

PSYCHO-SCIENTIFIC FRONTIERS

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Communicating with God's World of Spirit – its laws and its purpose

Personal experiences of a Catholic priest

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8. 0 Christ's Teachings and Today's Christianity (By Priest Johannes Greber)

See to it that no one captivates you by means of so-called science or by the foolish and misleading teachings grounded on the traditions of men; for they have their source in the evil spirit powers that rule the world, but have nothing in common with the teachings of Christ. (Colossians 2: 8)

During the first spiritistic séance I attended I had asked the spirit that was speaking through the medium:

Why is it that the teachings of Christ no longer seem to exert any influence upon the people of today?

I had been told in reply that we no longer possess Christ's teachings in their original purity and clarity, that in the course of time, many human errors had crept into Christianity.

Later on, I received a detailed exposition, in which the true teachings of Christ were compared with the doctrines of the Christian churches of today, and particularly with those of the Catholic faith, of which I was a priest. I was told:

8. 1 God's World of Spirit as a source for the Truth (From the SPHERES of LIGHT)

Where is the water of a brook purest and clearest?

Near the source or near the mouth?

Most assuredly, near the source.

As the spring water flows on as a streamlet, however, it loses its freshness and with it its purity and clearness. Muddy waters coming into it right and left mingle with its current. Further down it receives the drainage from human habitations, human and animal waste, and that of human industry. It no longer refreshes those who would drink its waters to quench their thirst. They drink of it only with revulsion and only as a last resort, when no spring water is to be had.

The same may be said of the truth.

Taken at its source, it is a *refreshing drink* that bestows new life, but when it is drawn from the stream that has flowed for a distance through the lowlands of human error and worldly passions, its purity and freshness are gone. The falsehoods and errors that have been mixed in have given it a bad taste.

- *The thirsty truth-seeker drinks from this murky stream only with inner repugnance, and only when denied the clear water of the fountainhead of truth.*

The teachings of Christ met with a fate like that of the water from a spring that, as a brook, flows by the dwellings of men. They, too, were *defiled* when they flowed through human channels.

- *The evil that is in men and the Powers of Evil that surround them have so sullied and rendered unpalatable Christ's pure teachings, that they have lost their life-giving power.*

The source of all truth is God.

A source to which man cannot ascend in his earthly form. He must therefore depend upon the *bearers of the truth* who draw from that source. These are God's spirit messengers.

- *Only they* are admitted to that source.
- Only they possess the *clean* vessels in which the truth can be brought fresh and unsullied to mankind.

The first and the *greatest* of truth-bearers was Christ as a spirit, in the days preceding his incarnation. It was he who, partly personally, partly through his subordinates in the spirit world, brought the drink of truth to early humanity.

Hence the active intercourse with spirits by the sick and exhausted world of Old Testament times. Hence, also, the coming and going, in the early days of the Christian era, of truth-bearing spirits, who constantly drew upon God's fountainhead and brought the water of truth, at Christ's behest, to the human souls who thirsted for the truth.

- *It is, therefore, one of the fundamental teachings of the true Christian faith that humans cannot proclaim the truth out of their own consciousness. They can do so only as instruments of God's spirit world.*

Even Christ *as a mortal* could not ascend of his own volition to the source of the truth. As a man, he had no more inherent knowledge of the truth than other humans. What he had known in the days when he, as the first-created spirit, dwelt with God had been as completely obliterated from his memory by his entry into a material body as the knowledge of a previous existence is obliterated from the recollection of other humans, although there was a time when they too had dwelled with the Father.

- *The property of matter by which the recollection of one's previous existence is wiped out exerted the same effect upon the incarnated Christ that it exerts upon every other spirit incarnated in human form.*

Thus, after his incarnation also Christ was dependent upon the spirit messengers sent to him by the Father. He acknowledged this when he said:

John 1: 51: 'You shall see the messengers of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

He was but God's envoy, and had no advantage over the Divine envoys that had preceded him, for they, too, had been instructed by God's spirits. *Enoch, Abraham, Moses*, and all of the Old Testament prophets *did not preach things* that had evolved in their own minds, but all of them, in Peter's words, 'spoke God's word under the guidance of a holy spirit.' A spirit of God inspired them with what they were to say.

Christ repeatedly assures his hearers that he speaks *not of his own* knowledge, but only what he has heard from the Father. It was the Father Who gave him the required teachings, through His spirit messengers who constantly ascended and descended above the Son of Man.

John 8: 28: 'You will realize that I do nothing of myself but only speak as my Father has taught me.'

John 8: 26: 'I speak to the world only those things that I have heard from Him.'

The same fountainhead of truth from which Christ had drawn was to serve all those who came to spread his gospel after him. First his Apostles, who were not simply to repeat what they had learned from Christ as they interpreted it. Misinterpretations easily slip in when humans are called upon to repeat what someone else has said. Of a hundred listeners to the same speaker, every one of them, when asked to repeat his remarks, will in one point or another say something different from what the speaker said or meant.

- *Hence, also the Apostles were to be instructed anew by the spirits of the truth about the things that they had learned from Christ as a man, to make sure that his words suffer no distortion from their erroneous interpretation.*

They were to receive from God's spirits both *confirmation* of the teachings proclaimed by Christ and certain *new truths* that Christ had had to withhold from them, either because under God's Plan of Salvation these truths could not be proclaimed before the Redeemer's death, or because the

Apostles themselves were *not yet mature enough* to receive them, and so would not have understood them. “You will find this statement of mine confirmed in Christ’s own words:

John 14: 16: ‘I will ask the Father to send you another helper, who will be with you always, the spirit world of truth.’

John 16: 12- 13: ‘I have much more to say to you, but you cannot bear it now. However, when the spirit world of truth has come, they will introduce you to the whole truth.’

John 14: 26: ‘The helper, however, the holy spirit world, which the Father will send in my name, will teach you whatever else you need to know and will remind you of all that I have told you.’

According to these words, then, the spirits of truth had a twofold task. First, they were to remind the faithful what Christ as a man had told them, and *to confirm its truth*. Beyond that, they were to *continue* the teaching that Christ had begun, and to proclaim those further truths that he had purposely withheld for the abovementioned reasons.

- *Moreover, the spirits of God were to be with the faithful forever, since, with the power of evil and the weakness of man, the danger of error was ever present.*

Subsequent generations must not be dependent upon the religious records of their ancestors, for such human records would bear no guarantee of truthfulness, and those to whom they were handed down could not discern what was derived from God’s wellspring of truth and what was attributable to human error. “Thus, after Christ’s corporeal death God’s messengers arrived constantly as *spirits of truth*, according to his promise. The Apostles continually cite them when exhorting their hearers to believe in their teachings. Paul’s writings, especially, abound in references to these messengers.

I Corinthians 2: 4-5: ‘The things that I have said and preached I did not lay before you in impressive words of human wisdom, but it was a spirit of God and God’s power that spoke through me. Your faith was to be founded not on human wisdom, but on God’s power.’

I Corinthians 2: 10-14: ‘But to us, God has revealed these things through his spirit..... Now the spirits we have received are not the spirits that rule the world, but spirits that come from God. We preach not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words that are taught to us by God’s spirits; thus, we deliver the spirit’s message in the same words in which the spirit gave it to us. True, a worldly minded person does not accept what comes from a spirit of God, for he considers it foolishness. He is not fit to understand it, because it must be judged spiritually.’

II Corinthians 3: 3: ‘You are an epistle of Christ, written by us as servants of Christ, not with ink, but with a spirit of the living God.’

Galatians 1: 11-12: ‘Let me say to you, dear brothers, that the gospel I preach is not the word of men. I neither received it from men, nor was it taught to me, but it was imparted to me through a revelation from Jesus Christ.’

Not only the Apostles received their teachings from God's spirits, but also the 'mediums', who were to be found in every community. As you already know, they were called 'prophets'.. Paul writes that the mysteries of Christ 'have now been revealed to his holy apostles and "prophets" by a spirit of God.' (*Ephesians* 3: 5) It was through these mediums as the instruments of the good spirits that the faithful could at any time ascertain whether a doctrine was true and how it was to be understood. Hence Paul writes to the Philippians:

Philippians 3: 15: 'If you hold a different opinion on any point, God will enlighten you on that point also.'

They could inquire of God at their religious gatherings, and were answered by His spirits speaking through the mediums. "Speaking of the earlier prophets as well as of those who preached the gospel in his own day, Peter says that they 'preached the gospel by the power of a holy spirit sent from heaven' (I Peter 1: 12), to which he adds in another epistle: '...

II Peter 1: 21: 'For no prophecy ever came about by the human will; it is only by God's command that people have spoken as instruments of a holy spirit'.

- *The word 'prophecy', which occurs so often in the Bible, does not mean, as you believe, the prediction of an event to come, but all speech by a spirit of God through a human medium.*

In the Old Testament God exhorted mankind to seek the truth from Him: 'Ask me!' – and He gave it to them through His spirit messengers.

- *By his own confession, Christ, as a mortal, received the truth from spirits of God. He promises his Apostles that they too shall learn the whole truth from spirits of truth.*

The Apostles testify that this promise of Christ's was fulfilled, and that they received their teachings from God's spirits.

And whence does today's Christianity draw the truth?

Can the ministers of the various Christian denominations say of themselves that *a spirit of God is speaking through them*? Can they testify, as did Paul, that what they preach is *not* the word of men, that they *neither* received it from men, nor was it taught to them, but that it was imparted to them through a revelation from Jesus Christ?

They cannot! They are in the employ of their churches.

- *As whose respective creeds they studied under human instruction at schools, seminaries and universities. What they absorbed there was human wisdom, professorial wisdom, with all of its errors, and that is what they preach to their congregations.*

Of spirits as messengers from God and as heralds of the truth they know *nothing*.

In their eyes it is, to use one of Paul's terms, *foolishness* to expect any further teachings from a spirit of God today. They believe that no further teachings are needed in this day and age. In their opinion, such teachings may have been necessary in the days when men were supposedly much more ignorant than they are in your enlightened age.

A man like Moses still had to communicate with God's spirit world and to 'inquire of God' in order to learn the truth. So also did the great prophets, Christ himself, as well as his Apostles. But nowadays all that is considered old-fashioned and a thing of the past. To be sure, you have made great progress in science, you can all read and write and have millions of books you can consult. And in addition, you have no end of learned theologians, doctors of divinity and professors. They must know what the truth is.

Actually, it is precisely these doctors and professors of 'sacred theology' who are responsible for the *introduction* of those doctrines against which Paul utters these words of *warning*:

Colossians 2: 8: 'See to it that no one captivates you by means of science and vain deception that is grounded in the traditions of men, in the spirit powers that rule the world, but has nothing in common with the teaching of Christ.'

I Timothy 1: 7: 'They wish to be regarded as scholars, although they do not understand the meaning of the terms they use or the things of which they speak with so much assurance.'

Jude: 19: 'These are the people who cause divisions, purely sensual people, who have not received a holy spirit.'

The spirit world of God has long since been eliminated from the Christian creeds; the heads of the churches have *expelled* the holy spirit. But wherever spirits of God have been forced to yield, *spirits of another nature* presented themselves, like those of which Paul writes to Timothy:

I Timothy 4: 1: 'God's spirit world declares expressly that in times to come, many will fall away from the true faith and turn to spirits of deceit and doctrines inspired by demons.'

Into the place of the good spirits stepped the Powers of Evil.

Their chief concern it is to obscure and to reverse the truth, an end which they seek to accomplish by playing upon every human weakness, such as:

- Human *vanity* and
- *scholars' pride*,
- or the greed for *power, distinction, money* and *luxury*.

All of these motives are utilized by them *to tamper* with the truths of God's wisdom, love and mercy, and to forge these into chains with which the heads of the churches manacle their poor, inexperienced adherents and render them subservient.

The root of all evil is *g r e e d* – the love of money.

Money plays an important role also in your Christian churches. Satan knew what he was doing when he used money as bait also in the field of religion. He knew that this was the surest way of binding

the spiritual leaders to error. He knew that none of them would be quick to give up a well-paid position for life as the religious servant of a church, even if they recognized the erroneousness of the doctrines they were preaching.

Thus, it came about that, since the time when communication with God's spirit world as the sole road to the truth was dispensed with, errors of the most varied and far-reaching nature have crept into Christianity.

Century by century conditions grew worse.

Truth after truth was contaminated by error and rendered unpalatable.

And what has been the result?

- *Today you have before you a Christianity split into a hundred parts, into countless creeds, each one of which proclaims a separate truth and each one of which contends that its creed alone represents the true teachings of Christ.*

Do you wonder that a Christianity so adulterated and torn has ceased to exert an influence on mankind?

- *Restore to humanity the faith of the early Christians!*
- *Remove from its shoulders those spiritual burdens imposed by manmade dogmas derived from a thirst for power. Let mankind have access once more to God's messengers of truth – and you will be amazed to see how much influence true Christianity can have, even on the people of today.*

8. 2 There is no infallible Papacy as a Source of the Truth

The Catholic Church seeks to explain this breaking up into so many Christian 'sects', as it calls them, by saying that all other Christian denominations have fallen away from it, *the only true church and the only one that leads to salvation*.

But I shall show you that even the Catholic Church *retains scarcely anything* of the Christianity of Christ and his Apostles. It has, true enough, succeeded in creating a human substitute for the Divine spirits so much in evidence in the early days of the Christian era.

It introduced the doctrine of '*papal infallibility*'.

This solved the problem of the truth in the simplest way, sparing Christ the labour of sending the spirits of truth to erring humanity as he had promised. He no longer needed to fulfill his promise to remain with the faithful, even unto the end of the world, for now there was a 'Vicar of Christ' on earth. Where there is a vicar, the individual who is represented need no longer appear.

- *Under this doctrine of an 'infallible Vicar of Christ on earth', the source from which the Divine truths could be derived was placed wholly into the hands of erring, sinful mortals, to the exclusion of God's messengers, thus opening the door to human caprice and lust for power.*

You may proclaim that the papal elections are held under the guidance of the '*Holy Spirit*', but you cannot cite a single instance in which a pope was chosen by a spirit of God. Or has it ever happened at a papal election that a spirit of God, using one of the electors as God's instrument, announced who was to become pope, as had God's spirits through the mediums in the early Christian churches whenever an elder or a bishop was to be ordained.

Just look at the history of the papal elections.

- Were they not at times conducted in a manner positively *diabolical*?
- Were not intrigues of all kinds and even armed force resorted to, in order to place the tiara upon the heads of adherents and favourites of certain families?
- Were not a succession of popes *instruments of hell* in their actions and their daily lives rather than 'Vicars of Christ'?

In order to evade this issue, you have resorted to the strange expedient of distinguishing between the pope as a man and the pope as the 'vicar of Christ', claiming that even the most evil of men, as soon as he becomes pope, represents Christ and acquires infallibility. Satan's tool and *at the same time* the deputy of Christ?

Could there be any greater blasphemy of Christ and of God?

Would any human being allow his greatest enemy to act as his deputy even for an hour?

Assuredly not.

And you think God and Christ *would do that*?

That God would entrust the great gifts of His order of Salvation to *a servant of hell*?

Common sense should tell you that this is impossible.

- *God's spirits bring their gifts only to the righteous, and remain with them only while they retain their righteousness.*

This is demonstrated by the story of Saul.. As long as that Divinely gifted monarch remained obedient to God, he was in daily communication with the Divine spirit world and could '*inquire of God*' whenever he felt the need of enlightenment, invariably receiving his answer from the *spirits of truth*.

- *When, however, he broke faith with God, this communication with God's spirit world was instantly interrupted.*

The inquiries he addressed to God remained unanswered, and in the place of the Divine spirits, evil spirits took possession of him. At one stroke he was deprived of all his great gifts.

No wicked man can ever be the holder of God's sacred gifts, not even if he is the pope. It follows that among the popes, the wicked ones at least could never have been infallible, and since you have no means of knowing whether a pope, or indeed any human, is at heart friendly or hostile to God, you can never be sure whether a pope's doctrines are true or erroneous.

- *God alone chooses those among men to whom He sends His spirits of truth.*

And no human choice can establish a mortal as the bearer of God's truths. Not even Christ selected his Apostles according to his own judgment, for it is expressly stated in the Acts that he selected them '*through a holy spirit*'. (Acts 1:2) It follows that God cannot make the gift of infallibility contingent upon any office held by the grace of man, as is the case with the papacy. "Consequently, also, the interpretations given to many parts of the New Testament in support of papal infallibility are wholly erroneous. Among the passages so cited are the words addressed to Peter by Jesus:

Matthew 16: 18-19: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

From these words you conclude that Peter, the man, was the foundation of the church of Christ; that as the leader of that church he *could not err* in his proclamation of the truth, and that, moreover, he had been *invested with* the power to bind and to loose the members of the church. Now that office has been passed on to his successors, the popes of the Church of Rome. Consequently, it is claimed, they have the same gifts and powers that once were Peter's.

These are all great fallacies.

- *It was not Peter the man but Peter's faith to which Christ referred as the rock on which his church was to be built.*

Peter's belief in Christ as the Divinely sent Messiah is the eternal, everlasting rock against which hell cannot prevail, *not the person* of Peter, who very soon afterwards was vanquished by hell when he denied his Master *three times* under oath.

- *He thus showed how little God can depend upon humans, and that no Plan of Salvation can rest upon them.*

That would be building on sand!

One thing only is immutable:

- *The truth, and the faith in the truth conveyed by the spirits of God.*

Peter, too, had received the truth – that Christ was the Messiah – from messengers of God, for as Christ said: 'Flesh and blood has not revealed that unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.' It was because Peter had received this revelation from spirits of God that he believed it.

And in this belief he stood upon unyielding rock.

For the spirit world of God does not lie.

Whoever *does as Peter did* stands on the same rock upon which Peter rested his faith.

- *Whoever is ready to receive God's truth from the hands of God's messengers of truth and to believe in it belongs to the Church of Christ.*

It is therefore a *Church of the spirit*.

- It recognizes no external membership in the form of membership in an earthly organized religion.
- It recognizes no *bishops and priests* with the broad powers assumed by the clergy of the Catholic Church.
- It recognizes *no infallible Pope*.
- Christ has *no deputy* on earth.
- People of every religion in the world belong to the church of Christ.

This spiritual Church of Christ can never be overcome by Evil, for it is *the source of the truth*, and truth is unconquerable. Its messengers of truth are not people – not popes, bishops or priests – but *spirits of God*.

