

In this way, old doctrines become new, after being ignored for a certain time.

Today, that wickedness seeks to undermine the Church of Christ, gathering under its banner Protestantism, Freemasonism, Spiritism, Bolshevism, it is necessary that the Catholic truth not only shines with more brilliance, but finds recruits of value, strength, conviction for to increase the living strength of the Church, the vanguard of its teachings, which is the religious state.

It is necessary that the ardent and idealistic youth of our time sees, in addition to the honors, dignity and power of the priesthood, which is proper to all priests, the sublimity and perfection of the religious state.

The Catholic Church is holy, not only because she has isolated saints at all times, but above all because there has always been and always will be in her the state of perfection and the solemn obligation to work for the acquisition of holiness; what would be impossible without the religious state.

It is not such or such an institute that is necessary; none of them in particular is necessary:

what is needed is the religious state ... it is the religious ones ... it is the religious life. No one is scandalized by this truth. It is not an exaggeration, nor a novelty, it is the great evangelical, doctrinal and historical truth. This truth, however, must be well understood.

My intention is not to exalt some to humiliate others, but only to point out an evangelical truth that many modern writers misrepresent or seem to ignore.

XI - Secular and regular clergy

These are states and not people, a distinction that is essential.

In an upper state there may be inferior people, as in an inferior state there may be superior people.

Habit does not make the monk.

The house does not make the saint.

The state is not superior.

I have shown in previous lines that the religious state is above simple chastity and that simple chastity is above marriage.

This does not mean that each celibate is worth more than the married, and that each religious is worth more than the celibate in the world.

If each person perfectly fulfilled all the duties of his state, then, yes, such a gradation would exist. But human miseries are numerous; it turns out, however, that such a married man is more generous than certain celibates and even certain religious. This is personal perfection, regardless of the state embraced.

The comparison does not extend to people, but only to the state of life.

In the Gospel, Jesus Christ speaks of prudent virgins and foolish virgins.

Judas was lost as a fallen apostle.

Sto. Augustine sanctified himself as a regenerated pagan.

São Paulo was a persecutor, and became a vessel of choice.

Julião, the apostate, was a seminarian and became a persecutor and apostate.

The angels sinned in heaven.

Adam and Eve sinned in paradise.

There are men and women, who live like angels, in the midst of the mire of this world.

In the same way I compared the secular clergy to the regular clergy and said that the state of the regulars, by the divine institution, is far above the state of the secular priests.

I said this by comparing states; I deny it when it comes to people.

In the secular clergy there are holy, zealous priests of great virtue, who personally are far above the person of certain slovenly, lukewarm and careless religious.

The person is distinct from the state, as birds are distinct from the cage.

The gold cage can house a repellent owl. The buriti cage can contain a charming canary.

Virtue is personal; the state of life is common to all who embrace it.

It is the personal virtue that sanctifies the state.

It is not the state that gives virtue; it is only a means of acquiring it.

Putting the two on the same plane, on the same virtue, the secular priest and the religious priest, there can be no doubt that the latter is superior to the former.

There would be a threefold distinction to be made between them: the state, the order, the office.

As a state, the religious is more perfect.

As an order, the two are the same.

As an office, it is necessary to examine each one's apostolate.

The great advantage of the religious state is that it does not suffer from mediocrity.

The axiom applies to it: "Where it is good, there is nothing better; but where it is bad, there is nothing worse".

São Bernardo said: "I don't know people better than those who exercise themselves perfectly in the religious state, but I don't know people worse than those who don't love God there".

Let us well remember the distinction between state and person, between habit and the monk. We don't compare people, we compare states.

There cannot, and should not be, rivalries between the secular and regular clergy; what there must be and what there is, fortunately, is the fraternity founded on similarity and a community of nature through the participation of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. They are brothers by the unique priesthood. The habit can be different, as the homelands, education, language are different. However, they have the same character and the same power.

XII - Conclusion

Let's finish here.

It is not my end to make a complete study of the religious state; I just want to avenge you for the ignorance you don't know and the perversity that you fell for.

The religion of Jesus Christ is not afraid of study, insight, penetration, light; she fears only ignorance and addiction.

That is why it is necessary, from time to time, to point out certain truths that wickedness attacks and covers up, to restore to them the shine of their divine origin.

This is the case with the religious state.

This state is not well known, nor appreciated, due to the slanders and sarcasms of wickedness.

What I have exposed here is the simple but profound doctrine of this divine institution.

The worthy consultant who referred to this state will now judge what that state is, what its greatness and what are its advantages.

It is clear that the religious state is not of precept, but of advice.

It is advice to embrace him, but it is precept to reach perfection: If you want to be perfect, says the Savior.

It does not oblige those who simply want to save themselves to enter the religious state; but it obliges anyone who wants to be perfect, as this state is the proper means of achieving perfection.

And who should embrace this state?

Those who are called, who have a supernatural vocation, that is, the attraction for the desire to sanctify themselves, the ability to fulfill the duties inherent in this state, and the advice of a prudent and educated confessor.

The vocation, being well determined, it would be dangerous not to follow it.

"It does not seem doubtful, says Santo Afonso, who expose their salvation to those who, being sure of being called to the religious state, try to persuade themselves that they will be able to save themselves as well in the world as in the convent (Theol. Mor.1.4, c .1).

The Holy Doctor concludes with these words, which will also form the conclusion of this study: "Those who are called are obliged to enter religion, because God will refuse them in the world the help he prepared for them in the convent; and, although they may be saved in the world, with ordinary graces, they will hardly be saved ".

THIRTEEN CONTROVERSY

The real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist

We received the following letter, which deserves a complete answer, because of the importance of the subject:

Hon. and Rt. Fr. Júlio Maria Due to certain objections about the institution of the Eucharist, of a cultured person and of influence in our environment, I think, as a Catholic that I am, in order to deflect certain doubts, that you publish an article clarifying the interpretation of the words who instituted the aforementioned sacrament.

For the objections, the words of Christ were to be interpreted in a spiritual way, and yet the Church materialized them.

In my impotence, I come to appeal to your never-denied zeal to show how the Church has recognized the admirable truth, elevating it to dogma of faith.

From V. Revma.

Servant in Jesus Christ RP

I - Answer

The satanic hatred that the poor and obsessed Protestants are concentrating on the Holy Eucharist and the SSma is well known to all. Virgin.

Is there any glimpse of reason in this hatred capable of explaining it?

No; absolutely none but the perversity of error.

The foundation of the Catholic Religion is the divine person of Jesus Christ, but not this

simply historical person enclosed in the pages of a book, as Protestants do, but, rather, this divine person, alive, remaining what he was during the thirty and three years of his mortal life: - light, love and strength.

Christ is eternal, not simply from an eternity of time, but from an eternity of Savior, Master, Father, Victim, as he has been throughout his earthly life.

Protestants relegate Jesus Christ, enclosing him in the pages of a book, of a dead letter. He is a past Christ, a dead Christ, a Christ who transmits to us only the distant echo of his word and his examples.

The Protestant Christ is a paper Christ.

He doesn't speak, he doesn't love ...; it transmits only remote thoughts and teachings, which they interpret to their taste, twist, tear and apply to their will.

However, Christ said it was the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14,6).

To walk, you need strength; To know the truth, one needs to teach it; To have life, you must have love.

Strength, teaching and love, these are three essential elements for the life of the soul.

Strength is given to us by Holy Communion.

Teaching is given to us by authority, that is, by the Pope, successor of Saint Peter.

Love comes to us through the motherly heart of SSma. Virgin Mary.

And the poor Protestants have nothing more of it all ... They rejected everything, as a prank to the Catholic Church, which keeps it all.

It is the only reason that can be found.

Reason of hatred, of praise; just it..

And that is not from God; such reasons are of the devil.

II - Interpretation of the Bible

Let us now examine closely the text mentioned by our worthy consultant.

Protestants say that Christ's words should be interpreted spiritually, yet the Church has materialized them.

Such words show a gross ignorance of all the laws of interpretation, and a singular aberration of common sense.

Common sense tells us that the first interpretation, the fundamental interpretation, must be the material sense, which is called, in its own term, the grammatical, literal sense and that one should not resort to the metaphorical sense, or the spiritual sense, unless we cases where the first cannot be applied.

For example, when I say: I want to eat bread, every man of common sense understands that I am hungry and I want to eat bread from the bakery.

In the same way, when I say: I am thirsty, everyone will think of serving me with a glass of water.

And why is that?

Because such is the grammatical and literal meaning of the sentence.

However, Sacred Scripture speaks of those who are hungry and thirsty for justice - *Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam* (Mt 5,6).

When a Protestant says he is hungry and thirsty, will it be necessary to bring him to justice?

Everyone understands that this meaning is metaphorical, and that the first meaning is the grammatical meaning.

So also in the Gospel.

The first sense to adopt, according to context and meaning, is the literal sense, so bread is bread and wine is wine.

However, the opposite happens, when any explanatory term is added to the word, clearly indicating that this word must be taken in another sense.

For example, saying: the bread of charity - drying the tears of those who suffer - eating the divine word, sowing good works - and even catching the moon with your teeth, any man of good sense understands the metaphorical meaning of these words, because the context expresses it, and the fact is impossible. Nor did Luther catch the moon with his teeth.

III - The exegetical application

Let us now examine the gospel text, to see what interpretation should be applied to it.

The institution of the Holy Eucharist is narrated by St. Matthew, in the following terms: And while they were eating, Jesus took the bread and blessed it and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said: take and eat; this is my body (Mt26,26).

Let's face it: what bread is this passage about? will it be a spiritual bread?

It's impossible; the text is positive, of course, without figures. It's lightning. Everything there is connected in a unity of thought and expression, that it is impossible to deviate from the meaning of a single word.