- *The 'keys to the kingdom of Heaven', which Christ promised to give to Peter because of his faith, are God's truths. By means of them he was 'to bind and to lose' by passing the keys on to those who lay bound in the chains of error.*

Whoever rejected those keys by opposing truth with unbelief would be bound closer than ever to his error, but the bonds of those who eagerly accepted the proffered key would be loosed. The binding and loosing applied to terrestrial existence as well as especially to life in the Beyond.

The same metaphor of the 'keys to the kingdom of heaven' is used by Christ in speaking to the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people of his day. With the *false doctrines* that they preached, they had given the Jewish people *the wrong key*, a key with which the doors of the kingdom of heaven could not be opened. The right key, which was offered by John the Baptist and by Christ himself and which the people were ready to receive, was torn from their hands by the Jewish clergy. That is why Christ exclaimed:

Matthew 23: 13: 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites that you are! You close the kingdom of heaven to mankind. You yourselves do not enter, and you will not let those enter who would like to.'

The words: '*Feed my lambs, feed my sheep*', which Christ after his Resurrection addressed to Peter, are also interpreted by you as indicative of a favouring of Peter. This is not the case. Peter had publicly denied his Master three times under oath, and according to all human standards it was to be expected that Christ would dismiss the unfaithful disciple from his service and relieve him of his apostolic office. Peter himself fully expected this, remembering Christ's words:

Matthew 10, 33: 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, who is in heaven.'

This the course you humans would have taken under the circumstances.

but Christ had mercy on the repentant Peter. He restored him to his apostleship and also conferred the duties of a shepherd upon him. Peter was allowed, in spite of his breach of faith, to lead his fellowmen to the pastures of truth on an equal footing with the other Apostles. Christ's question to Peter, '*Do you love me?*', repeated three times, was intended to remind Peter of his thrice-repeated denial, and to bring home to him God's great goodness towards him in retaining him as an evangelist of the kingdom of God and as an instrument of God's spirits despite all that had happened.

You see *how mistaken* the interpretations are that your [Catholic] church gives for the passages in question and that these cannot be construed to support a preferred status for Peter or the doctrine of papal infallibility. Hell has long since conquered that church, and Evil is also the author of the doctrine of papal infallibility.

Inasmuch as most of the doctrines of that church are *wholly erroneous*, hell is intent upon perpetuating them among mankind as long as possible. This end is best achieved by means of the *coercive measure of infallibility*, for the church, having taught its errors under the sanction of infallibility, cannot now retract them. To surrender them would be to commit self-destruction.

Your papal doctrine piles untruth upon untruth.

- *Thus, it is historically untrue that the Bishop of Rome is the direct successor to Peter in the Apostolic office, for the bishops of the first Christian congregations were neither elected as such by their fellowmen, nor appointed by the Apostles, but were appointed exclusively by the manifesting spirits of God.*

If it occasionally happened that an Apostle or the disciple of an Apostle ordained someone as bishop, this was done only after a *spirit of God* had named the person to be *so ordained*. Moreover, no bishop was another's superior and no Apostle had any greater powers than his fellows.

Galatians 2: 6: 'It matters not to me', says Paul, 'in what high esteem the Apostles were held. God takes no account of a person's rank.'

In the same epistle he relates how on one occasion he had opposed the Apostle Peter vigorously and had reproached him before the entire community, claiming that his behaviour was not in keeping with the true gospel.

Had it sufficed for God to reveal the gospel to Peter as the first infallible pope, the early Christian churches would have had no need of visits by God's spirits, since in Peter they would have had an infallible source of the truth.

Moreover, why was Paul not sent to Peter in order that he might receive the truth from him? The distance between them was not great. Why was he, as he himself says, taught by Christ himself?

8. 3 There is no tri-entity God

I shall now lay before you in their broad outlines certain individual truths in Christ's teachings, comparing them with the doctrines of modern Christianity and in particular with those you have heretofore preached as a member of the Catholic clergy. In so doing I fulfill the wish you have long cherished. This will also show the falsity of other doctrines that depart from the teachings of Christ in other Christian churches.

1. *Christ taught a God in one person*, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. He knows no triune God such as the Catholic and other Christian churches teach. Only the Father is God. None other is His equal, neither the Son, nor what you call the 'Holy Ghost'.. After his Resurrection, Christ said:

John 20: 17: 'I ascend unto *my* Father and *your* Father, to *my* God and *your* God.'

According to the words of Christ, the Father is above all.

John 10: 29: 'My Father, who gave me the sheep, is greater than everything, and no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand.'

If the Father is greater than everything, there is *nothing* equal to Him, and He is greater than the Son, a truth that Christ confirms with the words:

John 14: 28: 'the Father is greater than I.'

He also calls God the *sole good being*. Whenever Jesus was addressed as 'good Master', he would reply:

Luke 18, 19: 'Why do you call me good? No one is good save God alone.'

Because God is above everything, He can confer power upon whomsoever He will, as He did to His Son, whom He invested with the fullest powers.

John 17: 2: 'Thou hast given the Son power over all flesh in order that all that thou hast entrusted to him may have everlasting life.'

That Christ *is not God* I demonstrated to you with the help of the Holy Scriptures and in greater detail when I taught you concerning his life and his work. The truth, that only the Father, but not the Son, is God, is furthermore sustained by the teachings of the Apostles. Thus, Paul writes:

I Corinthians 8: 4-6: 'We know there is no God but the One. For although there may be such as are called gods in the heavens and on earth – and indeed there are many such gods and many such lords – there is for us Christians but one God, the Father, from whom all things are and for whom we were created.'

Furthermore, Paul calls the Father the 'God of Jesus Christ'.

Ephesians 1: 17: 'May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ give unto you a spirit of wisdom.'

According to Paul also, Christ's coming will be brought about:

I Timothy 6: 15-16: ‘...through the only Almighty, who alone possesses immortality, and who dwells in unapproachable light.’

If the Father *alone* has immortality, the Son does *not* have it. If the Father is the *only* Almighty, the Son *cannot* be. It follows that the Son is not God, but is, as he calls himself and as the Apostles unanimously proclaim him to be, the ‘Son of God’, less than the Father, whose creation he is.

The entire Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, recognizes *only one God in one person*. The Father is God, and He only. Not one of His Sons, neither the first-born nor any of the others, is God.

- *Because you have made Christ into God, you have insuperable difficulties in understanding his personality, his life, his sufferings, and his death. You are prevented by your misconception from accepting his own clear statement of his relationship to the Father as what it really is: it is the relationship of a created being, albeit the highest such being, to God, its Creator.*

What absurd theories your theologians have had to invent, to bring the undeniable facts in the life of Jesus, as well as his own words, into harmony with his alleged Divinity. They have reconstructed the person of Jesus, claiming that in him as a man there were two spirits: one Divine, the other human. Hence Christ is alleged to have possessed a twofold will and a twofold knowledge: A Divine will and a human will, a Divine knowledge and a human knowledge. Nevertheless, both spirits are regarded as having constituted but a *single* personality.

This is sheer madness.

Every spirit possesses an *independent* personality, and not even God can fuse *two spirits into a single* personality, any more than He can fuse two human beings into one, omnipotent though He is, since it is inherently contradictory that two should be equal to one.

Common sense should tell you that if Christ had been God, he could not have cried out from the Cross: ‘My God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ Could God forsake Himself, then?

When, furthermore, it is related in the Holy Writ that Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Father, what need was there of the Father’s power if Christ himself was God? According to your doctrine, after his death upon earth, he had divested himself of all human limitations, and was now only God and, as such, in every respect his Father’s equal. If so, he had the same power as his Father, and, possessing that power, why need he have depended upon power held *by another*?

These contradictions are irreconcilable.

And again, how do you explain the fact that Christ does not once assert: ‘I am God, my Father’s equal in all things’, and this despite the fact that he spoke of his relationship with God on innumerable occasions. Is it reasonable to assume that he never once spoke the truth and admitted that he was God? On the contrary, he calls himself only the ‘Son of God’, and maintains that he is *dependent upon the Father for all things*. He solemnly declares: ‘And this is the life eternal, that they should acknowledge Thee, *the only true God*, and him whom Thou didst send, Jesus Christ.’

He is but God's envoy; he is not God.

Paul calls him the *'firstling of creation'*.

- *He was, therefore, created by God and is, hence, God's creature, and thus no more God than all his fellow creatures.*

8. 4 Falsifications in the Bible

Inasmuch as nothing could be found in the New Testament to support the false doctrine that Christ is God, resort was had to the forgery of several Scriptural passages in order that the desired evidence might be forthcoming. Several of these I shall cite.

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul writes:

Romans 9: 3-5: ‘Willingly would I be banished from my fellowship with Christ if I could thereby save my brothers, men of my own lineage according to the flesh. They are Israelites. Time was, when they were God’s people. They witnessed the glorious deeds of God; it was with them that He made His covenant; it was they to whom He gave the law, the true form of worship, the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs and from them was the mortal body of Christ descended. May the God Who rules over all be forever praised therefore. Amen.’

In this passage as elsewhere in his epistles, Paul voices his heartfelt thanks to God for the fact that the Messiah sprang from a people to whom he himself belonged, but the text has been altered to read:

‘and from them was the mortal body of Christ descended, who is God over all, forever praised.’
By means of this falsification, the Messiah was branded as God.

A similar case of misrepresentation occurs in Paul’s Epistle to Titus:

Titus 2: 13: ‘We are to wait for the blessed hope and for the coming of the glory of our great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.’

Paul speaks here of the glory of the great God, the attainment of which is the aim of all material Creation, and also of the glory of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, through which we shall be led into God’s glory, according to the words of Christ: ‘No one cometh unto the Father, but by me.’ Thus, Paul here distinguishes between the glory of the Father and the glory of Christ.

The sense of this passage also has been *distorted* by its false wording:

‘We are to wait for the blessed hope and the coming of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.’

This version is intended to convey to the reader the impression that Christ is the great God for whose glory we are to wait. “Of course, falsifications of this sort will immediately be apparent to anyone familiar with Paul’s epistles, for they know how clearly this Apostle distinguished between the person of Christ and the person of God in all of his writings, referring to the Father as the ‘God of Christ’, and to Christ only as the ‘Lord’ appointed by God. Paul taught that God will make all His enemies submit to the Son, the last one being Lucifer, the Prince of Death himself, and that then the Son will also submit to Him Who subjected everything to the Son, that God may be all in all. (I Corinthians 15: 27-28) “Paul’s salutation always runs: ‘Grace to you and peace from God, our Father – and from the Lord Jesus Christ. He never says ‘and from God, the Son’.

If, therefore, there is any part of your present Bible that can be construed into something other than the truth that only the Father is God, then the fault lies either in the translation, or in a falsification

of the Greek text from which that translation was made, and in some cases in a combination of both. You will find such an instance in Paul's letter to the Philippians, in the passage that, according to your current translation, reads:

Philippians 2: 5-7: 'Let all be of a mind as was Jesus Christ, who, although he had a godly form, counted it not as deprivation to be equal with God, but relinquished himself, taking on the form of a servant.'

The correct text reads:

'Let all be of a mind as was Jesus Christ, who, although in his outward appearance he looked like a god, counted it not as self-deprivation to humble himself before God, but relinquished himself, taking on the outward form of a bond servant.'

It is true that the celestial body of Christ as a spirit resembled a god, and that all spirits on seeing him for the first time think they are seeing God – so gloriously has God endowed His firstborn.

The original text has been crudely *falsified* by substituting the words: 'to be equal with God', for the words: 'to humble himself before God'.

Inasmuch as I have just had occasion to use the words 'looked like a god', I shall make mention of the opening passage of the Gospel of John, also cited as proof of the Divinity of Christ. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'.

First and foremost, the text should read: '... the Word was a god'; and not: 'the Word was God'.

In this passage John uses the term 'a god' as it was applied in his day to all who were God's special instruments and who, as His envoys, stood in special communication with Him, the one true God. The same usage was employed by God when He spoke to Moses, the great messenger of God and Christ's model, to whom He said:

Exodus 4: 16: 'And Aaron shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be thy mouth, and thou shalt be his "god".'

Christ, also, when reproached by the Jews with making himself the equal of God by calling himself the 'Son of God', retorted with the question: 'Is it not written in your law: I said, ye are gods? If the Scriptures called them "gods", to whom God assigned a task, how can ye accuse me, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, of blasphemy because I said, I am the Son of God?'

What Christ says in these words is: 'How can you accuse me of making myself God's equal by calling myself His Son? Even if I had called myself "a god", I would not have committed blasphemy, for those who have heretofore appeared as God's envoys were called "gods", because they came to carry out tasks assigned by God. How much more right have I, then, to call myself "a god", since to me has been entrusted the greatest task ever assigned to an emissary of God's! But I purposely refrain from calling myself "god", in order to prevent any misinterpretation of the word, and call myself what I truly am, the Son of God.'

Paul also writes:

I Corinthians 8: 5-6: 'For although there may be so-called "gods" in heaven or on earth – and indeed there are many such "gods" and many "lords" – yet for us Christians there is but one God, the Father ... and but one Lord, Jesus Christ.'

Paul here says that Christians should not continue to use the term 'god' in its derived sense, in which it is applied also to God's creatures, but should use the designation 'God' only when they mean the one *true* God, 'the Father', and that they should call no-one 'Lord' except Jesus Christ. They must therefore also not refer to Jesus Christ as 'God'.

Another falsification is found in the Epistle of John, the passage in question reading in its *correct version*:

I John 5: 20: 'We know that the Son of God has come to earth and has given us true understanding so that we might know the true God, and we are in communion with the true God, since we are in communion with his Son, Jesus Christ, who is true and eternal life.'

Besides other inaccuracies, the word 'God' has been added to the last sentence so that it reads: "This is the true God, and eternal life."

What John teaches here is exactly what was said so often by Christ and by the Apostles, namely: God is the true God, but the Son also is true, for he speaks the words of God, teaching only as the Father has directed him. In everything that he proclaims, he is therefore as true as the Father Himself. Hence, those who are in communion with the Son are thereby also in communion with the true God. And since God has granted to His Son eternal life, the Son also is eternal life for all those who are in communion with him.

The doctrine that in God there are *three persons* who together constitute only one God finds its main support in the grossly falsified passage in the Epistle of John, the *correct* text of which reads:

I John 5: 8: 'For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three are in accord.'

To this has been *added* the spurious sentence:

'And there are three who bear witness in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one'.

Your Catholic theologians are well aware that this entire last sentence is a *contrived* insertion. Nevertheless, it is retained in the Catholic editions of the Bible, although other Christian denominations have eliminated it.

Except for the passage I have mentioned, there is in the entire New Testament not the faintest evidence to support the doctrine that what you call the 'Holy Ghost' is a Deity equal to the Father.

- The term "Holy Ghost" as used in the New Testament means the entire good spirit world.
- God is a 'holy ghost'. He is the highest and most sacred of all spirits.

- The Son of God is a 'holy ghost'; he is the highest and most sacred of all *created* spirits.
- The princes of heaven, like Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and many others, are *holy* spirits.
- All of God's legions are *holy* spirits.
- Lucifer was also a *holy* spirit *before* his fall.
- All of mankind, as well as the entire material creation were also *holy* spirits once.

The great misunderstanding that has arisen from the term 'the Holy Ghost' is due to inaccurate translations of the Greek texts of the New Testament, for wherever 'a' holy spirit occurs, it has been translated for some unknown reason as '*the*' holy spirit. This is all the more surprising, since the translators were men who had a command of the Greek language and who knew well enough *how strictly* the distinction between the definite and the indefinite article is observed especially in that tongue.

During your studies you yourself learned Greek, the language in which the New Testament has come down to you, and you will no doubt remember enough of what you learned then to be able to *confirm* my statement by referring to the Greek New Testament.

I shall cite only a few passages out of many. "Let us take the Gospel according to Matthew. In its opening chapter it says that Mary was with child of a holy spirit, not of the Holy Spirit. A few lines further down you find: 'the child conceived in her is of *a* holy spirit', *not* of *the* Holy Spirit, as though there were but one.

"If you will now turn to the Gospel according to Luke, you will find the same thing. Here also the text should read: 'A holy spirit shall come upon thee and the power of *a* very high being shall overshadow thee', and not, as your (Catholic) translation has it: '*The* Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of 'The Most High' shall overshadow thee.' It was not 'The Most High', but *one* of the highest spirits of God who overshadowed Mary.

So also, in the earlier reference to the birth of John, the correct reading is: 'He shall be filled with *a* holy spirit, even from his mother's womb.' This also is true of the passage referring to Elizabeth, which should read: 'She was filled with a holy spirit.'

Also, that relating to Zacharias, which should read: 'He was filled with *a* holy spirit'.

Christ says:

Matthew 12: 28: 'But if I cast out demons through a holy spirit....'

And John the Baptist declares:

Mark 1: 7-8: 'There comes after me one who shall baptize you in a holy spirit' .

In the first lines of the Acts of the Apostles it is related that Jesus chose his Apostles under the guidance of a holy spirit, and, in the second chapter, that on the day of Pentecost all those who were gathered were filled with a holy spirit.

When explaining the 12th and the 14th chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, I already called your attention to this *disastrous error of translation*, which has led to the belief that there is but one holy spirit, a Divine person, forming one Godhead with the Father, as your (the Catholic) church teaches.

- *In all passages where the Greek Text says 'a' holy spirit or 'a' spirit, your translators have written 'the' Holy Spirit or 'the' Spirit.*

Wherever the original Greek texts have 'a' spirit, one of many is meant. You therefore distort the meaning entirely by substituting: 'the' holy spirit. There are certain passages in those texts, it is true, where reference is made to 'the' holy spirit or 'the' spirit, but in those cases the term either means the spirit as distinguished from matter, as in the sentence: 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak', or else the reference is to the Spirit of God, that is, to God Himself, or to spirits of a certain kind such as 'the spirit of light', 'the spirit of darkness', 'the spirit of truth', 'the spirit of comfort' and others.

This does *not* mean that there is *only one* spirit of light, of darkness, of truth, of comfort, of strength, etc., but is merely an instance in which the singular [the generic term] is employed in place of the plural.

You have the same usage in your modern languages, for when you say to a sick person: 'I will get *the* doctor', you do not mean to imply that there is *only one* physician in the world, and when you speak of '*the* farmer' having had a prosperous year, you are referring to *all* farmers collectively. So, too, you use the terms '*the*' workman, '*the*' lawyer, '*the*' artist, '*the*' theologian to mean *all* workmen, lawyers, artists and theologians.

- *When, therefore, Christ says: 'I will send you the spirit of truth', he means the spirits of truth, for as you already know, the Divine spirits are assigned to various callings according to their respective tasks. There are spirits of protection, spirits of battle, spirits of comfort, spirits of strength, spirits of wisdom and innumerable others.*

A spirit of truth has tasks of a very different nature to perform than has a spirit of Michael's legions, and hence possesses different skills. A spirit of battle cannot take over the work of a spirit of comfort or of wisdom or of truth. Every spirit has its definite calling, and is equipped with the corresponding talents and strengths.

Similarly, Lucifer has divided his hosts according to their specific tasks. He too has his fighting forces, his spirits of lying, of despondency, of greed, pride, envy, revenge, lust, and of every other vice.

The different kinds of spirits, good and bad, are *specialists* in their fields and are well qualified to influence those on whom they work, either for good or for evil, within their respective domains.

As you see, the doctrine of a triune Godhead is not only contrary to common sense, but is entirely unsupported by the Scriptures. Yet, although only the Father is God, while the Son and all the other spirits are His creatures, nevertheless a most intimate harmony and unity obtains between the Father, the Son and the good spirit world, *a harmony of will and deed*. What the Father wants, the Son wants also, and so do the spirit hosts under the Son's command. God is the master and owner of all creation, spiritual and material; *everything belongs to Him*.

He has conferred *the management of creation* upon the Son, in a way similar to when a factory owner places the management of his factory in the hands of his oldest son and puts the entire working force under his supervision. In cases of this kind the son in question receives his instructions and orders from his father, upon whom he remains dependent in all things, since the father continues to be the master and owner of the factory, while the son may act only within the instructions received from him. But as far as the workmen and employees are concerned, the son is the 'master', whose orders they must obey, and whatever wishes they want to make known to the father as the owner of the factory must go through the son as his agent and representative.

Translate this example taken from human experience into the relationship existing between God and His Son, and all utterances of Christ upon that subject will at once be clear to you. He has been given all the authority he needs to rule over creation as his *Father's representative*. This he holds not by virtue of his own power. Everything is subordinate to the Son, but only because it was so ordered by the Father. Whatever the Father desires to perform in His universe, He does through the agency of the Son he appointed, and only through the Son can the Father be reached. Hence, as Christ says: '*No one comes unto the Father, but by me.*'

The Son receives his Father's directions, and those which are not to be executed by him personally are passed on to the spirits best suited for the task in question, who perform it at the direct command of the Son and at the indirect command of the Father. This also is the meaning of the words Christ addressed to the Apostles when he sent them forth, and which are somewhat incorrectly repeated in your Bible:

Matthew 28: 19: 'Go you therefore, and teach all the peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, in a holy spirit.'

The mission on which Christ sent the Apostles had been assigned by the Father; consequently, the Apostles were acting *indirectly* in the Father's name, but inasmuch as they had been sent *directly* by the Son, it was in his name that their mission was carried out, and since it could be done only if one of God's spirits helped them with his power, it was said to be performed under the power of a holy spirit, or '*in a holy spirit*'.

The holy spirits that the Apostles needed for their tasks were assigned to them by Christ himself. Therefore, the Apostles constantly invoke them in their preaching and emphasize that the truth was *revealed to them by a holy spirit*.

- *So, it is in everything that you do that is God's will – you are acting in the fulfillment of His will, and consequently in the name of the Father. The will of God is revealed to you through the Son, so you are acting also in the name of the Son; and the power you need is given to you by a holy spirit. Hence, you are performing your task in a holy spirit.*

Second: There is little to be found in the New Testament concerning *God's Creation and its destiny*.

The facts relating to the creation of the spirits are,

- the defection of *a part* of the spirit world under Lucifer's leadership,

- the Divinely created *spheres of progress* in which the fallen spirits are led back to God,
- the *enveloping the spirits in matter* – these were as difficult for the people of those times to understand as for the people of today.

The epistles of the Apostles likewise have little to say about the subject, for these truths lend themselves but poorly to instruction by means of letters, and could be brought home to the faithful only by oral presentation.

Nevertheless, Paul at least hints at these truths in several passages of his writings, even if you fail to understand them because they no longer fit in with your religious views. Thus, he writes in his epistle to the Romans:

Romans 8: 19-24: ‘For all Creation awaits with yearning the moment when they will shed their material bodies as children of God. For they are subjected to the impermanence of matter, not of their own will, but by order of Him who ordained their subjection in the hope that they will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that to this hour all of Creation sighs and awaits the pangs of a new birth. And not only they, but we also, who already possess the first gift of communication with God's spirits, even we ourselves sigh inwardly, waiting to be released from our bodies.’

From what I have already taught you, you know the relationships that are being referred to. In this passage Paul says that the whole of Creation is waiting with yearning to be delivered from the bondage of material existence, meaning thereby the *stones, plants, herbs, flowers, animals* and *men*.

- *Such ‘yearning’ is possible only in a being in which a spirit is incarnated.*

So, throughout Creation there are spirits, incorporated in matter of different kinds. They are the once rebellious spirits, which in the beginning resided in glory and splendour as God's obedient children and as His holy spirits, but then became disobedient and were therefore exiled from the Father's house.

- *Exiled though they be, they remain God's children to this day.*

They long to return to the Father's home and strive to free themselves of the material bodies in which they are confined, as during the birth pangs a child struggles to escape from the confines of its mother's womb. These spirits are not in the material bodies of their own will, but it was God who so embodied them in His mercy, in order that by trial and purification they might be saved. All material beings long for this salvation, even though they may not know the way to it nor the goal, and they pine for the day on which, purified and freed from their material bodies, they shall once more be called the children of God.

This longing abides, above all, in the people who believe in God, for although they, like the early Christians, may be in daily communion with the spirit messengers from their Father's home and in them have received the first gift and a foretaste of the kingdom of God, they still have not attained to that kingdom so long as they live in the flesh.

Third: The *upward evolution in nature* is indicated by Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, in which he says:

Ephesians 1: 9-10: ‘.... making known unto us God's will, which he planned to carry out in the fullness of time, *when the development ordained by him* had been achieved: to reunite everything in Christ, what is in the heavens and what is upon the earth ...’

There are, however, many things on earth besides human beings, who form only a small fraction of what exists thereon.

- *If, then, God intends to unite all things upon earth under Christ's leadership, it follows that in all things there are spirits that in the evolution ordained by God progress steadily, until they return as pure spirits into that great community under Christ to which they belonged before their fall.*

The fact that everything, not mankind alone, but all the rest of creation too, is included in God's Plan of Salvation is apparent from the following passage in Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Romans 11: 25-32: ‘For I would not, brethren, leave you ignorant of this mystery, lest your conceit leads you to false conclusions: Hardness of heart has come over a part of Israel and will last until *all* of the Gentiles have entered God's kingdom. Afterwards *all of Israel* will also be saved.... For God has confined *all* things because of their disobedience, for He plans to have mercy on *all*’.

I have given you this passage as it should be. If the last sentence in the translation before you reads: ‘For God hath let *all men* fall into disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all’, it is because the translator has made *two mistakes*.

- First, he has written ‘*all men*’ whereas the Greek text says: ‘everything’.
- Second, he has translated as ‘*into disobedience*’ what should have been: ‘*God hath confined all things by reason of their disobedience*’, meaning that all things were embodied by Him in matter corresponding to the various stages of progress.

God confines no one unto disobedience; on the contrary, He desires the return to obedience of all who were once exiled from His kingdom because of their disobedience.

- *The Israel of the earlier millenniums consisted of the people to whom the pure faith had been revealed and who were to spread this faith to the other nations of the earth, thus acting as a leaven of truth. Had Israel accomplished this errand faithfully, it would have been the first to re-enter God's kingdom after the Redemption.*

But the greater part of Israel showed itself *unworthy* of the high mission with which it had been charged.

Consequently, the *first* to be saved will be *the non-Israelites*, the very ones who in the past had known nothing of God, and only when all the non-Israelites have returned to God, will those be saved who had once possessed the true faith, but who failed to observe its precepts. ‘*The first shall be the last.*’ But all, without exception, will be saved.

The references in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians to the course followed by God's work of Redemption are brief but clear:

I Corinthians 15: 22-28: 'For as together with Adam *all* died, so also together with Christ *all* shall be returned to life, but each in his turn: First Christ; then they that are Christ's at his coming. Then the rest, when he delivers up the kingdom to God, the Father, as soon as he has abolished all other sovereignty and power. For Christ must reign until he has laid all enemies at God's feet. The last enemy that shall be vanquished is "death". For God put all things in subjection under Christ. But when Christ says, "all things are subjected", it is evident that He (namely God) is excepted Who did subject all things unto the Son. And when all things have been subjected to Him (God), then shall the Son also subject himself to Him Who did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.'

Thus, all things will return to God that had been separated from Him and had been subjected as spiritually 'dead' to the prince of spiritual death. Christ will lead all things back to God. He was also the first to return from hell, the realm of the Prince of Death, after having descended there and vanquished Lucifer on his own ground. *His was the first Resurrection from the spiritually dead.*

As time passes, all the spiritually dead will follow him, as they learn to know and to love God, but 'each in his turn', which depends upon the spirits themselves.

- *Those who hasten and apply themselves to seeking God and to living as He would have them live will come before those who give no thought at all to a return or show but little zeal.*

Everything depends upon their own initiative!

He who fails repeatedly in his examinations will *be late* in reaching the goal. This is true of life on earth, as well as in the Beyond.

The last of all to return unto God will be the Prince of Death himself, Lucifer.

Paul calls him '*Death*'.

For he is the cause of all apostasy from God's kingdom and, hence, of spiritual death. He is the '*murderer from the beginning*', guilty of the spiritual death of all those who are separated from God, and of having done his utmost throughout millions of years to prevent the return of his subjects to the Realm of Life in God. He is, therefore, the personification of separation from God, the personification of death. Thus, when you read in the Revelation of John.

John 20: 13: 'And death gave up the dead',

the meaning is that Lucifer, the Prince of Death, was forced to give up the spiritually dead that were in his kingdom.

And when I said that the order of the return of the fallen spirits depends upon the free will of each one, I must qualify this statement by adding that:

- *Lucifer himself is the only one who cannot return to God until the last of those he led astray has reached that goal. He cannot do so, not even if he were to attempt it by reason of a change of heart. Also, he may not, even if he should early see the error of his ways, urge any of the fallen spirits to reform or even aid them with his advice in order thereby to hasten his own return to God.*

This is the just fate that rests upon him as the original instigator, and which he cannot change.

The Redemption of all of those who had fallen away from God, even of Lucifer, is *the glad tidings* told not only in the epistles of Paul, but shown to the prophets of the Old Covenant in their visions. These are the glad tidings to which the Revelation of John refers with the words:

Revelation 10: 7: ‘But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound the trumpet, then will be accomplished God's mysterious Plan of Salvation, as he had imparted in the glad tidings to his servants, the prophets.’

8. 5 There is no eternal Hell

If it were true that there is an eternal hell, as is taught today, wherein would lie the '*glad tidings*' God promised as the completion of His Plan of Salvation?

- *A completion that involved the eternal damnation of countless spirits would assuredly be no day of gladness, but a day of horror for all of God's Creation.*

What then would become of the Redemption of all, preached so often and so insistently by Paul?

What of the fulfillment of God's promise given through the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, that unto Him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, and all shall come, even they who had been hostile towards Him?

What would become of the fulfillment of all the passages of which I have spoken to you?

All of God's enemies will be laid at the Father's feet by Christ, *not by force*, but by a *merciful love*, against which not even Lucifer can hold out forever.

- *God forces no fallen spirit into subjection!*

Had He wished to, He could have done so long ago, for even hell must obey His omnipotent will. When hell one day humbles itself before Him, it will do so of its own *free will*, in contrite acknowledgment of His justice, love, and patience.

A doctrine to which you cling with astonishing tenacity although it was unknown to the early Christians is that of an 'eternal hell'.. This is a spectre that you seem unwilling to surrender. Do you perhaps imagine that you can accomplish more with poor humanity by preaching a barbarous untruth than by preaching love and mercy?

To what trouble you go to find support for this *untruth*!

You say that a so-called '*mortal sin*' must entail *eternal punishment*, seeing that it is an unforgivable affront to God.

Those are wholly mistaken, manmade concepts!

No creature can affront God unforgivably and thereby incur unending punishment. The lower the standing of him who affronts you, the less attention you will pay to his insults.

What is a miserable creature as compared with its Creator?

A mere speck of dust!

- *Your insults do not even touch God; they hurt not Him, but yourselves.*

Again, if a mortal sin were an unpardonable affront to God, it could not be forgiven during your lives on earth. On the other hand, if, as your doctrine claims, it can be forgiven in men, why should

it not be forgiven the spirits in the Beyond? They are, after all, the same spirits, whether they inhabit a mortal body or have become separated from it by human death.

- *It is the same 'I' with all its spiritual attributes in the Here and in the Beyond. Hence a change of heart may occur in spirits in the Beyond as well as while they reside on earth.*

Proof that the tortures of hell are everlasting is sought by invoking the Bible, by citing the word 'eternal' used in your translations of the New Testament in connection with punishment in the Beyond. But what is the word in the original Greek texts that your translators have rendered as 'eternal'? What matters are not your translations, but *the sense* of the word as it occurs in the original text.

- *It so happens that wherever your translators of the Scriptures use the words 'eternity' or 'eternal', the Greek text has 'eon'.*

You, too, have adopted this word and speak of 'eons' to designate long periods of time. That is correct; for also in Greek the word 'eon' *never* signifies 'eternity' or the idea of anything everlasting, but merely an indefinite period of time. Antiquity was an 'eon', the Middle Ages were an 'eon', the Modern Age is an 'eon'. The Romans regarded an 'eon' as the equivalent of a hundred years.

An 'eon' is therefore a period of time, the limits of which are sometimes seen to be closer together, sometimes further apart. Even a human lifetime is sometimes so designated. Never, however, can 'eon' be used to describe a never-ending period of time. So, you may never translate 'eon' as 'eternity', or the adjective derived therefrom as 'eternal'. The correct equivalents are 'time' and 'temporal'.

- *First I want to call your attention to the interesting circumstance that in many passages of the Bible the word 'eon' and the corresponding adjective have been correctly translated as 'time' and 'temporal', because in those particular places the word 'eternal' would be nonsensical. Only when punishment in the Beyond is involved have the translators used the word 'eternal'.*

Indicating clearly that they were influenced by the Christian religions that preach eternal damnation.

Let us consider a few of the numerous passages in the Bible in which the word 'eon' can be translated only as 'time' or 'pertaining to time.' Thus, it is said that *blasphemy against the Spirit* shall not be forgiven, either in this 'eon' or in that which is to come, that is, neither in this age nor in the next, or neither in this life nor in the next. Inasmuch as there is only one eternity, you cannot rationally translate that it will not be forgiven in 'this eternity' or in the 'eternity that is to come.' For there is no such thing as *two eternities*.

In the *parable of the sower*, it is said that some of the seeds were choked by the cares of this 'eon', which again has been correctly translated as 'by the cares of this "life"'. Here also the rendering of the word as 'eternity' would obviously be inappropriate.

The same is true of the *parable of the weeds among the wheat*, in which Christ explains that the harvest will be the end of this 'eon', that is, the 'end of this age or this world.' Here, too, it cannot mean 'eternity'. In this passage the word 'eon' occurs twice more, both times in a limitative sense.

Finally, I shall quote a few passages from *Paul's epistles*: 'Do not conduct your lives in the manner of this "eon" (these times).' 'We speak a wisdom not of this "eon", or of the rulers of this "eon", but we speak God's mysterious wisdom, which He foreordained before all "eons".'

- *From these passages, which could be multiplied many times, you may see that the word 'eon' does not mean 'eternity', but a time period of limited duration.*

Now, this same word 'eon' occurs where a punishment in the Beyond is mentioned. Whence do you derive the right to translate a word as 'eternal' when referring to damnation, when you have rendered it as 'time' and 'temporal' in countless other passages? It would almost seem as though you took a particular delight in the thought of an everlasting hell.

According to the translation you have, Christ said: 'It is better for you to enter into life maimed or lame than to have two hands and two feet and be cast into the "eternal" fire.' What you here designate as the 'eternal' fire is also only a fire that will last throughout an 'eon' and hence last only for a time. Strangely enough, the original text did not even contain the word 'eon' in this passage; it was added as a *falsification*. The original text read: 'into the fire of hell' and not 'into the eternal fire'.

Similar spurious alterations have been made elsewhere. Thus, your present Bible translations say: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire', whereas the authentic version was: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into the outer darkness!'

'I believe these explanations will suffice to convince you that there is no basis in the Bible to support your inhuman and *untrue doctrine of an 'everlasting hell'*. The duration of the punishment meted out to the different spirits depends above all upon the spirits themselves. The longer they persist in their rebellious attitude, the longer their exile and the punishment of separation. Not even God knows when the individual spirits will come back to Him, since their return depends upon their own free will, and, as I have told you, all future decisions that spirits are free to make lie outside the scope of God's foreknowledge of events.

Also, what has been incorrectly translated as '*eternal life*' by a mistaken rendering of the word 'eon' is merely a life in the 'eons' or 'ages' to come. How long this life with God may last depends upon you yourselves. If you remain faithful to God, that life will be, *in truth, eternal*. But who can tell whether in the future there may not be another rebellion of the spirits, in which you will again take part, as you did in the first revolt under Lucifer? Spirits in heaven have *the same freedom of choice now as before*, and the possibility of a misuse of that freedom is as much a fact today as it was at the time of the first revolt. Whether or not there will ever be another is something that even God does not know, for the reason I have already indicated to you.

- *You cannot, therefore, speak of an 'eternal' reward, any more than you can speak of an 'eternal' punishment.*

Wherever the Bible refers to the 'fires' of hell, this is symbolic of the excessive pain suffered by those who must endure hell's punishments. You, too, speak of a burning pain without meaning actual fire.

- *The torments of hell are so great that they are beyond human conception.*

Christ says: 'The damned shall be salted with fire,' for as salt permeates everything, so does agony permeate the spirits of the damned; but he adds: 'Salt is good.' *So, too*, the torments the spirits must

endure are in reality good for their Salvation, even if they seem cruel and incomprehensible to mankind, and not in keeping with the concept of a merciful God. And yet the torments of hell are evidence of the love of God.

A mother who subjects her child to the surgeon's knife in order that it may be cured of a dangerous wound, acts under the impulse of maternal love and is driven to expose her child to pain because there is no other remedy.