Let's see: It is a supper - Jesus takes the bread - breaks this bread - gives this bread to the disciples - makes them eat this bread. All of this forms a perfect supper set.

It cannot be spiritual bread, nor allegorical: it is bread.

And this bread, says the Savior, is my body.

He does not say: he figures or represents my body ... but this is my body. Now, for anyone who knows how to speak, say: this is my body, it is your body.

And if someone said: this is my hat, this is my tie, it seems to me that everyone would understand that the object in their hand is quite their hat or tie.

Of two one! Either Jesus Christ does not know how to speak, or does not understand the meaning of the terms he uses.

And which Protestant would have the courage to say this? Jesus Christ, when he speaks figuratively, is careful to always warn.

For example: The kingdom of God is similar to a mustard seed (Mt 13,31). The kingdom of

God is similar to a sower (Id.24) - to yeast (Id.33) - to a treasure (Id.44) - to a king (Id.18,23) - to a family man (Id.20,1), etc.

Our Lord knows how to speak, his word is luminous, although there are, as a consequence of traditions, customs and times, many passages of difficult interpretation - Quaedam difficilia intellectu (2Pet.3,16).

Such difficulty does not come from the divine word, but from our ignorance.

In the quoted text, everything is clear, and no difficulties exist.

Jesus takes the bread, blesses this bread, breaks it, gives it to the disciples, saying: Take and eat, this is my body.

Is it not clear that Jesus has just changed the substance of the bread, in the substance of his body?

It was material bread, and now it is your natural body.

It is not a parable, a comparison.

it is a physical reality: - That is.

And this is my body.

If Jesus Christ knows how to speak and understands the meaning of the terms, then we must conclude that the bread that he had in his hands, by the divine blessing given, has truly become his body.

There is no other way out, nor any subterfuge, other than impiety, hatred, voluntary blindness that you don't want to see.

It is not, therefore, a matter of materializing what is spiritual, since here it is material.

Why do Protestants want to spiritualize what is material, and why do they elsewhere materialize what is spiritual?

Only by the spirit of contradiction.

It is the habit of contradicting the truth.

It's the craze to protest against everything ...

That is why they are Protestants.

Little honorable and little spiritual title!

IV - Protestant counterfeiting

The previous answer would be enough to elucidate the question at issue; but when I finished this answer, I found in the "Batista newspaper" a small piece of gold, or leather, which will serve me to catch these Protestants in the act of biblical forgery.

In its December 7, 1933, there is in the doctrinal part of it the following consultation with a Protestant: - Please explain about João, 6,53,57.

Such is the consultation. Now look at the phenomenal response of the resentful Baptist, revealing his stupendous exegetical ignorance, or else, his diabolical perversity.

Here it is:

1. "Jesus therefore said to them, Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, you will not have life in you (Jn 6,53). The following verses, up to 63, clarify completely what Jesus meant in this one, he himself gave the interpretation of his words, so as not to leave a trace of doubt, and there would be no such doubt if the Catholic Church had not materialized those words which Jesus himself declared were figurative, and should be "spiritually understood. "The spirit is what gives life, the flesh does not use anything; the words I have told you are spirit and life" (v63). Or, in other words: "If I gave you my own meat to eat, it would be of no benefit to you, because meat has no spiritual value; it is always meat". That in spite of so clear and peremptory statements by Jesus himself, the doctrine of eating Jesus materially to give life to the soul was established, is the most stupendous and incomprehensible thing that can exist in this world. This proves, however, that there is no doctrine no matter how false and absurd it is that it does not find anyone who accepts it and believes in it ".

V - The text of the Gospel

The Baptist fanatic says that the following verses, up to 63, completely clarify what Jesus meant in this one.

We agree.

Perfectly. Such words of Jesus Christ are so clear and positive that it is enough to quote them to be understood by anyone.

That is why the Baptist friend does not quote them, but seeks to deflect the meaning of the word of Jesus Christ by covering them with slander.

But, dear pastor, slander is not an argument; it's a lie!

The consultant does not ask what the Catholic Church teaches; he only asks for an explanation of the text.

And why didn't you give the explanation requested?

Why divert the query and make comments that do not belong to the text?

I prefer to suppose that it is ignorance, but I should say that it is perversity.

Let us quote, in its entirety, the text indicated, in order to appreciate its meridian clarity, which Protestants distort, hide, twist, not to tell the truth, with lying and slander being their usual explanation.

Let us therefore read the Gospel text well, which is the complete and granitic condemnation of Protestant absurdity.

Take the entire quote from verse 48 through 61, as the context illuminates the text and indicates its true meaning: (Jn 6:48, a61).

VI - The meaning of the text

The quoted text is so luminous that it does not even need elucidation.

Luther himself, father, grandfather and teacher of the Protestants, recognizes the brilliant clarity of this text, calling those who dare to deny it foolish.

These would-be sages, he writes, would do me a great service if they gave me the means to deny it; as for me, not the post, because the text is too clear - nimio apertus.

It is true that the new Lutherans inherited only the hatred of the old Luther, without even possessing his intelligence.