Similarly, the fundamental beliefs of the spirits in the pit can be reformed only by the torment they have to endure; *there is no other way*. But to all, even to the most hardened, the hour will come when, by their torment, they will be brought to see the error of their ways and will arise and go home to their Father.

8. 6 The Origin of the Human Spirit and Original Sin

It is because Christianity of today has *no true understanding* of the larger picture of world events that it is so helpless in all the most important questions relating to the Beyond. That is why it is unable to explain the origin of the human soul, or the sin weighing upon that soul as a result of the revolt against God, or the purpose of material Creation. Its doctrines in regard to all of these questions are wholly erroneous.

Fourth: Whenever an explanation is sought from today's Christian denominations as to the *origin of the human spirit*, the answer is: 'The human spirit is created by God at the moment of conception. It is, nevertheless, burdened with the so-called "*original sin*", because Adam, the ancestor of all mankind, sinned in earthly paradise and his sin has descended upon all of his progeny.'

They do not stop to consider how absurd such a doctrine is.

- *They do not pause to think that everything God creates comes out of His hand pure and flawless, and that the contamination of a spirit can occur only through its own fault.. Consequently, if the human spirit were created by God at the instant of conception, it would be entirely pure and spotless.*

In this case there could be no question of any 'original sin', for why should Adam's descendants be punished with the bondage of sin and exile from God's kingdom because of their ancestor's fault? And that, by a God Who once said:

Ezekiel 18: 20: 'The soul that sins, it shall die; but the son shall *not bear* the iniquity of the father.'

According to this, Adam's descendants *cannot* be punished by God for their ancestor's fall if they did *not themselves* take part in it. As a matter of fact, they themselves did *personally* fall – as I have already told you – by following Adam's spirit's example, thereby *like him* incurring banishment from God's kingdom with all of its dire consequences by their own fault.

- *It is therefore true that the human spirit bears from birth an iniquity which you call 'original sin'. But it is false to assert, as you do, that the human spirit comes into existence only at the moment of human conception and that it bears a sin without itself having sinned.*

How can you, in the light of your false doctrine as to the origin of the human spirit, explain all the suffering that exists on earth?

Do you imagine that God brought forth His creatures to suffer through life and to die in agony *without* having been personally guilty of any wrongdoing?

Think of the millions of children who die amidst the greatest suffering every year! What have they done to deserve such a fate? Have they by any chance so affronted God during their life on earth as to merit such a punishment? They were incapable of sinning, being as yet unable to distinguish right from wrong. Would an infinitely good and just God torment innocent infants?

Wherein, then, would lie His goodness, and above all, His justice?

Not even the most brutal human father is so cruel and unjust as to maltreat a child that has done him no harm.

Would God do that?

You may offer what explanations you will; you cannot explain away the hideous injustice that would have been done to these children, if your doctrine were correct. The same thing may be said of the fate of humanity generally.

- *But if you know that your spirit came into this life bearing the sins of a former existence, all mysteries of fate are solved in an instant. Then you see the great revolt against God in which the spirits of mortals once participated, as well as previous incarnations in human form, in which individuals committed sins for which their present life must make atonement.*

If you bear this in mind, you will be less often tempted to exclaim in times of deep distress: '*What have I done to deserve this?*' If God, in reply to this question, were to show you a picture of your entire past, you would be struck speechless with horror.

Moreover, many parts of the Holy Writ that have heretofore been obscure to you will become clear. You could by your own reasoning solve the *apparent* contradiction contained in the Old Testament, which in one passage says: 'The son shall not bear the sins of the father', and in another: 'For I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, upon the third or fourth generation.'

- *When God punishes children for the sins of their fathers, it is not by allowing innocent children to suffer for their father's sins. That would be manifestly unjust. He does, however, incarnate in the sinful father's children spirits that have themselves incurred a painful fate, and whose fate serves as a visible punishment to the father also. Now, since a father seldom experiences more than three or four generations of his descendants, for him this punishment can last only unto the fourth generation.*

How, furthermore, in the face of your teaching that the human spirit comes into being at the moment of conception, do you explain this sentence from the Bible: 'God is able to raise up children unto Abraham from these stones'?

You may say that God in His omnipotence can turn stones into human beings, but such human beings would not be children of Abraham. They could become children of Abraham only by way of procreation as his descendants through a line of human ancestors. But how can stones become Abraham's children through procreation?

All your theological learning will not enable you to answer this question.

- *When you know, however, that spirits exist in stones, as they do in all matter, the explanation is obvious.*

Then you will realize that God is able to divest the spirits in stones of their material bodies and to put them into the bodies of those children that come to be born as descendants of Abraham according to the established laws of procreation. “The same applies to the words of Christ:

Luke 19: 40: ‘I tell you that if they [the disciples] keep quiet, the stones will cry out.’

Obviously, stones cannot cry out unless spirits are embodied in them.

8. 7 The Concept of Sin

5. Just as you have established *a false doctrine as to original sin*, your conception of sin as a whole is erroneous.

The Bible draws a *distinction* between the sin of ‘separation from God’ and the sins of the faithful committed by reason of human error.

In the first Epistle of John there is a passage whose explanation causes all of you great difficulty. It reads:

I John 5: 16- 17: ‘If any one sees his brother commit a sin, and it is not a sin unto death, he shall pray for him and so give him spiritual strength, that is, for those who sin not unto death. There is also sin unto death; in these cases, I do not say that one should pray for them. Every wrongdoing is a sin, yet not every sin is unto death.’

John thus draws a distinction here between sin unto death and sin not unto death and – and this strikes you as most incomprehensible in the Apostle’s words – he tells you that you need not even pray for those who have committed a sin unto death.

The sense of these words is best explained by means of an example.

Soldiers, on joining the armed forces, are required to take an oath of allegiance. This makes them soldiers of their native land. Now it often happens that soldiers commit offenses for which they are punished by disciplinary measures, without therefore ceasing to be soldiers of their native countries. There is, however, one sin through which a man ceases to be a soldier of his country and the punishment for which is death: desertion by going over to the enemy. This makes him dead for his homeland. From a military point of view, he has ‘sinned unto death’.. It would be useless for the mother of such a deserter to appeal to the government of her country for mercy for her deserter son, seeing that he is no longer under the jurisdiction of his own government but has subjected himself to that of a hostile state, whose laws henceforth are binding for him. That state will not surrender him, even should the deserter want to return. Of course, he has no desire to go back to his old homeland. Hence, any appeals for mercy addressed to the home government by his mother are useless.

Apply this example to your relationship with God.

As mortals who believe in Him, you are subjects of the kingdom of God. Even if, erring pilgrims that you are on earth, not a day passes on which you do not commit some trespass great or small for which you are duly punished by God, you do not on that account cease to be His subjects. If, however, you turn your back on God by abandoning your belief in Him, by denying Him or by living as though there were no God, you are guilty of desertion. This is the sin by which you sever yourselves from the kingdom of God and go over into the kingdom of the evil powers, who are hostile to God. You abandon your allegiance to God completely, just as a deserter abandons his allegiance to his own sovereign. You are dead to the kingdom of God, having committed the ‘*sin unto death*’.

Of what avail, then, would someone’s prayer on behalf of such a turncoat be?

He cares nothing for God and has no desire to return to Him. For your prayers to be granted, God would have to force him to return. This He cannot do, because He has bestowed on all the gift of free will, and hence never employs force to compel the decisions of His creatures.

Everyone must bring about his own Salvation through free choice.

8. 8 The Resurrection of the Dead is not the resurrection of the Bodies

The first desertion was the great revolt of the spirits led by Lucifer. That was the first 'sin unto death'.

6. *The Resurrection of the dead* is therefore their repentant ascension from their exile in the realm of the spiritually dead into the kingdom of God. It is the homecoming of the former deserters.

They have the Redeemer to thank for the fact that they can return and that Lucifer, the ruler of the kingdom hostile to God, may no longer hold them by force. By his victory over the ruler of the kingdom of the dead Christ secured the release of all those who sincerely repent of their ways and long to return to God.. Christ was the first to descend to the dead in hell without himself being one of those separated from God. He also was the first to ascend from hell to heaven. Before him, this had not been possible for any of the fallen spirits. Spirits, once they had entered hell, were powerless to escape from there to the heights.

- *Christ's ascent from hell was the first 'Resurrection from the dead'.*

To which frequent reference is made by Paul in his epistles, as in that to the Ephesians, in which he writes as for the phrase:

Ephesians 4: 9: 'Christ ascended on high, what does that mean but that he first descended to places lower than the earth?'

What Paul means here are the spheres of hell. They are, as I have told you on another occasion, lower than the terrestrial spheres. To the Colossians he wrote:

Colossians 2: 15: 'Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he triumphed over them.'

The powers and authorities to which Paul refers are those of hell, against which Christ fought, aided by the celestial legions, after his descent into hell, and which he overcame, forcing Lucifer, their ruler, to surrender those of his subjects who desired *to escape* from his rule. Paul refers to this in the same epistle with the words:

Colossians 2: 12-13: 'Because you belong to Christ, you were also raised with him.... You, too, who were once dead, God restored to life together with him.'

The Colossians, to whom Paul was writing, had also formerly been spiritually dead and Lucifer's subjects, but in time they came to believe in Christ and in the kingdom of God. Through their faith they gave their allegiance to Christ and shared in the kingdom of God, together with him. When it says here that Christ was restored to life, this does not mean that he had been spiritually dead, but that he had been in the realm of the spiritually dead and was outwardly separated from God's kingdom. To all effects, Christ was, during his stay in hell, like someone who was spiritually dead, although he himself was not spiritually dead. God restored him to life insofar as He gave Christ the power to overcome the forces of the realm of the dead, and thus brought him back into the kingdom of celestial life.

- *The 'Resurrection of the dead' therefore has not the slightest thing to do with the resurrection of the physical bodies. There is no 'resurrection of the flesh' such as is contained in the creeds of the various Christian denominations.*

In the early centuries of the Christian era, the creeds did not speak of the 'resurrection of the flesh', but of the *'Resurrection of the dead'*, thus conveying the consoling message that all those who were spiritually dead, including Lucifer, would ultimately return to God.

Later these words were changed, when the false doctrine was introduced that the earthly bodies of those who had died would come back to life, in spite of the fact that Paul has given the true doctrine in the words:

I Corinthians 15: 44: 'That which is sown is a natural body; that which is raised is a spiritual body.'

Not even Christ's earthly body was raised. Like the physical bodies of all mortals, it had been created from the od of the earth and, like them, it returned to the earth, with this exception: it was not transformed into terrestrial od by way of decay, but by *dematerialization* effected by the spirit world. In the same way as Christ's corpse, the bodies of men like Enoch and Elijah had been transformed into od.

- *All human bodies are created from the od of the earth and into the od of the earth they are all ultimately transformed. This is a law that admits of no exception.*

To the Christians of today, the 'Resurrection of the dead' means the restoration of the physical body, and Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday is regarded by them as the reunion of his spirit with his body, which had lain in the grave for three days.

These are wholly mistaken ideas!

For, to repeat it once more, Christ's Resurrection from the dead merely means his return from the realm of the spiritually dead, his return from hell, into which his spirit had descended. The Apostolic creed expresses this correctly in the words: 'Descended unto hell, on the third day risen from the dead.' This would be clearer still if phrased as follows: 'Descended unto the dead, on the third day returned from the dead.'

The term 'Resurrection of the dead' confuses you as it does, because the word 'death' means to you only the cessation of life on earth, and 'the dead' makes *you think* only of corpses, graves and churchyards. You do not take the wording of the Bible into account, according to which 'death' means separation from God, and 'the dead' are those who are thus separated. The incorrect translations of certain Biblical passages have also contributed liberally to this misunderstanding, as, for example, the passage in the Book of Job:

Job 19: 25-26: 'I know that my Redeemer lives and he will appear as the last upon this earth.
Then shall I see God, though my skin be in tatters and I without my flesh.'

These words have been *completely distorted* into the opposite meaning in the version: 'I know that my Redeemer lives and will at last raise me from the dust, when I shall be covered with this my skin and in my flesh I shall see God.'

Another falsification I have already explained to you. It is the passage in the Gospel of Matthew that speaks of the dead having risen from their graves on the day of the Crucifixion, whereas in reality it said that the earthquake had cast bodies from their tombs. "I should also mention here a passage from the Gospel of John, which reads:

John 5: 28: 'For the hour is coming, indeed it is already here, when all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.'

The word 'tombs' here refers to the same thing that Peter calls 'prison' when he writes in his epistle:

I Peter 3: 19: 'Christ went as a spirit and brought the tidings unto the spirits in prison.'

In another passage:

II Peter 2: 4: 'For God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell, and committed them to "caverns" of darkness.'

That the word 'tombs' as used by John in the passage I have cited cannot mean graves in the churchyard is clear from the words of Christ: 'The hour is already here, when the dead in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God.' Had that been the case, the bodies of the dead would have had to come out of the graves then and there. What Christ meant by his words was the spiritually dead in Satan's dungeons, whom he intended to redeem on the occasion of his upcoming descent into hell, insofar as they would give heed to his voice.

Furthermore, the fact that after his earthly death Christ appeared to his followers in material form has led you to the erroneous conclusion that his spirit re-entered his former physical body. In reality he made himself visible in the same manner in which all spirits do, namely by the *materialization* of their spiritual body.

Had not many spirits done this before him? Did not three spirits, in completely human form, appear to Abraham, eating with him as Christ ate with his disciples after his death? Did not the Archangel Raphael for many weeks accompany young Tobias, eating and drinking with him, so that Tobias was convinced that he was dealing with an ordinary man? Was it, then, something extraordinary that Christ showed himself to his disciples after his death, and that he spoke, ate and drank with them?

You have similar cases of materialization today!

Evil spirits also are able to materialize themselves in the same manner.

The true meaning of the 'Resurrection of the dead' was made clear to the Apostles and the faithful by spirits of God only *after* Christ's ascension. Whenever during his earth life Christ spoke to the Apostles about his 'Resurrection from the dead', they were unable to understand what he meant.

Mark 9: 10: 'And they discussed among themselves the meaning of the phrase "risen from the dead".'

About the views of the religious leaders of the Jewish people of the time on the 'rising of the dead', the Acts tell you:

Acts 23: 8: 'For the Sadducees say that there is no Resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits; but the Pharisees acknowledge both.'

8. 9 The meaning of Baptism

To return from the kingdom of the spiritually dead to the kingdom of God *no one* needs any human institution, no organized religion or clergy, as found among the religions of today and in particular in the Catholic Church.

- *Whoever has strayed from God may at any time communicate in spirit with God, the Father, and from Him receive, without the aid of human intermediaries, pardon and the strength to live according to God's will.*

Seventh: Your [Catholic] church, in contrast, teaches the need for so-called '*sacraments*' in order to achieve Salvation, and as these sacraments can be dispensed only by priests ordained by bishops, the Catholic Church possesses in that doctrine a perfect means of binding the faithful to its organization. For, according to its precepts, no one can reach God save through the mediation of a priest.

As you read the New Testament you will notice that there is not one single word in the teachings of Christ and of his Apostles on which this doctrine of sacraments can be based. Your sacraments, to which you attribute such scholarly significance, are *manmade fabrications*, as I will now show you.

a. "First and most essential of your sacraments is that of *baptism by water* .

You claim that baptism *per se*, that is, entirely without the involvement of the person baptized, converts an enemy of God into one of His children, by the eradication of so-called original sin as well as all personal sins. Hence, you go so far as to baptize infants so young that they are utterly unaware that the rite is being performed.

This shows a *complete misconception* of the significance of baptism!

Which, in the early days of Christianity, was merely an external rite emblematic of an attitude of mind. Baptism, therefore, created nothing new, as you preach, but was merely an external manifestation of the sentiments of those who received it. Thus, the baptism administered by John was a public acknowledgement on the part of those he baptized that they were ready to accept his gospel and to mend their ways. The essence of the rite lay in its administration in public, so that all might know *who* those were that had been baptized.

You may perhaps think that an attitude of mind requires no outward sign, but you mortals often deceive yourselves as to your own *real* sentiments and become quite sure of them only when called upon to profess them in public. Then you frequently find that what you had considered to be the good within yourselves is *not as great as* you had imagined it to be.

Among those who went out to hear the Baptist preach, there were many who *thought* that they were experiencing a change of heart, but when they were faced with baptism in public as an outward sign of this change of heart, *their courage failed* them. Their fear of man was stronger than the good in them; they dreaded the taunts of their fellowmen, and particularly those of the Jewish priesthood, which had not acknowledged John as an envoy of God. Because of this fear they therefore declined baptism. Had they not been faced with the choice between accepting or rejecting this outward

manifestation, they would never have realized that they were in fact *not yet ready* for the kingdom of God.

- *Anyone who, because of worldly considerations, refuses to stand up in public for what he knows is true and right, and to accept all the worldly consequences of his action, cannot be depended on. He is of no use to God's cause, for the things of the world mean more to him.*

It was for this very reason that *Christ accepted baptism from John*. He, too, wanted all the people *to see* that he stood up for the truth preached by John. "As a sign of acceptance of his teachings and of the desire to improve one's ways, John chose baptism by immersion in water. He might indeed have chosen any other symbol, but immersion in water was *the most beautiful symbol* indicative of the purpose of his preaching. He taught the cleansing from sin by virtue of abandonment of previous evil-mindedness.

- *As those being baptized were cleansed physically by immersion and, as it were, emerged from the water as new beings, so the acceptance of the truth would cleanse their souls and enable them as new beings to lead a life of obedience to God.*

It was because of the symbolic nature of the rite that Christ retained baptism with water as an outward sign of the acceptance of his gospel.

People today can hardly imagine the consequences for the early Christians of their *public baptism*, in token of their conversion to Christianity. The Jewish converts thereby exposed themselves to hatred and persecution on the part of their former fellow believers and particularly on the part of the Jewish priesthood, and suffered financial losses. They were insulted in the streets, dragged to prison, and stoned. The story of Paul and the fate of Stephen show the *fanaticism* with which the Jews of the times persecuted those of their people who had become Christians.

Persecution by the Gentiles was equally savage. The pagan religion was the state religion; the worship of the gods, the festivals held in honour of the idols and the sacrifices offered to them were prescribed by law. It was considered to be one of the most serious offenses against the state and its ruler to fail to attend such acts of idol worship and sacrificial ceremonies, and it was punishable with death and confiscation of property. Of course, no Christian could continue to participate in such events, although he knew that if he were denounced, he must be prepared for the worst. The horrors that attended the persecution of the Christians by paganism are but too well known to you. Death and confiscation of their property was the lot of many Christians..

How many so-called Christians of today do you think would be willing to accept a baptism involving such consequences to their lives and property? Yet whoever lacks the courage to testify to his faith in the face of such sacrifices is no true Christian. "Baptism did not, therefore, dispense any special inner grace, but was a mere symbol that the baptized person *was ready* to accept all consequences attendant upon the public confession of his belief.

What, then, are the consequences of this?

- *First and foremost, it follows that the baptism of infant children is of no value, since they are utterly incapable of recognizing the truth or of expressing a belief therein.*

That is why the Christians of the first centuries never dispensed baptism to children. That is also why Christ commanded his Apostles that they should first preach the gospel and only thereafter baptize those who were *ready* to accept it. It also follows that the doctrine of the Christian churches, that baptism purges a child of original sin and that the souls of children who die unbaptized have forever lost the kingdom of God, is *completely wrong*.

- *A cleansing from sin can be effected only by a determined effort to abandon the ways of evil, and not by any action that comes from without.*

Paul relates of some of the Christians of his day that they had themselves baptized on behalf of persons who had already died. This was an example of *excess of zeal* in new converts. No one can be baptized in another's place. Everyone must work out his own Salvation, for in this there can be no acting as a deputy for someone else. Nevertheless, the intentions of these converts were good: They thereby sought to proclaim that the deceased, had they still been alive, would also have accepted Christ's teaching and received baptism in outward testimony thereof. They did it as a gesture of love for their departed.

8. 10 The sending of the Spirit (Confirmation)

b. The second sacrament recognized by your church is that of '*confirmation*'. The bishop administers this sacrament by laying his hand upon the confirmed, anointing him and praying for him. It is held that by virtue of this act the 'Holy Spirit' comes upon the confirmed, as it descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost.

- *It is true that Christ promised that after his Resurrection he would send his Father's spirits to the faithful, but he did not make their sending contingent upon any ceremonies conducted by a bishop. The messengers from God were to come to all who were spiritually worthy to receive them.*

Even if there is, in the Acts of the Apostles, a reference to the laying on of hands in connection with the outpouring of the holy spirits, the relationship between these two things was *quite different* from what is assumed today.

- *The elder laid his hand upon the person newly baptized or converted in token of his admission to the congregation.*

Since the elders possessed *great psychic* powers, the odic power of psychically gifted individuals was so greatly increased by this laying on of hands during their baptism that spirit messages were frequently communicated through them. For this, a proper state of trance was not necessary; the influence of the spirit world was often the same as what you have seen in the case of so-called '*inspirational mediums*'. Persons under this influence uttered words of prayer or glorification of God, a manifestation known to you from the early centuries of Christianity as '*praying in the spirit*'. Frequently also they spoke words of admonition or instruction that deeply distressed their hearers.

Furthermore, the laying on of hands was performed with those to whom some special task had been assigned on behalf of the community, to signify that they were to be regarded as instruments of God after having been *appointed* as such by *God's spirit messengers*. When, therefore, the Apostle Paul warns his fellow worker Timothy not to lay hands on people too hastily, he has two things in mind:

- One is that Timothy should not assist anyone in becoming a medium unless he has first made sure of his *disposition and loyalty to the faith*, lest the medium later devote his powers to evil ends and thereby cause serious harm to the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
- The second reason is that no one should be sanctioned by the laying on of hands as an instrument for a given mission *unless specifically assigned to that mission by a spirit of God*.

A person on whom only the power of healing had been bestowed could be employed only as a healer, and not, for instance, as a teacher, a duty for which he was neither called nor qualified.

I Corinthians 12: 29-30: 'Are all apostles?' asks Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians. 'Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have the gift of healing? Do all speak in foreign tongues? Can all translate the foreign language into their mother tongue?'

And when Paul admonishes this same Timothy to fan to a bright flame the gift of God that was in him through Paul's laying on of hands, he is referring to the gift of teaching. Under the direction of

a spirit of God Timothy had been commissioned by Paul, through the laying on of hands, *to teach the gospel of Salvation* and had been sent forth on that mission. Because of the many difficulties he encountered in the performance of his mission as a teacher, however, he had become discouraged and despondent.

If you compare the workings of the spirits in the early days of the Christian era with what you teach about the subject today, you will see how far you have strayed from the truth also in this matter.

- *The spirit of God will not submit to being used by mortals at their will. It comes to those whose inner lives have rendered them worthy of it and who desire it with heart and soul – without the intervention of bishops and their anointing ritual. The spirit of God ‘blows where it wants’ and not where humans want it to.*

Before Christ brought Redemption, the *spirit of darkness* pervaded all mankind, exerting thereon its sinister influence. This you can see from the many *cases of possession* mentioned in the Scriptures when they speak of the healings performed by Christ. In other cases, the victims suffered severe physical injuries at the hands of the evil spirits; thus, you read in the gospels of people who had been struck *dumb, deaf, blind, or epileptic* under their influence. At times it was a single demon that fell upon its victim, at other times a host of demons. ‘Our numbers are legion,’ was the admission of one of them.

Even if the majority of the people were not so palpably affected by the Powers of Evil as were those who suffered bodily torments at the hands of demons, nevertheless *even in their case* the influence of evil was such as *to prevent* them from seeing the truth and the path of righteousness and to harden their hearts.

However, not even the Redemption has wrought any change in the influence of the evil spirits upon those people who by reason of their lack of faith continue, voluntarily, to be slaves to such influence. Satan exerts his power, *now as then*, upon all who belong to him at heart.

- *There are many cases of persons possessed by demons also today. You call them mentally deranged (Schizophrenic), but in all cases where madness is not due to a diseased brain, they are possessed.*

For those, however, who return to faith in God and obedience to His word, the power of evil over them was broken by the Redemption. Of course, even they must continue to fight and require, as Paul says, the ‘armour of God’, that they may prevail against the cunning assaults of the Devil.

Ephesians 6: 11-12: ‘For they do not battle against flesh and blood, but against supernatural powers and forces, against the rulers of darkness, against the hosts of evil spirits in the universe.’

8. 11 The meaning of the Eucharist

c. “The third sacrament recognized by the Catholic Church is known as the ‘*Eucharist*’. Other Christian churches call it ‘*Communion*’; Paul refers to it as ‘the Lord’s Supper’. This also has been converted in the course of the centuries into something quite different from what Christ intended it to be.

Sacrificial feasts were common features in the religious rites of both Jews and pagans and constituted an essential part of their religious services. Animals were slaughtered in consecrated places, their blood was poured out before the deity in whose honour also certain parts of the flesh were burned, while the rest was eaten by the worshippers at a communal feast. Not only animals, but fruit, bread, oil and wine, and the like were offered in sacrifice. A part of these things was destroyed in honour of the deity; the rest was consumed at the sacrificial meal.

The portion that was burned or poured out to the deity served, as you know, to prepare the power current required for spirit communication. But even the part that was consumed by the worshippers was regarded as sacred and as sanctified by the deity.

Eating and drinking of the sacrificial remains was a *symbol* of inner communion with the deity itself. Just as the consecrated food and drink became united with the bodies of those who consumed them, so the participants at the feast were supposed to become united with the deity in spirit and belief and to perform its wishes.

Such was the significance of the sacrificial feasts held by Jews and heathens alike.

The Jewish feast of the Passover on the anniversary of their exodus from Egypt was the symbol of their wish to remain in communion with the God Who had manifested Himself to them through Moses, their rescuer, and to abide by His commandments in the future. The Passover meal of the Israelites was, therefore, the symbol of their redemption from the bondage of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, God’s emissary.

Christ was the great emissary of God, foreshadowed and foretold by Moses, and destined to lead mankind out of the bondage of Satan, the pharaoh of hell. On the eve of the day on which he was to consummate the deliverance of mankind by his death and his victory over hell, he celebrated in the company of his disciples the same feast that had once been celebrated by Moses on the eve of the deliverance of the Jewish people. This feast was intended to have a twofold significance: Christ’s impending departure from earth through the death of his body, and his continuing union with his followers in spirit.

As symbols he selected bread and wine.

Taking the *bread*, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples with the words: ‘Take it and eat. This is the symbol of my body, which is given into death for you. This do in remembrance of me!’ As he then broke the bread into pieces, so upon the day to follow was his earthly body broken in death and separated from life.

Likewise, he took a *cup of wine* and let all of them drink from it, saying: ‘This cup is the symbol of the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you. As often as you drink of it, remember

me!’ As the wine flowed from the cup as they drank, so on the day of his death did the blood flow from his body.

In its essence, however, this meal was *symbolic of the spiritual communion* Christ intended to maintain with his followers despite the fact that he would be parted from them on earth. Just as the bread that he distributed to the disciples had been a single piece, and as the individual sips of wine that they drank had come from one cup, so the disciples were to be *united* in spirit and in love with Christ as well as with each other from then on.

It was for this unity that Christ prayed so fervently and touchingly that evening. He admonished them to preserve their love for their Master in their hearts and thereby to remain united with him in a spiritual body of which:

Christ would be the head and they the limbs.

He beseeched them to remember this whenever they came together in order to repeat, in memory of him, the meal that he had partaken with them in farewell. They must not forget that it was a feast of love that their Lord and Master had celebrated with them, and that only those may take part in the observance of this meal who are united with God and mankind by bonds of love.

- *Whoever does not feel this love in his heart is not fit to receive the commemorative rite of love.*

Anyone who receives this meal while harbouring within him hatred, enmity, anger, envy and other sins against the love of his fellowman would be guilty of the *greatest hypocrisy*. That would be an *insult of the most flagrant kind* to him who instituted this rite in *commemoration of his love*. Therefore, all who want to receive it should *search their hearts*, to know whether they truly love the Lord and their neighbours, since otherwise the Communion would be a mockery of Christ.

That is the real significance of the Lord’s Supper and of its observance in commemoration of him.

What, however, has been done to this rite in the course of the centuries?

The doctrine has been established that Christ, by virtue of the words he spoke in the act of distributing the bread and the wine, converted the bread into his actual body and the wine into his actual blood, that therefore the bread and the wine had not been mere symbols, but the bread had turned into Christ’s living body and the wine into his living blood, although the transubstantiation was not perceptible to the human senses. It is further asserted that the same transubstantiation takes place even today, whenever a priest pronounces the words of Christ over the bread and the wine.

This is perhaps the most preposterous doctrine the human mind has ever been asked to accept.

It would mean that on the occasion of the Last Supper in that room in Jerusalem Christ’s person was present 23-fold at the same instant: He was present before the Apostles in body; every morsel of the bread eaten by the 11 disciples was the same living person of Christ, and every sip of the wine they drank was likewise supposed to have been Christ, body and soul, in flesh and blood.

It is incomprehensible how human beings could invent such an *insane idea*. No human and no spirit can multiply himself. *Not even God.*

No one - *not even God* - can be present as a personality in more than one place at the same time. No one can transform into something else and yet remain what he is. Christ could not sit before his Apostles as a man while they were partaking of him in the shape of bread and wine. Christ could not eat himself - for as Christ also partook of the bread of which he gave to his disciples, he was, according to your doctrine, eating himself.

I can find no words in your language to adequately brand this doctrine as the height of human delusion.

Furthermore, you teach that the same transubstantiation is effected daily by your priests, and that when they pronounce the words 'This is my body; this is my blood' every crumb of the bread and every drop of the wine is changed into the person of Christ.

- *With this, your priests presume to a power that not even God Himself possesses, because even He cannot bring about what is inherently impossible.*

You may protest all you will that this is an unfathomable mystery; you may call it the mystery of the faith. The fact remains that *this doctrine is untrue*.

The word 'mystery' can be used *to cover any human fallacy*. Words are always available, even when they convey no sense.

There is one thing in connection with this doctrine at which I never cease to wonder. You all read the Bible; has it never occurred to you that in the entire New Testament there is *not a shred of evidence* to support this preposterous view? If, at the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine had been changed into the true Christ, the Apostles certainly would never have wearied of pointing out this incomprehensible event. This miracle of miracles would have been recorded minutely in the gospels, in addition to which the Apostles would have referred to this commemorative supper again and again in their epistles to the early Christians.

But you *cannot* find one single reference to it.

The Apostle John, who reclined beside his master during the supper and who was the first to receive a morsel of the consecrated bread, says nothing whatever in his gospel of Christ's distribution of the bread and wine. He relates that Jesus washed the disciples' feet. He relates his betrayal by Judas. Is it reasonable that he should have said nothing of the most mysterious and mightiest event in the life of Jesus?

The Apostles make no mention of the Lord's Supper in their epistles. In the Acts of the Apostles, it is recorded only that the early Christians continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the *breaking of bread* and in prayer. Here, then, the observance of the supper is described as 'breaking of bread', and *not as that which you have made out of it today*. The bread was broken as a symbol of the death of Christ and of the love that they bore for one another and for him. It was bread that they broke and ate, but while doing so, their thoughts and their prayers were directed to him who had promised them: 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Partaking of the bread and wine was to them a *sacred symbol* of their spiritual fellowship with the Redeemer.

The Apostle Paul, who wrote a great number of epistles to the congregations, is the only one to refer to the Lord's Supper, in his first letter to the Corinthians, but not even he would have mentioned it,

had he not been compelled to do so by the circumstances. He had learned that the observance of the Lord's Supper by the Corinthian congregation was marked by unseemly conduct. Among the early Christians the observance of the Lord's Supper included partaking of a *complete meal*, as indeed had been the case at Christ's supper in Jerusalem, for before he gave his disciples bread and wine in remembrance of him, he had eaten of the paschal lamb and of the other dishes, and drunk wine together with them. So, too, the early Christians, when observing Communion, began with meats and other dishes, and partook of wine. Not until the end of the feast did they break bread and drink from a common chalice in remembrance of Christ.

These Christians, too, were, weak human beings, and had the same human failings that all men have.

This was unfortunately made evident during the *Communion service in Corinth*. It was held in private dwellings, and since the owner of the dwelling in which the celebration took place was in no position to supply the meal for all participants – most of the early Christians were poor – it was necessary for all who participated *to bring with them their own food* and drink for the common meal that preceded the rite. It sometimes happened that the very poor brought little or nothing at all, contenting themselves with partaking only of the Communion service proper after the conclusion of the meal. Too often they had to witness how the more affluent members of the congregation consumed plentiful repasts accompanied by wine, and how, upon occasion, they exceeded the bounds of discretion and became drunk. Conditions of this kind could, of course, not be tolerated, not only because they gave offense to the poor who were obliged to sit and watch, but chiefly because they were entirely *out of keeping with the spirit of the celebration of Communion*.

When, therefore, Paul heard of occurrences of this sort in the Corinthian congregation, he stepped in and called the Corinthians sharply to task for their behaviour, and in so doing he could scarcely avoid speaking to them of the true significance of Communion. He begins by criticizing their conduct at the celebration of Communion.

I Corinthians 11: 20-22: 'When you meet in this way, I do not call what you are doing celebrating the Lord's Supper: For each one eats his own supper before the Communion ceremony; and one is hungry, and another is drunk. Don't you have houses to eat and to drink in? Or do you think you needn't show consideration for the congregation of God, and that you may put the poor to shame? What should I say about such behaviour? Should I praise you? In this point, surely not.'

Then he proceeded to point out to them the significance of Communion, although no lengthy explanations were necessary, since he had already taught them about the subject in person. Citing the words spoken by Christ at the supper in Jerusalem, he thus summarized their import: 'As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.'

- *The Lord's Supper is, therefore, a partaking of bread and wine as a symbol of the death of Christ, who gave his life out of love for the fallen spirits.*

Therefore, anyone who, during a rite observed in his memory, treats the symbols of the Redeemer's body and blood in so unworthy a manner as did some of the Corinthians sins not only against those symbols, but against Christ himself. Furthermore, whoever dishonours a festival given in honour of his sovereign, commits an offense against the sovereign's person, and is punished accordingly. 'Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord.'

Paul further exhorts his hearers to search their souls before receiving Communion, in order to determine whether their convictions are similar to the Saviour's. 'Let everyone examine themselves first, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For whoever eats and drinks will through this eating and drinking incur God's punishment if he does not accord the body of the Lord proper respect.'

Anyone who treats bread and wine, when they are symbols of the greatest and holiest act of love in all Creation, with indifference or contempt, anyone who partakes of them while drunk or in some other equally objectionable state, must be punished by God. Even human beings will resent the slighting of a gift they have given as a remembrance. *Lack of respect* for the symbols of Christ's death and of his love includes above all an unworthy frame of mind in a participant in Communion.

- *At a rite held in commemoration of love, it is eminently unfitting that the hearts of the participants be filled with feelings of an opposite kind.*

When the heart is full of quarrelsomeness, enmity, bitterness and other sins against the love of one's neighbour, one cannot partake of the meal of Love.

On this score also, the Corinthians had sinned heavily, for Paul gives as the primary reason why Communion brought them not blessings but spiritual harm the fact that divisiveness and dispute abounded among them, indicating that they had sinned against the precept of neighbourly love. "Where the Lord's Supper was held in such an unworthy manner, both outwardly and inwardly, as in the congregation in Corinth, it is no wonder that the Apostle characterized many of the participants as '*weak and sickly*', and found that some of them had already succumbed to the worst, namely the spiritual sleep of indifference towards God.

- *As you see, nothing in Paul's epistles indicates that he regarded bread and wine in any other light than as symbols of Christ's body and blood.*

Had the bread ceased to be bread, as you teach, and had it been changed into the body of Christ, Paul would have said so very clearly. How much more emphatically would this fiery disciple have addressed the Corinthians, if the bread of Communion were Christ himself.

Already in an earlier part of the same epistle, Paul had mentioned Christian Communion in connection with his discussion of idolatrous festivals. In that passage he compares these with the Christian observance of the Communion rite.

The sense of his words is as follows:

- *By eating the flesh of beasts sacrificed to the idols, the heathens commune with the evil spirits. The sacrificial meat itself is nothing out of the ordinary; it is meat, and remains meat, like any other meat. But the conviction with which it is offered and eaten by the heathens is the factor that allows them to hold communion with the evil spirits.*
- *Christians enter into communion with Christ by receiving bread and wine, which do not change their nature by virtue of this rite, but remain bread and wine. It is only the conviction with which they partake of the consecrated bread and wine that enables them to commune with Christ.*

Because of this, Christians are forbidden to take part in pagan sacrificial feasts, since thereby they would enter into communion with the evil spirits.