In fact, every man of common sense, examining this text, must admit that it is a physical reality, a real food, drink, or else he must say that Jesus Christ is playing, mocking the language he speaks and the apostles who listen to you.

If this passage is about a simple piece of bread, a simple glass of wine, why so many ceremonies, why this mysterious tone and manner? Why are these veiled, incomprehensible expressions? Why is all this?

Would Jesus Christ have lost his accustomed seriousness, falling from his clear and transparent language in this bombastic mess that can only say hollow, meaningless words?

Think carefully, my dear Baptist.

I suppose that any baker goes to Rio, and with complaints and speeches attracts the people of the capital around him, saying that he will communicate something very important to them.

And this man, on the occasion of the general meeting, would begin to claim his bread, exclaiming: That he is the bread of life ...

How about bread came down from heaven.

That those who eat it will never die ...

That such bread is the salvation of the world.

How about bread is your meat.

That is your blood ..

Which is superior to desert manna, etc.

And at the end of this spiel, the man would display a piece of bread, which he would have bought at the nearest bakery ..

What would we say of such a man?

The 886 Protestant sects (in 1935), in a single voice, would shout that he was a madman ... a fugitive from the asylum.

And not only would they say so, but we would all be in agreement.

But then, my dear Baptist, why do you attribute to Jesus Christ a joke that you disapprove of in any other?

Reread the divine Master's serious, solemn, majestic words well, and then tell me if such a language is conceived to promise a piece of bakery bread! ..

Finally, in its Baptist language, the Eucharist is just that!

It's a supper !.

But, so much noise, so much talk to announce a supper, in which (as Protestants say) Christians will take a slice of bread and drink a sip of wine in remembrance of the Lord.

Don't you see that this is extremely ridiculous, and that they make Jesus Christ a true market clown?

For God's sake, shut up ... The majestic, sweet and sublime figure of Jesus does not lend itself to such a degrading role!

It is blasphemy.

If you do not respect the doctrine of the divine Master, respect at least your lovely person!

VII - Protestant cunning

Protestants' cunning is known to deviate texts from their natural meaning, approaching the text to explain other texts of completely different meaning.

Here we have a striking example here.

I wish I could excuse such an approach, attributing it to ignorance, but it is impossible.

In addition to ignorance, there is clearly here wickedness, hatred, contempt for the word of God, giving it voluntarily and grossly the meaning that it does not have, nor can have.

If my dear Baptist did not understand such wickedness, my readers will understand it; and my antagonist, if you have a little sincerity, will not fail to examine the refutation of your mistakes .. and from this examination he is able to sprout a spark of light ... that makes you see - and who knows, maybe - straighten your its so many heretical explanations.

The text quoted in the Gospel of St. John clearly shows that it is not a figurative, symbolic bread, but the body of the Savior, his own body, which he wants to give as food to souls: I am the bread of life - I am the living bread - the bread that I will give is my flesh (Jn 6,48,51,52).

Of course: the bread that Christ is going to give is living bread; the bakery's is dead bread; such bread is its meat; it is not wheat flour, nor any other, as used in the Protestant supper.

In the face of so much clarity, as it is lightning, our Baptist friend will fish any text to contradict the word of Jesus Christ.

The continuation of the text is admirable, confirming the above, and refuting possible objections in advance. But it doesn't matter to the friend, what he wants is an objection, leave it wherever you want.

The continuation of the text reads:

61. Many therefore of his disciples, hearing this, said, This language is hard, and who can hear it?

62. But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured, therefore said to them, Does this offend you?

63. What if you see the Son of Man going up to where He was before?

64. The spirit is what gives life: the flesh does not use anything; the words I told you are spirit and life.

65. But there are some of you who don't believe.

Because Jesus knew from the beginning who were the ones who didn't believe, and who was to deliver him.

Let us stop here, and let us now see the meaning of this text, which is completely different from the meaning given by the Baptist friend (Jn 6,61-66).

VIII - The interpretation of this text

Let us examine the text and the context well, and we will see the truth exposed by the Savior shine with meridian light.

Jesus has just said that he will give his flesh to eat and his blood to drink (Jn 6,55).

Such language amazes the disciples. It is natural ... It would have surprised us as well.

Imagine! .. Jesus, so serious, so sublime, so exact in all his expressions, saying, suddenly, that he will give his body to eat and his blood to drink; and he says this with a vigor of expression that does not allow for replication.

Naturally, the materialist Jews believed that Jesus was going to cut a piece of his flesh to make them eat it, and was going to open a vein to make him drink his blood.

This is too much ... they are horrified and exclaim: This language is harsh and who can hear it?

The evangelist notes that Jesus knew the doubt, the hesitation of his disciples.

Will He retract himself?

No, on the contrary, it will reaffirm, rectify the materialistic ideas of its listeners.

He asked them: Hoc vos scandalizat?

Does this scandalize you? It's because? Do you think that I cannot give you my flesh to eat, how can I go up to heaven where I came from? Isn't one more difficult than the other?