I Corinthians 10: 21: ‘You cannot at the same time drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of the evil spirits; you cannot at the same time be guests at the table of the Lord, and at the table of the evil spirits.’

The bread and the wine of which the Christians partake are no more changed into the body of Christ by virtue of the rite than the meat eaten by the heathens is changed into evil spirits. In both cases, however, communion is established with the spirit world.

- In the case of *the heathens* this was communion with the evil spirits, symbolized by the sacrificial meat and sacrificial wine,
- while with *the Christians* it was communion with Christ, symbolized by bread and wine.

Furthermore, just as the heathens at their sacrificial feasts came into communion not only with the particular demon in whose honour the feast was held, but with the entire world of evil spirits, which constitutes a single unit, so the Christians by receiving the bread and wine had communion not only with the individual spirit of Christ, but with *all the spirits* in the kingdom of God, whose king Christ is.

- *Paul describes this great community as the ‘body of the Lord’. Christ is its head, and the whole created good spirit world, including all human beings who believe in God, are its limbs. Whoever, therefore, is in communion with Christ, is also in communion with the limbs of Christ.*

This communion is symbolized at the Lord’s Supper especially by the single piece of bread; just as it, prior to its distribution, constituted a whole, so the many among whom it is distributed are to constitute one unit through the bond of love.

I Corinthians 10: 17: ‘Just as it is but one piece of bread, so we, although many, are but one spiritual body, for we all share in that one bread.’

The image that all who belong to Christ form one *spiritual body* with him is frequently employed by Paul in his epistles.

It is what you call the ‘*Communion of Saints*’ in your creed.

In support of your false doctrine of the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the person of Christ, you quote the words allegedly used by him: ‘This is my body – this is my blood’, emphasizing that in both cases he said ‘*is*’ and not ‘*signifies*’. How do you know that in the language he spoke Christ used a word corresponding to your word ‘*is*’? You do not know the words of the Aramaic tongue spoken by him, and you no longer have the original Greek text of the New Testament.

In reality, Christ at the Last Supper said nothing to indicate anything beyond a reference to the bread and the wine as symbols of his death the following day on behalf of the Redemption of the world.

Let us assume, however, that he really said: ‘This is my body – this is my blood’. Everyone familiar with the Bible knows that Christ spoke only in parables, as he himself says:

John 16: 25: 'These things have I told you in figurative speech; but the hour is coming, when I shall no longer speak to you figuratively.'

Do you recall when it was that he spoke these words? As you will be able to confirm, it was on the occasion of the Last Supper, but a few hours before his death. As a man he said everything in parables.

Matthew 13: 34: 'All these things Jesus spoke unto the crowds in parables; he said nothing to them without using parables.'

Moreover, on the eve of his death he spoke not only of bread and wine as symbols of his approaching death, but in another parable he described his living relationship with the disciples:

John 15: 5: 'I am the vine, and you are the branches.'

So, if you are not willing to accept the bread and the wine in a figurative sense, you may also not assign a figurative meaning to his words of the vine and its branches; instead, you would have to claim that by speaking the words 'I am the vine and you are the branches' Christ was transformed into a vine and his disciples into its branches. The mode of expression is the same in both cases, and one transformation is no more difficult than the other, both being equally impossible.

It is understandable that the Catholic Church should look for even the most far-fetched evidence from the Bible to support its preposterous doctrine. Thus, it accepts other figurative expressions literally, where Christ says of himself that he is the 'bread' that came down from heaven, and also where he says that his flesh is really a food and his blood is really a drink. This is all to be taken *in a spiritual sense*, as Christ never wearied of repeating.

John 6: 63: 'It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh contributes nothing. The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.'

Speaking of himself, he says that it is his 'food' to do the will of his heavenly Father. He promised the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well that he would give her 'water' that flows to eternal life. These are all symbolic expressions that must never be taken literally, as that would lead to the sheerest absurdities.

- *Christ is not truly a vine and his disciples are not truly its branches. The bread and the wine at the Lord's table are not actually his body and his blood. All of this is to be taken spiritually and figuratively, and it was so understood by the Apostles and by all the Christians of the early centuries.*

The Divine service that centres on the alleged transubstantiation of bread and wine into the person of Christ is known to Catholics as the 'Mass'. It is also referred to as the re-enactment of the Crucifixion.

- *There is no such thing as a re-enactment of the death of Christ, not even a bloodless re-enactment.*

Just how do you think Christ's death on the Cross could be re-enacted bloodlessly? You really do not think at all in this, because the subject does not lend itself to reasonable thoughts.

- *The Mass came about through an extension of the prayers offered at the celebration of the Lord's Supper in early Christian times, but in the course of the centuries it has lost all the features that made it a communal meal and a meal in memory of the Lord.*

Thus, the present day 'mass' retains nothing of the good except a series of prayers that can just as well be said by anyone in private.

They do not need the help of any priest.

- *The great faith Catholics place in the effectiveness of paid masses is unfortunately a great self-delusion.*

Restore to the people the Communion ceremony of the days of the Apostles. It was a sacred rite that brought the people blessings! It should be observed frequently, the most appropriate occasions being *the eves of your high church festivals or the days of the festivals themselves*. You may come together to observe this celebration also on other days that are of special significance to you.

You can do this *without outside help*, at home in your own family circle. No so-called 'priests' or other clerics of any other kind are necessary, and no churches. In every circle of the faithful there will be someone who understands how to conduct the Communion service in a worthy manner.

Because of the importance of the subject, I want to give you *a brief description* of such a ceremony.

- The best bread to use is *unleavened bread*, or what you know as 'matzoh'.
- Pour the wine, *either red or white*, into a chalice of glass or crystal.
- Put the bread and wine on a table covered with a white cloth. Keep the chalice containing the wine covered until it is used, so that nothing will contaminate it. Similarly, you may cover the bread with a clean cloth.
- In addition, you may follow the custom of the early Christians and place a *simple cross – not a crucifix* – on the table.
- Place *seven candles* behind the cross, arranged so that the centre one is directly behind and close to the cross.
- When you have gathered at the appointed hour, open the service with a *song* appropriate to this ceremony.
- After this, *the person leading the service offers a prayer* in his own words, followed by the reading of some psalm that is suited to this hour. He may, if he likes, select from a number of different psalms the verses he considers most fitting.
- Next comes a *reading from the Holy Writ*. If someone is present who can give a short sermon, this also will be of value.
- After that the congregation devotes *several minutes to silent reflection*, thinking over their sins and shortcomings and in true repentance asking God for forgiveness.

- Then the leader, or the whole congregation in unison, recites the 130th Psalm: '*Out of the depths I cry out to thee, O God!*'
- At the conclusion of this psalm of repentance, the leader approaches the table and in *words of his own choosing* prays that God may bless the bread and the wine, so that they may contribute to the Salvation of all who partake of them.
- He thereupon breaks morsels from the bread and hands them, one by one, to each worshipper present, with the words: '*Take this and eat; it is the symbol of the body of Christ, our Redeemer, who died upon the Cross so that we might be saved!*' These words are pronounced *only once*, very slowly, as he distributes the bread, which the worshippers eat as soon as they receive it into their hands. The officiating member is the last to take a piece and eat it.
- In the same manner he then passes the cup from member to member, saying: '*Drink you all from it. This is the symbol of the blood of our lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for the forgiveness of our sins!*' Again, the leader is the last to drink from the chalice.
- He then offers a *prayer of thanksgiving*,
- and the service is closed with a *song*.
- If there is a *deep-trance medium* present, the spirit that speaks through him will take charge of the ceremony and give the necessary directions.

It is not at all forbidden for the Communion service to be followed by a joyful social event, which may include a meal, for it is right that you should feel *happy* and express your inner joy. You should enjoy not only God's spiritual gifts but also His earthly blessings joyously and cheerfully, without exceeding the bounds of propriety, giving thanks to God.

8. 12 Repentance – Confession - Absolution

d. “The Catholic Church has a *Sacrament of Penance*. According to the teachings of the New Testament, ‘penance’ signifies a change of heart. John the Baptist preached repentance as a means to obtain forgiveness for sins, and of Christ it is related:

Matthew 4: 17: ‘From that time on, Jesus began to preach the message of salvation, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’

‘Repent’ literally means: ‘*Change your manner of thinking.*’ Repentance is therefore a spiritual change, by which the mind ceases to harbor evil thoughts and turns to God.

- *Whoever lays aside a former evil habit and acquires a good one gives evidence of a change of heart and is one of the penitents.*

The Catholics give a far wider scope to the sacrament of penance. They do not regard reformation in thought and conduct as sufficient. The Catholic Church demands, rather, as a condition for such reformation and reconciliation with God, the confession of each individual grave sin before a *Catholic priest*, who alone, *according to its teachings*, has *the power to act in God’s place* in granting pardon. For Catholics, there can be no pardon without priestly absolution, and in this way the Church tightly binds its adherents to the priesthood and to the church organization. This is the spiritual power by which it exercises unrestricted domination over their souls.

- ‘*No one can forgive sins, save God alone.*’

In making this statement to Christ, the scribes were right.

No mortal and no priest can grant absolution

Even Christ could not.

It is true that God can commission a mortal as His instrument to tell a particular sinner that his sins are forgiven. A commission of this kind was given by Him to the prophet *Nathan*, whom God sent to David to say that He had pardoned him for the sins of adultery and murder.

Similarly, Christ had been *specially empowered* by God in those individual cases in which he told the sinners that they had been forgiven. He did not grant this pardon himself or at his own discretion, but announced it only to those whom God, through His spirit messengers, had designated as being worthy of forgiveness. This is confirmed by Christ, when he expressly tells his opponents that his Father had authorized him to do so – not given him authority to cover all cases at his own pleasure, but only specific authority in each individual instance.

The Catholic priest, however, asserts that he has been invested by his bishop with the power to grant or deny absolution to the faithful *according to his own human judgment*.

How can he tell whether God has pardoned the sins of one person and not those of another?

Or do you delude yourselves into thinking that God will pardon one sinner because he has been absolved by a priest, and deny pardon to another because a priest has refused to absolve him?

Or do God's spirit messengers direct the priest, as they did the prophet Nathan and Christ, when to grant and when to deny absolution?

Does the priest perhaps have some other supernatural gift to guide him in this decision? Can he read in the hearts of those confessing whether God has forgiven their sins?

The Catholic priesthood must admit that it *is not so gifted*.

How can they assure their fellowmen that God has pardoned their sins, when they have not the slightest grounds for knowing whether this is true or not? The priest can neither read the heart of the sinner, nor know the will of God. Although you say that absolution is contingent on the condition that the person confessing truly repent of his sin and earnestly strive to mend his ways, the absurdity of priestly absolution lies in the very fact that the priest is *never in a position* to know whether the confessor is sincere.

- *A priest can never, therefore, say: 'I absolve thee of thy sins.' At the most he can say: 'May God absolve thee of thy sins!'*

One need not be a priest in order to utter a wish of this kind. Anyone can do so. It is merely the expression of a desire and exerts no effect. However, the priest says explicitly, 'I absolve thee of thy sins', and thereby pronounces a judicial sentence of whose validity in the eyes of God he knows nothing.

What would you think of an earthly judge who pronounced sentences without the force of law behind them?

That would be a farce, wouldn't it?

So is the Catholic doctrine of the remission of sins through a priest, as your common sense must tell you.

The truth of the matter is this:

- *Whoever sincerely repents of his sins and turns to God will be forgiven by Him, regardless of whether or not he has received the forgiveness of a priest, and whoever does not repent will not be forgiven by God, no matter how often he may have received priestly absolution.*

Your doctrine of the remission of sins by priests is therefore *one* of the greatest human fallacies that have crept into religion in the course of time.

In support of its contention that its priests have the power of granting absolution, the Catholic Church invokes a *spurious Biblical passage*, to which I called your attention on the occasion of our first meeting. This reads:

John 20: 23: 'If you forgive the sins of others, they are forgiven unto them; if you do not forgive their sins, they are retained.'

As you already know, a single word was left out of the Greek text, thereby completely changing the sense of the passage. Instead of '*them*' the original text had '*you*'.

Whence the passage would read: 'If you forgive the sins of others, yours will be forgiven. If you retain (or do not forgive) them, your own shall be retained (not forgiven).'

In these words, Christ voices the same teaching that is contained in the words of the Lord's Prayer: 'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us', and in the words that he uttered immediately after the Lord's Prayer:

Matthew 6: 14-15: 'For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, your heavenly Father will not forgive your trespasses either.'

Inasmuch as the power of remitting sins, such as is claimed by the Catholic Church, *does not* and cannot exist, it was never either taught nor exercised in the early days of Christianity.

Hence the Christians of those times were never required to confess their sins to a priest, but were urged, in accordance with the teachings of Christ, to confess their sins *to one another*, namely those sins which they had committed against each other. They were expected to acknowledge the wrongs that they had committed against their neighbours to the neighbours themselves and thereby to effect a reconciliation.

For this is, after all, the only and the quickest way of making atonement. If a person who has offended you comes to you and admits that he was in the wrong, you will gladly give him your hand in reconciliation. It is this that Christ is requesting when he says:

Matthew 5: 23-24: 'If, when you are offering a gift at the altar, you remember that your brother has a grievance against you, leave your gift before the altar, and first go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift.'

If confession before a priest and absolution by him were *necessary* for the remission of sins, Christ and the Apostles would not have neglected *to point this out again and again*. It would have constituted the most important part of the Christian teachings, since without forgiveness of one's sins no one can enter the kingdom of heaven.

- *Nevertheless, neither Christ nor the Apostles make any mention of confession before a priest, nor of absolution by him.*

Confession and absolution by a priest are *human institutions* that do not make the road to God any easier for the believer. Instead, they make it *more difficult* by lulling him into *a false sense of security*. He confesses, receives absolution from the priest, and goes his way, thinking that he has made his peace with God.

He thus becomes the victim of a great deception!

- *Every error in the truth of Salvation is like the wrong path taken by the wanderer that leads him away from, rather than toward, his goal.*

8. 13 Repentance exercises - Celibacy

In the Catholic religion the so-called *outward 'penitential exercises'* play a major role. It prescribes *abstinence* from certain foods on certain days, ordains *days of fasting*, considers *physical castigation* to be a higher degree of excellence, recommends *pilgrimages*, and demands *celibacy* of its priests and those in religious orders as a step closer to perfection. All these things have nothing to do with the true idea of repentance and inner perfection.

- *Christ never fasted voluntarily and never mortified the flesh. When he fasted in the desert it was because he was forced to. He could not avoid it, since the desert offered nothing edible.*

Consequently, you will not find a single word in the teachings of Christ or in the epistles of the disciples enjoining people to abstain from certain foods, or to castigate their bodies. On the contrary, such things are described as being of no value. Thus, Paul writes to the Corinthians:

I Corinthians 8: 8: 'The food that we eat or do not eat *in no way affects* our standing in the eyes of God.'

To the Colossians he writes:

Colossians 2: 20-23: 'If, then, being with Christ, you have freed yourselves wholly from the spirit powers that rule the world, why do you still submit to ordinances like: Do not touch this, do not eat that, do not handle this – as though you were still subjects of the world? All such things exist in order to be used and consumed. Such ordinances are *human laws* and *human doctrines* and, although reputed as wise as a result of self-imposed piety, outward humility and mortification of the body, they have *no real value*, and only serve to completely gratify the flesh.'

All of the ordinances imposed upon mankind by the various Christian religions originated not with Christ, but, as Paul writes to Timothy:

I Timothy 4: 1-5: 'With those who have *fallen away* from the true faith and turned to spirits of deceit and to doctrines inspired by demons. They have been seduced by the deceitful behaviour of lying preachers, who carry a brand of guilt on their own consciences. These men *forbid marriage* and demand *abstinence* from certain foods, although these were created to be enjoyed with a prayer of thanks by those who believe and by all who have come to a full knowledge of the truth. For all things created by God are good and nothing is forbidden, if you partake of it with a prayer of thanks; it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.'

The Catholic Church is one of those that highly values *abstinence* from food on specified days, for which its rules of fasting prescribe a single meal. It *forbids* its clergy and those in religious orders *to marry* and regards the monastic state as the most perfect state. Also, this church has turned to doctrines *inspired by demons*, for these are all purely human ordinances that, according to the words of the Apostle, are reputed as wise as a result of self-imposed piety, outward humility and mortification of the body, but have *no real value*.

- *They have no value for the Salvation of mankind, and, consequently, no church has the right to force such ordinances upon its followers and to brand any infraction thereof as a 'grave sin'.*

It is true that your church [Catholic] maintains, as regards its ordinance of celibacy, that there is no compulsion in the matter, since no one is obliged to enter the priesthood or any of the orders. True enough, nobody is forced to become a priest, a monk, or a nun, but if anyone believes that he has been called to proclaim the truths pertaining to Salvation as a priest, that Church does compel him to a vow of celibacy, giving *him the choice* only between abandoning his chosen calling, or taking the vow to live a life of celibacy ordained not by God but by church ordinance. He is, therefore, subjected to the greatest spiritual stress that can be exerted upon a human.

For although the church *openly* compels no one to join a religious order and, in consequence, to remain unmarried, it nevertheless exercises *soul-wrenching* pressure of the most powerful kind by picturing a monastic existence as the acme of perfection.

Now it so happens that it is precisely the best individuals who regard it as their duty to attain to the ideal of perfection; and since a *celibate life* as the member of a religious order has *falsely* been held up as the ideal, their striving to become perfect inevitably compels them to remain unmarried.

Let it not be said that God *gives* those who feel called to join the priesthood or a religious order *the strength* to lead a life of unblemished chastity.

That is utter self-delusion!

God gives strength only for the fulfillment of that which is *God's will*, but *not* for the accomplishment of what men impose upon themselves or on their fellows in an outward display of so-called piety in violation of God's will.

- *Goodness and perfection lie only in doing what is in keeping with the will of God, and this is at all times wholly voluntary.*

Never, however, can something be good or perfect if it is done under compulsion, not even if the first step was voluntarily taken but subsequently involves lifelong compulsion.

Not even God exercises compulsion upon anyone to do His will. How then can a church deprive people of their right to self-determination, a right upon which God Himself never encroaches? Compulsion and enslavement are the measures by which evil governs; the rule of goodness is based on liberty. Evil, and nothing else, has introduced oppression into religion. The mania for unrestricted power over others is responsible for the introduction into the Catholic Church of the suppression of personal liberty in the guise of achieving greater perfection. The celibacy of the clergy, as well as a monastic life with vows of poverty, chastity in the form of celibacy, and blind obedience to ecclesiastical authority are the most powerful weapons of the Catholic religion for strengthening its internal organization.

Neither Christ nor the Apostles know a priesthood such as the Catholic Church's; they do not recognize any religious orders.

- *They never taught nor founded anything of that nature.*

- *They did not proclaim that the ideal perfection lay in taking vows of poverty and of chastity in the form of celibacy, and least of all, in blind obedience to ecclesiastic superiors.*
- *They know no voluntary poverty, as the Catholic Church defines the term.*
- *They founded no monastic orders, nor did they teach that such should be founded for people to enter, and on entering, endow them with their worldly goods.*

8. 14 Destitution

Can the members of monastic orders *truthfully* be called poor?

Are they not rather relieved for the rest of their days of all worry on the score of support?

Is not the table set for them every day?

Is that what you call poverty?

If all people were as well off, there would be no poverty in the world. If ideal perfection is to be found in poverty, how is it that so many monasteries are so rich in worldly possessions? If poverty is the ideal condition for the individual, it must also be the ideal condition for the community.

Furthermore, why do your clergy, who preach voluntary poverty as one of the highest degrees of perfection, *not* practice it themselves? Whoever preaches an ideal should surely be *the first* to practice it.

Or do you perhaps call your clergy poor?

Is the Pope poor?

Are the bishops poor?

Are the priests poor?

There would be no more poverty on earth if everyone was as well off as those who preach poverty as an ideal.

You invoke Christ's speech to the rich youth to prove that voluntary poverty is necessary to perfection, but your interpretation of his words is quite incorrect. When Christ said to the young man: *'If you want to be perfect, then sell everything you have and distribute the proceeds to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come and follow me'*, this advice was for *that particular youth*, whose heart was set upon his money and possessions, which had become a snare for him and prevented his admission into the kingdom of God. When, on receiving this advice, the youth turned his back on Christ, the Lord said to his disciples: 'My children, how difficult it is for those who have put their faith in money and possessions to enter into the kingdom of God!'

- *Not everyone who is blessed with worldly goods is 'rich' in the sense Christ alluded to here, but only those whose hearts are set upon Mammon and who make a god of him.*

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, and David *were rich* in material possessions, without belonging to that class of the rich to which Christ referred, for their wealth *did not stand in their way* on their road to God. Christ would never have told them to sell all they had, in order to become perfect. It was a different matter in the case of the rich youth, whose love of riches was such that it would not let him follow the call of God. He would rather do without the kingdom of God than without his wealth.

All people encounter obstacles when they attempt to come nearer to God. These obstacles are as different as are the individual themselves.

It is each person's task to remove his own particular obstacle.

This is indicated in the words of Christ: *'If your eye causes you trouble, pluck it out, and cast it from you.'* If there is anything in your life that hinders you from fulfilling the will of God, part with it, though it be as dear to you as your eye. In the case of the rich youth, his wealth was the hindrance, which is why he was asked to part with it by selling all he had and giving the proceeds to the poor. If, however, wealth does not constitute a hindrance in someone's progress towards God, he has no occasion for parting with his possessions.

Furthermore, if it were incumbent upon all to sell their possessions in order to attain perfection, it would be wrong for anyone to acquire property, for if the retention of money and possessions is a hindrance to perfection, so, surely, would be its acquisition. In that case the churches and monasteries would certainly *not be allowed* to acquire and hold property.

- *Christ himself was not poor before he appeared in public. He owned several houses, which he had acquired by dint of hard work. He sold them when he began to preach, giving the proceeds to those of his friends with whom he lodged while appearing in public.*

Therefore, although he no longer owned property after he had entered upon his career as a teacher, he had no need to beg of anyone.

8. 15 Chastity as Celibacy

Another of the ideals of perfection according to the views of the Catholic Church is that of absolute chastity in the form of celibacy. Absolute chastity is something that everyone should and can observe, but it has nothing to do with celibacy, for there is nothing unchaste in matrimony. Married people can be perfectly chaste, and the unmarried ones quite the opposite, even if they are priests or members of a religious order.

- *True chastity consists in exercising moderation in matters pertaining to the natural laws of sex life.*

Just as moderation in eating and drinking does not lie in the forcible suppression of hunger and thirst, but in refraining from consuming food and drink to excess, so also in the case of sex life.

- *The sex drive has been implanted in all created beings by the Creator, as one of Nature's laws, and since whatever He has created is good, it should not be forcibly suppressed by man, but should be used within the limits set by God.*

The law of procreation applies to all human beings!

And founding a family is *an order of God's* that no one may avoid without punishment. Procreation on earth is the way by which the fallen spirits must progress through Nature's stages in order that they may reach perfection.

- *God in His wisdom ordained that those of the fallen spirits that have progressed to a given terrestrial stage help their brothers and sisters, by way of procreation, to rise from the lower to the higher stages of nature.*

If human brothers and sisters fall into the same pit, the first one to succeed in climbing out of it will lend the others a hand, so that they too may escape. That is a duty brothers and sisters owe one another.

It is from this viewpoint of God's wisdom and mercy that you should consider the law of sex life. God has made the sex drive as strong as it is because procreation is a part of His Plan of Salvation and so that His creatures may find it less easy to shirk their duty of collaborating with Him in carrying out that plan. "It is therefore clear that this is a duty from which a person *can be absolved only by the weightiest of reasons.*

- *Hence, the vow of celibacy is a grave offense against the will of God.. Neither Catholic priests nor the members of monastic orders have adequate grounds in the eyes of God for remaining unmarried.*

I know that celibacy has been justified on the basis of the seventh chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which Paul gives several reasons why it is better to remain unmarried. He advises marriage only for those for whom celibacy has perils.

This view of the Apostle's was false!

He had received no authority from Christ to preach such a doctrine. Paul himself was well aware of this, as you will see if you will read that chapter carefully. If you do, you will notice something that occurs nowhere else in any of his epistles, namely, Paul's repeated insistence that he is voicing his *personal views* only as regards celibacy, and that in this respect he is speaking under no mandate from the Lord. Hence the constant reiteration of the words: 'I say'. 'But *I say* to the unmarried men and especially to the widows....' 'Not I, but the Lord commands the married....' 'But to the rest *say I*, not the Lord....' 'As for the unmarried young women I have no explicit commandment from the Lord, but give only *my opinion*....' At the end of the chapter, he again emphasizes: 'That is *my opinion*!'

His opinion *was mistaken*, even if his last sentence closes with the remark that he believes that he also possesses a spirit of God'. Paul himself was not married, a state which he justified by the fact that his calling as a preacher required him to make long and frequent journeys over an extended area. Had he had a family, these travels would have been impossible, for he could neither have taken his wife and children with him nor have abandoned them for months and years at a time.

Paul's own unmarried state made him *narrow-minded* and fanatical about this subject.

All people have their *human faults*.

This is a fact for which allowance must be made *even in the case of the Apostles*.

Paul was subsequently *enlightened by Christ* as to his misconception about celibacy and was directed to correct his viewpoint in a letter addressed to all the congregations. This is the letter I told you about on the evening of our first meeting, and in which a number of other passages in his earlier letters that had led to misunderstandings were also corrected. On that occasion I told you that this letter had later been *destroyed* because a number of the explanations and corrections that it contained were *not acceptable* to the Church of the later age and its teachings.

How radically Paul changed his views on celibacy in consequence of the enlightenment he received from his Master can be seen from his writings to Timothy and to Titus. He, who had written to the Corinthians that he wished they all were unmarried, as he was, now no longer tolerates the appointment of an unmarried man or woman to any office in the congregation. Judging from his Epistle to the Corinthians one might have expected that he would have preferred unmarried individuals for the posts in question, but no – all had to be married.

I Timothy 3: 2- 12: 'So must the bishop be the husband of one wife..... He must govern his own household in exemplary fashion, and with the utmost dignity teach his children obedience; for if a man cannot govern his own family, how shall he be able to take care of God's congregation?' 'The deacons, too, must be husbands; they must do a good job of governing their children and their own households.'

A similar injunction is addressed to Titus, that he should choose no unmarried men as elders, but only married men whose children were of the faith. (Titus 1: 6)

Whereas he had written to the Corinthians that he wishes widows to remain unmarried, he writes to Timothy:

I Timothy 5: 14: 'I desire, therefore, that the younger widows remarry, bear children, and preside over their households.'

When Paul stresses the point that bishops and deacons must be 'husbands of one wife', he does not mean that men may not enter into a second marriage, for if he recommends that widows remarry, as he does in his letter to Timothy, then surely he concedes the same right to widowers. The term 'husband of one wife' is used because several men who became converted from paganism to Christianity had concubines in addition to their wedded wives, a fact which was generally known. Because of the detrimental effects that could arise therefrom, Paul would not tolerate the appointment of such men to service in the religious communities. For such offices he wanted only married men of good repute among both Christians and non-Christians, as he writes to Timothy:

I Timothy 3: 7: 'Moreover, he must have a good reputation also among the non-Christians, so that he will not be maligned and fall into the slanderer's snare.'

For a thousand years, matrimony, which Paul made a duty for the elders, bishops and deacons of his time, was permitted to Catholic priests also.

When the papacy *forced* celibacy upon the clergy, its motives for doing so were not based on any lofty religious grounds, for such could hardly have existed, since otherwise they would have led to the imposition of the rule of celibacy in the first days of the Christian Church. The later determining factor was a *purely worldly* viewpoint, namely, *strengthening the power of the pope*.

- *For a clergyman who is bound by no family ties is a far more pliable tool of his ecclesiastical organization than a priest who enjoys the moral and material support of a wife and children.*

It might be added that it was likely that a *celibate* priest *would bequeath his property to the Church*.

The dangers of celibacy, which caused a man like Paul to reject unmarried persons as servants of the church, are the same in all ages. They were no greater then than they are today. The alleged gain in purity of morals and devotion to the cause of God in the case of a celibate clergy *is a mere pretext* that has ever proven fallacious.

8. 16 Obeisance towards Human Authority as Ideals of Perfection

What has been said concerning the vows of absolute poverty and permanent chastity in the form of celibacy applies equally to *the vow of unquestioning obedience* to human superiors.

This also is *contrary* to the will of God, being merely an invention of man's lust for power.

- *God gave every spirit at the moment of its creation, as His greatest gift, the gift of free will. God does not restrict anyone's liberty to govern by their own personal decisions what they will do and not do. It is also not His will that it should be restricted by humans, since everybody is personally responsible for everything they do throughout every moment of their lives.*

It is a responsibility that no one can take over for you. No one can justify himself before God by appealing to the fact that he subordinated his will and his personal decision to the will of another.

- *As soon as a person has reached the age of reason, he must never subordinate his will blindly to that of any fellowman, whether an ecclesiastical or a secular authority.*

Blind obedience is due to God alone.

When it says in the Bible, 'Obedience is better than sacrifice', this refers only to obedience to God, never to obedience to man, in spite of the fact that people in authority, and ecclesiastics in particular, are prone to quote this passage from the Bible in order to secure the blind obedience of their subordinates. The false doctrine has also been propounded that blind obedience to an ecclesiastical superior relieves the obedient person of all personal responsibility for the actions involved, that the only thing he may not do is be obedient to the point of committing a sin.

This is a big misconception!

For man is personally responsible not only for such wrongs as he may commit, but also for any good deeds he fails to perform. In fact, the sins of omission may often be more serious than those of commission.

According to your doctrine, if an ecclesiastically superior orders a subordinate to commit theft, that order must not be obeyed. If, on the other hand, the superior forbids his subordinate, for example, to help a fellowman when it is in the subordinate's power to do so, the latter must refrain from giving help, despite the fact that in the eyes of God failing to help might be *a far greater sin* than the theft. In such a case the subordinate could not justify himself before God by contending that his duty toward his superior prevented him from doing a good deed that he would have performed had he been free to follow the dictates of his own conscience. On the contrary, it is *his duty to obey the dictates of his conscience under all circumstances*. Another man's conscience can never replace one's own.

To every individual God has allotted a special task, and they must fulfill it, without allowing themselves to be prevented from doing so by human orders or manmade ordinances. It follows that no one may subordinate his own will to that of another by virtue of a vow of obedience.

- *The vow of obedience that is rendered by your priests and members of religious orders is, therefore, against God's will.*

- *In the case of secular authorities also, obedience is due them only to the extent that their laws do not conflict with those of God.*

You cite the words of the Apostle Paul found in the opening lines of the 13th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans as a basis for your doctrine that man owes obedience to his human superiors, but you have *completely misunderstood* the sense of these words and have translated them *quite incorrectly*. Paul is not speaking here of temporal authorities but of *the spiritual ones* that God assigns to everyone.

- *To each of you God has allotted His spirits for your direction and guidance, more of them to some, fewer to others, depending upon the magnitude of the task a person has been assigned by God. These spirits of God are sent not only to protect you, to inwardly admonish you, warn you, teach you and encourage you to do good, but they also have the right to punish you. They bear God's sword of punishment, for the punishments that He inflicts are executed by His spirits, as you know from numerous passages of the Bible.*

I shall now give you the *correct* rendering of Paul's words:

'Every soul should render obedience to the spirit forces under whose guidance it stands, for there are no spirit powers placed over you but those that have been appointed by God. Therefore, anyone who opposes these spirit powers opposes the will of God and thereby incurs punishment. These powers are not a source of fear to those who do good, but only to those who do evil.

So, if you want to have no reason to fear such a power, then do what is good, and you will earn its praise, for these servants of God have been assigned to you for the accomplishment of good. But if you do evil, you have reason to be afraid. The spirit power does not bear the sword of punishment in vain. As a servant of God, it is charged with avenging God's wrath on those who do evil. Therefore, be obedient to that power, not only in fear of God's wrath, but also following the voice of your conscience.

Also make the spiritual sacrifices requested of you, for these powers are God's envoys, attending continually upon you for this very purpose. Render to all of them their due! If one of them demands sacrifices from you, then make them; if a spirit envoy demands the execution of a task, perform it; if one leads you to fear something, then fear it; if one shows you something as valuable, then value it! Leave nothing undone that these Divine powers ask of you. You fulfill your obligations in every case if you love one another, for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the whole law.'

How could you interpret these words as referring to your *worldly* rulers? Do you seriously believe that every earthly authority is appointed by God? Did the countless kings and princes of history, who in so many cases were instruments of evil, rule 'by the grace of God', or did they not rather rule by the 'grace of the Devil?' Do the words from the passage I have quoted: 'for they are servants of God for the accomplishment of good', apply to those rulers also who committed the greatest acts of cruelty, injustice and oppression against their wretched subjects?

- *You mortals put your secular and religious leaders into power by virtue of manmade ordinances – not God. A spirit of God participates neither in your coronations nor in the election of your popes and bishops.*

When in your translation of the text in question you speak of '*taxes*' and '*dues*' and think that the passage refers to the earthly rulers to whom these are due, you forget that there are also spiritual dues that you owe to God. They are the fruits of the spirit. Just as a tree's 'annual payment' consists of the fruit it bears, so you, too, are called upon to render payment to God in the fruit that the spirits of God assigned to you are constantly endeavouring to bring to maturity.

- *As you see, the Catholic ideals of perfection – voluntary poverty in religious orders, chastity in the form of celibacy, and blind obedience to ecclesiastical superiors – are in reality great fallacies, unknown to the early Christians.*

8. 17 Indulgence – Saints – Adoration of Saints

In connection with the Catholic Church's doctrine of penance and the remission of sins, I must mention one very strange doctrine held by that church, namely the *doctrine of indulgences*. This is an appendage of the doctrine of the remission of sins, for if a church can forgive sins, why should it not also have the power to remit the *punishment for them*? By virtue of this doctrine, the church lays claim to the right to grant pardon. But just as *only God* can forgive sins, so *only God* can remit the punishment of sin.

Especially strange is the reason advanced by the Catholic Church in support of this right to grant pardon. It speaks of a '*church treasure*', a fund of surplus merits earned by Christ and the holy spirits. It then draws on these merits in the form of indulgences to the extent necessary to compensate for contrite sinners' lack of merits, so that the punishments for their sins may be remitted wholly or in part, according to whether the indulgence is complete or partial. "This doctrine of indulgence is absurd on various grounds.

- *In the first place, no creature of God's, neither spirit nor mortal, can render God more than is due Him.*

In the eyes of God, of whom it has been said that not even the heavens are pure in his sight, even the most perfect spirit is but a servant who is doing no more than its duty, even when it does the best that it can. *God recognizes no surplus of merit*. Even Christ did not perform more than his duty in what he achieved, for had he done less than he did, he would not have accomplished his exalted mission. He would have succumbed to hell and fallen from God. No one can do more than fulfill the will of God, and when he does so, he is doing no more than his duty. He cannot give an iota to others who may fail to do their duty.

- *Everyone must work out their own Salvation.*

That is the second reason why the merits of one person may not be applied on behalf of another. What is inadmissible according to your human laws of justice is equally inadmissible in God's justice. Just as your judges would never reduce the punishment of a lawbreaker because *other* citizens faithfully observe the law, so no remission of punishment is made to a sinner because *others* have obeyed God's laws. Where would that leave God's justice?

Furthermore, just what do you imagine this church treasure of the surplus merits of others to be? Do you by chance think that spiritual life in God can be stored in a vault like the worldly treasures of your churches, to be drawn upon as needed for others? How irrational you mortals can often be! *How utterly foolish* is the procedure observed by the Catholic Church in the granting of indulgences!

Can you, as reasoning beings, really believe that the *remission of punishment* for sins is contingent upon the observance of ridiculous outward behaviour? Do you think that your punishment will be remitted if you recite your prayers upon a blessed rosary, but not when you pray to God without the rosary in hand? Do you think that you will receive complete remission of all your sins by virtue of reciting a certain prayer upon a certain day in a certain church, but not if you recite the same or even a better prayer in the privacy of your own room?

That all punishment for your sins will be remitted at the hour of your death, merely because you are holding a blessed crucifix in your hand or wearing a scapular¹, associated by your church with so-

called plenary indulgence? Do you honestly believe that the crucifix or the consecrated scapular¹ can save you, if without them you would have incurred God's chastisement? Can you really believe that certain prayers, pilgrimages to shrines, and similar rites can bring about a remission of punishment determined and regulated by your church? Is it not rather blasphemy against the great and holy God to regard His manifestations of love and mercy as being contingent upon such absurdities?