You do not understand these words, continues the Master, because you are material; you are flesh, and the flesh does not understand such sublime truths; it must be the spirit (the faith) that receives these words of mine; for the words which I have just said to you are spirit and life, that is, faith and reality.

But there are some among you who do not have this spirit of faith; that is why they doubt and do not believe my words.

See, dear Baptist, how the text develops logically and with unambiguous clarity.

Our Lord does not retract, does not contradict himself, does not back down, but shows the disciples that it is not, in fact exposed, to cut off a piece of his body to feed, which would be the materialistic sense, but, rather, a miracle that he will do, instituting, later, the Eucharist.

And to better highlight this miracle, he compares it to his glorious ascension.

This miracle is the transubstantiation, or change of bread and wine, in the body and blood of the Savior, through the words of the Consecration, indicated by Him at the institution of this Sacrament.

It is what we call the sacrifice of the Mass.

I ask the Baptist friend to compare the terms of the Gospel well, to see that in the text quoted the word flesh does not refer to the body of Jesus, as some verses above (49 to 51) but to the carnal man, homo carnalis (1Cor 3,1).

Such an interpretation is obvious and the only one that matches the context, the circumstances and the people.

The spirit is what gives life - the flesh does not use anything.

It can be seen that here it is not about the spirit of the Savior, nor of his flesh, but of the men who are listening to him, and who belong to these two opposite categories: of the spirit, by faith, of the flesh, by materialism.

The first gives life, gives life, by understanding the exposed truth; the second is useless, due to the lack of understanding of the sublime doctrine that Jesus has just exposed.

And in the latter case is Judas; all Protestants are in perpetual opposition to the words of Jesus Christ, materializing everything, and making the life-giving word of the Gospel a dead word, a letter that kills; because they adapt only the letter, inserting their own spirit in this letter, replacing the spirit of Jesus, as in the present case.

That is why the Master ends his sublime instruction by saying: The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

Being spirit, they can only be understood by the spirit and not by the flesh.

Being life, they must be animated by their spirit, which is the only life, and not by the spirit of the flesh, which is the individual Protestant interpretation.

What clearer and more logical thing?

IX - Conclusion

It is clear and logical, and that is why it is not Protestant.

To this clarity of text now oppose the babble of the Baptist friend.

Christ has just said that he is going to give his meat to eat, and that his meat is truly eaten (Jn 6,56), and, shortly thereafter, according to the Protestant interpretation, He would say (see the objection: it is textual) " If I gave you my own meat to eat, it would be useless, because meat has no spiritual value: it is always meat ".

Tell me, dear Baptist, after calm and dispassionate reflection, can a sensible man stop exclaiming: But then, either Christ does not know what he is saying, or he is contradicting himself, lying shamefully, because at the same time he affirms and denies the same thing.

Will the friend have the courage to draw this conclusion?

However, it is the only one that can be removed, following its interpretation.

Poor Protestant hatred !.

It is the application of the Proverbs' sentence: Odium raises quarrels: - hatred provokes fights (Pv.10,12).

All Protestant fights or objections stem from the ignorant hatred they devote to the Catholic Church.

The word of Jesus Christ may be crystal clear, but Protestants will first examine what the Catholic Church teaches, and then say the opposite.

The present example is striking, as are all the controversies already published.

In the present case, Jesus Christ affirms that the meat to be fed is not his actual flesh, but his glorified flesh after his death, by resurrection.

Therefore, he says in the future: - The bread that I will give is my meat (Jo6,52).

You should give this bread at the Last Supper.

Since the Jews did not understand this miracle, I passed on to divine omnipotence, the Savior shows them that they must receive their relations with faith, and not in a materialistic sense.

It was not his body, in the present state, but in the glorified state, after the resurrection.

Beware, Catholics, of the Protestant poison. Catholic truth is almost always a denial of what they deny.

I fought their mistakes ... and always stand firm in the teaching of the Catholic Church, the only true one.

FOURTH FOUR CONTROVERSY

Popular objections and responses

ABOUT VARIOUS MATTERS

A friend sent me a list of objections collected among the people.

These are not scientific or even religious difficulties, but only objections against common sense, which certain enemies of Religion, indifferent or ignorant, formulate, without bothering to examine them closely to give them the answer that dictates the good each one's sense.

With the author's bow, I reproduce the letter and objections here, giving them a short but decisive answer.

Ilmo. Mr. P.] ulio Maria.

My parents were Catholics, so I followed the religion that they taught me for many years; I am baptized, married in the Church and my children are all baptized. For some time now, due to the reading of the newspaper "A Lanterna ", I am becoming a little skeptical in view of the doubts I have about the facts that go in the form of questions next to this one.

I therefore ask you, Mr. who explains everything that is asked so clearly, explain some points to me so that I don't lose my parents' belief.

I think that God, having created the world and placed us here, should have given us more foresight so that we could better avoid mistakes; and yet, it surrounds us with dangers and then it doesn't forgive us.

I - Bad readings

We have two points to make in this first part of the consultation:

1 - reading wicked newspapers.

2 - preservation of error.

The friend will immediately understand the opposition between these two elements.

Suppose a friend came to the Lord and said: Look, friend, I am losing my health, I feel weak, due to the excess of alcohol that I am drinking; it seems to me that God should have made man's organism stronger so that he could withstand a few complete cocktails.

What would you answer?

I would certainly answer the following: - Look, my friend, enjoying health and drinking cachaça are two things that do not match. You stop killing the animal, otherwise the animal kills you. Either one, or stop drinking, or renounce health. The answer would be short, but clear and sure.

Let the friend ask you the same question. Reading immoral, communist newspapers that respect nothing in this world, infamous newspapers that are a real shame for a civilized people, such as that lantern, and wanting to preserve their faith, this is impossible. There are two antipodes.

The lantern is the devil's lantern.

Faith is God's beacon.

Wanting to bring the two together is impossible. Only the sickening smell, or the pestilential miasma of such a lantern, is able to extinguish faith in the soul of a Christian, just as the smell of certain rot is capable of stifling the breath of a human chest.

Such a lantern should never be found in a Catholic home.

It is the lowliness and the infamy personified.

Faith is an immense gift from God. God gives us faith, but we must keep it, preserving it from dangers and cultivating it through the practice of religion. Anyone who approaches a chasm uselessly and recklessly cannot complain of falling into it.

Whoever puts the cause is responsible for the effect.

God does everything he can to keep us from evil: he warns us, shows us the abyss, indicates the means to avoid it, so that if anyone falls into it, it is because he obstinately wants it.

Now, against these, God can do nothing without violating our freedom.

And God must respect this freedom, because without it man would cease to be a man, to become an animal.

It is, therefore, our duty to ward off intellectual evil (and the lantern is one of the greatest) just as there are moral and physical evils that can harm us.

God forgives such faults, it is true, but on condition that there is repentance and a willingness to ward off dangers.

It is not clairvoyance that we lack, but generosity, and generosity is reached through prayer.

As my consultant is a man of character, I am sure he will understand my answer, immediately reducing it in practice, will stop signing and reading such filth that is the lantern, and will instead read Catholic newspapers, which explain and defend religion.

With this simple measure, the friend will feel his faith increase and grow, and will be worthy of the faith of his parents and his youth.

II - The devil

If God is omnipotent, how does He allow the devil to continue to pursue the souls he created?

God allows the devil to tempt men, to give them proof of their worth and generosity.

The devil's temptations are not evil, for man can make them a source of good; cowards, on the contrary, are deceived by the devil.

Sin is not in temptation, but in consent.

Now, God always gives us the grace to resist the devil; just ask for it.

In this way, man remains in humility, recognizes his weakness and practices prayer, turning to God: they are two great means of sanctification.

If God is the enemy of the devil, why does he punish those who sin?

Yes, God is the enemy of the devil; we must be, moving away from their pitfalls.

Falling into sin, God must punish us, for we are the ones who do evil by committing sin.

III - The Masses

If God consents that sinful souls: only go to purgatory, what is infallible, what then are masses worth?

Yes, God consents, so that souls with light sins can atone for their faults in purgatory and then enter heaven.

The souls in purgatory can do nothing for themselves; it is we who must offer them the merits of Jesus Christ, in his passion and death. Now, since the Mass is the bloodless renewal of the bloody sacrifice of Calvary, there can be nothing more meritorious than this sacrifice, for the relief and liberation of souls from purgatory.

IV - Diseases

If God had the power to create the universe and put his beloved children, who are men, why did he make tuberculosis, cancer, leprosy and other diseases?

Here, there is great confusion in the querent's ideas.

God's works are perfect, and God cannot do evil or imperfect works, because they are repugnant to his goodness. God did not make tuberculosis, or cancer, or leprosy, and no other disease.

He created man with perfect health, without suffering and without death; but he created the free man.

Man abused this freedom, revolted against God and launched himself into all aberrations of pride and sensuality.

Hence the damage to the human organism, due to the appearance of all diseases.

The disease is a denial: the denial of health.

God created health, but man spoiled it through abuse, the consequences of which are passed down from father to son, from generation to generation, causing the numerous diseases known today.

God cannot create a denial.

Now, disease is the denial of health as death is the denial of life, as madness is the denial of intelligence. God created health, life, intelligence, but man removes these gifts and spoils them of his own free will.

We are the cause of such evils, we alone.

That is why the Gospel says that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. - Non est Deus mortuorum, sed viventium" (Mt 22,32).

This: it is not the God of denial, but of affirmation; life is the affirmation; death is the negation of life.

V - Insects

What is the advantage of the saúva, the rat, the bug, the snake and other evil beings?

Such beings must have their use, since they are creatures of God, since God does nothing useless.

In every creature it is necessary to distinguish two things: the beneficial side and the harmful side.

This exists between men and animals. There is no man so bad that he does not have any good quality, nor is there so good that he does not have, for some, a bad side.

So do animals.

I do not want to enter into zoological considerations here, which is useless, since my consultant can see in any book of natural history the usefulness of frogs, snakes, rats, etc., and even of hawks, bedbugs, etc.

Certain insects, such as bedbugs, fleas, lice, etc., which seem to be the most boring, have a use: they force men to take better care of cleanliness, cleanliness, order, etc.

Without the inconveniences of these insects, how many people would neglect the issue of hygiene and cleanliness, so necessary for the conservation of health.

Rats can enter the list, as they compel man to maintain order in his house, in his provisions, etc.

The hawk forces the farmer to travel through his lands, watching the plantations, digging the ground, etc ...

The snake has great qualities, such as the frog, frog, etc., destroying many insects harmful to plants and livestock, not to mention the cleanliness with which a homeowner must conserve gardens and backyards, to avoid these dangerous guests.

The bug itself, however tremendous, has its usefulness, forcing families not to neglect the complete cleanliness of their beds and other furniture.

Examine your friend closely for all the insects and you will find in all of them, beside the harmful part, a real use in any branch of human life.

VI - Color and intelligence

If God is the father of all, as he does some children of one color, others of another; some with intelligence, others silly?

God made all men equal, in the sense that they are all children of the same parents: Adam and Eve; the question of color has no influence on the human race, but it is a mere question of climate, food, customs, etc.

The inhabitants of cold countries are targets; the least cold countries are white; from warm countries they are tanned, or yellowish; and those in other torrid climates are black.

As for intelligence, every man is intelligent, however, in some there is a rudimentary intelligence, because it was not cultivated, while in others there is a lucid, extensive intelligence, the result of study, observation, means, etc .; all of these are mere accidents, which have no influence on the constitutive part of man.

VII - Animals

What harm do animals do to suffer physical pain as well?

Animals suffer physical pain because they belong to the sensory order.

Now, since they feel, they must feel pleasure and pain; because the two necessarily combine.

It is impossible for an animal to feel physical satisfaction and not to feel physical pain.

Apart from the painful sensation, you have to remove the pleasant sensation, in which case the animal stops being an animal and becomes a plant.

I could say, then, with equal reason: Why does the plant grow and not the stone?

Because the plant belongs to the vegetable kingdom, and the stone belongs to the mineral kingdom.

It is necessary to leave each being in its own kingdom, leaving them the qualities and defects arising from these same qualities.

Objections and responses

Man is an intelligent being, but intelligence can be developed or oppressed and hence the intelligent or foolish man.

The animal is sensitive; you must therefore feel physical satisfaction and suffering.

The plant is vegetative; it must therefore have greater or lesser growth.

The stone is mineral; therefore, there must be more or less hard minerals.

All of this belongs to the kingdom itself, and is essential to this kingdom.

VIII - Conclusion

As the friend sees, it is not enough to be impressed by external facts, or appearances; it is necessary to penetrate the core of beings and discover in them the reason for their existence.

All God's works are perfect, and there is nothing useless about them.

Dei perfecta sunt opera (Dt32,4), says the Bible: - Opera Domini, universa bana valde (Ecle.39,21).

Noticing any defect in these works, that defect does not come from God, but from men.

Man should be the crowning achievement of divine works, but, unfortunately, he is often the disturber and even the destroyer of these works.

Evil exists in this world, it is true, but it is caused by men.

Let us not limit our views to the surface of these works, but we will penetrate to their core, and we will see in all of them the finger of God, his greatness, his goodness, and often the lowliness and misery of man, who does not know or does not know want to see.

The sky sings the divine glory, and the firmament proclaims the works of his hands, says the psalmist (Ps18,2).

IX - Today's miracles

Another consultation: Jesus said: Truly I tell you, if you have faith, you can even transport it. mountains (Mt21,21,22).

The consultant quotes many other texts, proving that, having faith, man achieves everything, and in the end he asks: Why do today's Catholics no longer do what they did in the beginning?

They do not heal the sick, they do not cast out demons, they do not raise the dead, they do not give sight to the blind, speak to the dumb, listen to the deaf. They must do today what was done in the beginning.

Perfectly; we agree.

But it seems to me that my worthy consultant is unfamiliar with reading the lives of the saints and the religious movement of our century.

The time for miracles has not passed or ended, and perhaps there was no time when God performed as many miracles as we do today. My consultant seems to ignore this. Read a little about the "miracles and graces of Santa Teresinha". There are more than 8,000 and there are cures among the blind, the dumb, the paralyzed and even the resurrection of the dead.

And this is today, it is modern, it is every moment.

If my consultant made a trip to Lourdes, I would discover amazing miracles there: blind people who suddenly see, deaf people who hear, tuberculosis, morphics who are suddenly cured by the SS. Virgin.

And I can say the same thing about Nossa Senhora de Fátima, in Portugal, from Pontmain, La Sallete, in France, from Beauring, in Belgium.

In Germany there is a stigmatized girl, Teresa Neumann, living only for Holy Communion, who reveals the past, predicts the future and performs the most amazing miracles.

We have saints in heaven who work miracles; we have saints on earth who imitate them; we have shrines for hundreds, where Jesus Christ and Mary SS. they manifest their power and their mercy.

It is not miracles that are lacking in order to believe in the Catholic Church, since only it has the gift of miracles; what is missing is only people who want to see, understand and draw the practical conclusion from these miracles.

The miracle is like the divine stamp.

Only the Catholic Church has miracles and has men who work miracles.

Protestantism, with its countless sects, "did not even cure a lame horse", as one of its leaders said, because the devil does not have the gift of performing miracles.

The conclusion is that today, as in the past, there are miracles, there are saints, as there were at the beginning of Christianity.

X - The final judgment

A Catholic sends us the following consultation:

"With this I come to make a consultation to you that was made to me by a Protestant and by a Catholic of these who give a lot of reason to the friends of Martin Luther. Here is the consultation:

If the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman, (or Roman Church, as Protestants say) teaches that at the end of the world they will all be judged, how can this be, if, I say, they will all be judged and the righteous will have eternal reward and evil condemnation, and how can this be if, according to the doctrine of the Church, the righteous are already in the Kingdom of Heaven, which are the saints, and the wicked in hell. By the consultation, the aforementioned ones want to know if the Saints will be tried again as well as those condemned in hell ".

Answer:

The worthy querent's doubt stems from a confusion between the private court and the final court.

The private judgment will take place shortly after death. São Paulo writes: it is decreed that all men will die and the judgment will accompany death (Hb9,27).

This first judgment irrevocably fixes the fate of man, as we see in the case of Lazarus and the evil rich man, both of whom are already fortunate enough to be theirs (Lk 16, 22).

The Last Judgment also exists. It is Jesus Christ himself who proclaimed him before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin: One day you will see the Son sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven (Mt 26,64; Mk 14,63).

This final judgment will change nothing from the first sentence, but it will publicly manifest, before the assembled world, the wisdom and justice of God, as it will serve as a public exaltation of Jesus Christ, the triumph of the elect and the confusion of the reprobate.

All of this is indicated in Sacred Scripture.

The Father entrusted the Son with the judgment, so that all may tax the Son the honors they - give to the Father (Jn 5,22).

Jesus Christ will separate the wheat and the chaff, the sheep and the goats (Mt 25,32).

It is not, therefore, a second judgment itself, but a solemn and public confirmation of the first judgment, which manifests the justice of God, the glory of the elect and the punishment of the reprobate.

Such is the Catholic teaching, and such is the only truth about the case, taught by Jesus Christ himself.

It would be good for that Protestant to study the Bible a little, and to be more concerned with understanding it than carrying it under his arm.

XI - Religious amendments

Another reader sends us a long article by mr. A. de Macedo Costa, on the religious amendments of the religious draft, asking for our opinion on the ideas outlined.

Such an article does not deserve refutation, as it already refutes itself.

It can be seen that the writer is one of these Catholics by name, tradition, without understanding what religion is and what it requires.

He is afraid that religious amendments will provoke new debates and attacks between Catholics and anti-Catholics.

His argument, which is not an argument, is as follows, changing only from religious to social terrain.

Good and honest men should not oppose the thief, murder, debauchery, because such opposition can be a cause of struggle between the good and the bad, exciting the bad to resist the good.

All the reasoning of mr. A. de Macedo Costa is summarized in this sentence.

Such an idea is called liberalism.

This gentleman intends that one should not speak of religion, nor of religious instruction, in order not to contradict the Freemasons, the Protestants, the Spiritists, the indifferent.

It is the peace of the dog and the cat.

No, dear friend, the Church does not sacrifice its divine rights in front of the false rights of men.

The Church does not bend and does not adapt its doctrine to the opinions of men, in order to attract them or win them friendship.

The Church is divine; it holds a divine doctrine, it has divine rights, and as such, such rights cannot yield to the rights of men, just as God cannot yield to the whims of men.

The Church wants the freedom to teach her doctrine, and so she wants her principles, which are the basic principles of progress and happiness, to find support in the laws of nations.

In addition, Brazil is a Catholic country, and as such it has the right to have its faith respected, by those it has chosen as representatives, for the organization of the Constituent Assembly.

The noble and firm attitude of the Church, can arouse the sectarian's hatred; but it matters little whether this Church knows how to claim its rights.

She knows how to suffer; the only thing you don't know and can't do is die, because it's eternal.

Such an article is a miserable pasquim, of a hypocritical and false doctrine; however, Catholics know how to understand their rights, as they also know how to discover the head of the serpent, even when hidden under the roses of religious appearances.

Far from us, socialist and cowardly liberalism!

The Catholic people will know how to give this liberalism what it deserves, that is, contempt; above all, he will know how to obey the voice of his chiefs, his Bishops, to the social orientation that the illustrious Cardinal D. Sebastião Leme so nobly prescribes.