- *No human being, not even a pope or a bishop, can grant remission of punishment for sins. God alone repays each individual according to his works.*
- *God forgives and pardons according to the sinner's inner repentance and works of love.*
- *Whoever contritely turns to God will be pardoned by Him for his sins, and if, in addition, he strives to perform labours of love by forgiving the faults of his fellowmen and by helping them to the extent of his ability, the punishments that he may have incurred will be remitted correspondingly.*

That is why Christ says of Mary Magdalene: 'Much will be forgiven her, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, that person loved little.' Naturally, the reference here is not to sexual love, but to love of God and of one's neighbour. Whoever gives evidence of abundant love for his fellowmen will through being pardoned obtain remission of much of the punishment he has incurred by his sins. In one side of the scale are placed the penalties incurred through sin, in the other the sinner's deeds of love, and to the extent that the penalties outweigh the deeds of love, to that extent the sinner will be punished.

- *Thus, those to whom little is forgiven have little to show in the way of good deeds.*

Mary Magdalene had sinned greatly, but she had always shown herself to be ready to help the suffering and those who were persecuted unjustly. On that account much was forgiven her after she had abandoned her life of sin.

It is true that Christ speaks of one sin that will not be forgiven either in this world or in that which is to come. The word '*forgive*' is used here, as in so many other passages in the Bible, in the sense of 'pardon'. For the sin Christ had in mind *there is no pardon; its punishment must be paid in full, 'paid to the last farthing'*. This is the sin he described in the following words:

Matthew 12: 31-32: 'Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto man; but blasphemy against the spirit [world] shall not be forgiven. Even if someone speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but if someone speaks against the holy spirit [world]⁶, that shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.'

¹ **Scapular:** The throw over chest and back as part of the monk's livery.

- *Whoever has come to know the workings of the spirit of God, whose soul has had the light of the truth shine through it, imparted by God's spirits acting under His power, and who, out of worldly considerations, nevertheless rejects the truth commits a sin against the spirit [world] and shall incur a punishment for which there is no pardon.*

¹ **Scapular:** In the monk costume overthrow over the chest and back

The reason for allowing no mercy in this case lies in the nature of this sin, for if the most convincing evidence of the truth that God's spirits can bring fails to induce a person to accept it, even though in his innermost being he recognizes and feels the truth as the truth, what other means are there to lead him to accept the truth? One thing only remains: he must be worn down inwardly *through complete atonement* for this sin; he must suffer hunger and misery, like the prodigal son. *Only then* will he be ready for God to offer him the truth *again*.

The Jewish priesthood, the Pharisees and the scribes committed this sin against the spirit [world]. They had listened to the gospel preached by Christ and had daily seen with their own eyes its *confirmation* through the power of God's spirits, through which he healed the sick and raised the dead, and performed other miracles.

More convincing proofs of the truth could *not* have been offered, but in spite of them, his opponents would not accept the truth. On the contrary, they blasphemed against God's spirits who were working in Christ by declaring them to be 'devils'. (6 Corrections made on the basis of Johannes Greber's subsequent translation of the New Testament (1937))

- *In the same way you would sin against the spirit if, in the face of the overwhelming evidence you have received from the good spirit world, you were to reject the truths that have been given to you out of fear of your fellowmen or for any other reason.*

In the case of *all other* sins God shows far greater mercy than people deserve, provided only that they show their good intentions and strive to turn to the good. All mankind and sinful spirits have *need* of His mercy.

- *For no one is without sin and steps spotless from this life into the Beyond. There are therefore also no human 'Saints' in the sense taught by the Catholic Church.*

By 'Saint' the Catholic Church understands something far different from the meaning attached to the term by the early Christians. The Apostles make frequent use of the word 'Saints' in their epistles, applying it to all who accept Christ's gospel as God's truth and endeavour to live accordingly. Hence they address the members of the Christian congregations as 'Saints'.. In so doing they are not implying that the early Christians were free from sin. On the contrary, they censure them in almost every epistle for their daily sins and their human infirmities. They knew that no human is without sin. 'If we claim that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,' writes the Apostle John.

Your (Catholic) church takes a different view of this point.

It maintaining that those whom it reveres as 'Saints' were either entirely free from sin throughout their lives, like the mother of Jesus, or that they committed no further sins after the day of their conversion. It teaches that these 'Saints' go directly into the presence of God after their earthly death, and that God has confirmed their standing as Saints by means of miracles. It furthermore presumes the power to pronounce infallibly whether or not a person is to be revered as a 'Saint'. Saintliness lies in a person's will and disposition.

- *Since no man, not even a Pope, can infallibly read and judge another's disposition, no further proof is needed that canonization by humans can never lay claim to the truth. God alone is the judge of Sainthood; there is no other. Only God knows the human heart.*

It is not in man's power to say whether a fellowman has merited God's love or incurred His hatred. It is monstrous human presumption to claim that one can infallibly say whether this or that person is with God, for along with true saintliness there is also a false saintliness (sanctimoniousness), and often the two cannot be told apart.

As for the alleged miracles God is said to have performed through the Saints, many of these can be relegated to the *realm of fable*. Other happenings in the lives of these Saints that may appear miraculous to you are simply the result of the fact that they had various *mediumistic* gifts and through them stood in communication with the spirit world, but whether it was the good or the evil spirits that manifested themselves is something you have no means of knowing at this late date.

The Egyptian sorcerers of the time of Moses, and the magician Simon of Samaria, whom his contemporaries called 'the great power of God', performed more so-called miracles than any Saint of the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, they worked them under the spell of *Evil disguised* as Good.

- *God is not interested in revealing to you by means of miracles whether or not a person is a Saint, for he desires no veneration of Saints or of their relics, no pilgrimages to the tombs of Saints or to any other shrines. All these things are nothing but glorified idolatry.*

Why did Satan want the body of Moses? Because he wanted to deliver it to the people of Israel as an object of veneration of the same sort that you pay to the remains of your 'Saints'.. Why did Michael contend with Satan for the body of Moses? For the same reason that you should not revere Saints and their relics and hold pilgrimages today, namely, because the people of Israel would have *diverted* a large part of their worship from God to the body of Moses, and would have made this the object of a cult similar to that which you render today to the remains of your saints. You may say that you are worshipping God through the saints, but that is a *mere pretext*. In reality, Catholics put *a great part of the faith* they should be placing in God *in the Saints* and in their images, statues and relics. If God had wanted that, He could just as well have allowed the Israelites to have the body of Moses.

The early days of the Christian era had *no* veneration of saints and also *no veneration of Mary*, to which, as you know yourself, *more* attention is given by your Church than to the veneration of God. The 'Hail Mary' is recited far more often than the 'Lord's Prayer'. Think of your rosary, which is recited in place of prayer on every possible occasion.

- *Christ and his Apostles and the early Christians worshipped God only; they recognized no worship of spirits of the kingdom of God.*

Even in their time there were mortals who died as great 'Saints' according to all human standards. Among them were *John the Baptist*, whom Christ called the greatest of all ever to be born of woman; *Stephen*, who died a martyr's death; and the *Apostle James*, to mention only a few of those whose death took place in Biblical times. However, it never occurred to the Apostles even to mention these men as Saints, much less to make them the objects of divine worship, as is the case today.

Mary is also never mentioned by the Apostles.

- *The whole practice of veneration of Saints is a human invention of a much later date.*

The Apostle Paul *censures* those who take pleasure in worshipping 'angels', meaning by 'angels' all spirits residing with God, or what you designate as 'Saints'. No holy spirit created by God

possesses anything whatsoever in its own right. Therefore, the spirit cannot of its own accord give anything to mankind. Everything comes from God.

Hence, let all glory be to God alone!

This also is the reason why God's good spirits, when they manifest themselves to you, invariably decline your thanks. Whenever you tried to thank them, you received the reply: 'Thank God!'

8. 18 The meaning of Anointing the Sick (Last Rites)

e. In the Catholic Church you have a sacrament that you call '*last rites*', known today as 'Anointing of the Sick'. The early Christians also had the practice of anointing the sick with oil, but its significance was quite different from that which you now attach to the '*last rites*'. You anoint the sick only in cases of life-threatening illness and do so primarily to secure forgiveness of the patient's sins – and, only incidentally, an alleviation of his sickness.

- *Among the early Christians, however, the anointing of the sick was for physical healing. Its effectiveness was dependent upon the patient's eradication of sin from his heart.*

In the Epistle of the Apostle James, you read:

James 5: 14- 16: 'If one of you is sick, let him send for the elders of the congregation; let them pray over him, after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. Their prayers, offered in faith, will bring aid to the sick person, and the Lord will help him up. If he has committed sins, they will be forgiven. Confess to one another the wrongs that you have done and pray for one another, that you may be healed. A righteous person's fervent prayer has great power.'

The 'elders', as they were called, of the early Christian congregations were men who stood high in God's favour and were endowed with the *power of healing*, as their visits to the sick were among their most important duties. By anointing the patients with oil, they transmitted their healing power to them in prayer. Through prayer, one comes into closer communion with God, who is *the source of all healing*, and the more sincere the communion, the greater is the power derived from this source by the supplicant.

From the healings performed by Christ you know that certain sicknesses are punishment for sins, particularly for sins against the love of one's fellowman. Thus, Christ repeatedly warned those whom he had healed: 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall you.' It was necessary *first* of all to remove the sin that was the cause of the disease. This was done by the patient's confessing the faults he had committed to those against whom he had committed them. He would, therefore, where possible, ask any person whom he had wronged to come to his sickbed, where a reconciliation would take place. It is for this reason that the Apostle James admonishes: 'Confess therefore your sins to one another, that you may be healed.'

- *They were not directed to confess their sins to anyone indiscriminately, or to a priest, but to those against whom they had sinned. After the reconciliation with the injured party had taken place, God forgave the sin and the patient's sickness left him by virtue of the elder's healing power, transmitted to the patient, as has been said, through anointment and prayer.*

The words of the Apostle describe the noblest form of healing offered to man. It was a healing of the patient's body and soul.

What has become of this anointment and healing of the sick today?

According to your doctrine, the oil used must be consecrated by a bishop and may be applied only by a priest ordained by a bishop, who must recite a prescribed prayer while administering the last rites. This, you believe, will bring about forgiveness of the sick person's sins. You go so far as to

administer the last rites to a person who has lost consciousness, in the belief that even though he is in that condition, the rites will effect forgiveness. Common sense should tell you that the anointing of an unconscious person *cannot* affect the state of his soul. Among the early Christians also it was not the anointing that brought about the forgiveness of sin; rather, the *preceding* forgiveness removed the obstacle and thus paved the way to healing, allowing the oil to exert its healing properties upon the patient. Inasmuch as in the rites practiced today all of the prerequisites that existed in the early Christian congregations are generally lacking, the so-called 'last rites' are a purely external ceremony, of no *inward* effect whatever.

8. 19 The Priesthood of the early Christians and the Priesthood of today

f. Early Christendom also had no *ordination of priests*. The word 'priest' is derived from the Greek word '*presbyter*' used by the early church, which means 'elder'. However, it does not refer to age in years, *but to maturity* in the cause of God. To them were applicable the words from the Wisdom of Solomon:

Wisdom 4: 8-9: 'For honour is not measured in length of time, nor by number of years. But insight is the true grey hair of man, and a spotless life is true old age.'

- *Hence, the presbyters of the early Christian church were not selected for their office by mortals, since these are unable to judge the worthiness of their fellowmen. They were appointed at the Christians' gatherings for Divine worship through communication from God's spirits, who designated them as those chosen by God for His purposes. They were then solemnly acknowledged, amid the laying on of hands, by the members of their Christian congregations as invested with their office by virtue of God's wish.*

Whereof did their duties consist? Did they possess greater spiritual authority than other Christians? Did they possess spiritual authority that they exercised over their fellow Christians, making the latter dependent upon them in their relations toward God and for the attainment of Salvation?

By no means!

There was no priesthood then such as you have today. In those times there were no priests endowed with special spiritual powers that they alone could exercise. There were no priests to administer so-called sacraments, to forgive sins, or to dispense other forms of spiritual grace. There were no bishops by whom others were ordained as priests and invested with spiritual authority.

- *The office of an 'elder' or 'presbyter' involved duties of quite another nature. Wherever people join together and assemble for a given purpose there must be a leader to maintain order and to see to it that all formalities are carried out as required to achieve the end in view.*

This was true also among the early Christians. They met for the purpose of worshipping God, of holding the Communion service, and of mutual upliftment and strengthening in the faith. Someone was needed to make the arrangements, to prepare the quarters, to fix the hours, to lead the whole assembly, and to see to it that all things were done in the best of order and harmony, for God is a *God of order* throughout all Creation. Just as He has appointed guides and leaders in the spirit world to supervise the execution of His ordinances, so it is His will that there should be *leaders* on earth in congregations seeking their Salvation, who arrange everything in such a manner that the faithful may derive the greatest possible spiritual benefit. This was the duty of the presbyters. First they attended to the practical details, determining at which house the meetings for Divine service were to be held, seeing to it that the premises were suitably arranged and provided with whatever might be needed, fixing the time of the meetings and, in general, looking after all requirements.

However, they had even *more important* duties to perform with regard to the spiritual life of the congregation. During the Divine services many important directions concerning the spiritual progress of the faithful were given by the attendant spirits, and it was the presbyter's task to see to it that these directions and assignments were carried out promptly and conscientiously. Inasmuch as *true religion* is one of service to one's neighbour, the early Christians placed great value in the

assistance given to the truly needy of the congregation, and it was the presbyter who was in constant touch with the families of his congregation and who consulted with them about all their troubles of body and soul. He was everyone's best friend. Everyone had unlimited confidence in him because he had been designated by God's spirit messengers as the one who was to share their sorrows and joys and to whom they could confide everything.

In consequence of his selection by the spirit world he also possessed the Divine gift of always giving them the best of advice and assistance. He found out who needed help, visited the sick and the lonely, the widows and orphans, and saw to it that they received the help they needed from the other Christian families.

- *It was the custom of the early Christians to bring to the meetings numerous gifts of the most varied nature and to entrust them to the elder in order that he might distribute them among the needy.*
- *Since the elder also possessed the power of healing and was of great help to the sick, it naturally followed that he won the love and affection of his fellow Christians also on purely human grounds by virtue of his activities.*

Moreover, because of their great confidence in him, the members of the congregation confided their spiritual troubles to him, frequently also confessing their sins to him and asking for advice. He on his part would uplift, console, and encourage them, pray with them, and be in every way a spiritual guide and a true shepherd to all.

The early Christian congregations were composed of groups of neighbours and formed by a given number of families living within a certain radius. They could not be very large, since otherwise the limited space of a private house would not have accommodated them for their meetings. For this reason, the number of congregations in a large town or a populous district was often quite considerable, each congregation having its own presbyter.

Now it often happened that one congregation was composed primarily of well-to-do families, while another might consist almost entirely of the needy. Since the well-to-do families were eager to do as much good as possible with their wealth and did not always have the opportunity for this in their own congregation, it soon became necessary to establish ties among the separate congregations by selecting someone to keep in touch with all the presbyters of the district. It was that person's task to find out from the presbyters the number of those in need of assistance and what help was available. In this way a system of giving and helping was inaugurated, for the presbyters kept an accurate record both of the numbers of the poor and of the means available for aid in their respective congregations.

The person who took charge of the exchange and distribution of supplies and relief for the congregations of an entire district was called 'Episcopos', the word from which your modern word 'bishop' is derived. It means 'supervisor'. He had no dealings with the members of the individual congregations. His duty was to meet with the presbyters of his district, to discuss and organize cooperative efforts in providing Christian aid, and to forward supplies to the various presbyters for final distribution. It was only natural that the presbyters and the 'Episcopos', or bishop, should also discuss other important questions relating to their caring for the souls of their parishioners during such conferences.

Like the presbyters, the bishop was not elected by mortals, but was appointed by pronouncement from the spirits of God.

His influence on life in the Christian congregations was naturally very great, but it was an influence that rested upon the *worth of his character* and his *exemplary conduct*. For this reason, his opinion was sought on all matters of importance.

- *In all questions affecting the whole of the Christian community, the spirit world referred the presbyters to the bishop of their district, who was instructed by God's spirit as to what he should do.*

However, you mortals are prone to abuse any influence you may acquire over your fellowmen, and the Christian congregations were later no exception to this rule. In the course of time, God's spirits were *banished* from the Christian church, and presbyters and bishops were no longer appointed by the spirit world, but by persons of influence. Lust for power and other human vices made their appearance.

- *For where God's spirits are absent, other spirits, concerned not with man's Salvation but with his perdition, are at work. Goodness governs through freedom, evil through compulsion.*
- *The original church, in which God's spirits wielded the sceptre, was a church of freedom for God's children.*

The later church, which *banished* God's spirits, became, under the influence of the Powers of Evil, a *church of spiritual slavery* in which the leaders assumed an authority that *clashed* with the will of God and by virtue of this authority blocked the direct path to God for the faithful.

This situation has remained in the Catholic Church until today.

The Catholics are bound to the robes of the priesthood, for without calling upon that priesthood there can be, according to the doctrine of that church, *no* forgiveness of sins, *no* presence of the Spirit of God, *no* Lord's Supper, *no* anointing of the sick, and *no* legitimate marriage. Marriage has also been classified as a sacrament by your Church, but I need not speak further on the subject of marriage after what I have already told you.

If Christ were to come back to earth today, he would again be forced to exclaim: 'I pity the people!'

If the Christian churches of today are to become once more the bearers of the true teachings of Christ, they must *return* to the Divine service observed by the early Christian church.

- *There is, of course, no hope that a return to the Christianity of Christ will be initiated by the leaders of today's Christian churches. It must be started by the people.*

The people, who have been burdened with so many manmade rules in the name of religion, must learn anew to seek God and to do His will in the same manner as the early Christians, under the guidance of God's spirits – for the sentence that the original Christian church took as a guiding principle holds true to the present day:

'Wherever God's spirits are, there is the truth!'

9. 0 Epilogue (By Priest Johannes Greber)

We tend to *reject* anything that *conflicts* with our traditions. This is a part of human nature. Habit is the strongest of all forces in the life of the individual as in that of a people. That is why we cling so closely to the customs and habits handed down to us by our parents and observed from childhood on.

This is particularly true of anything related to the *religion of our parents*. What a child's father and mother hold up to it as sacred and Divine, what *they practiced* as a religious duty and imprinted as such on the child's heart, is difficult to eradicate completely. Even though most of us do not actually conduct ourselves in accordance with our early teachings, we continue to regard them as something to be held in reverence, as something before which we stand in awe and which we are not ready, outwardly at least, to discard completely. We still feel that our own funeral should be conducted in the traditional way of our fathers, even if we have led lives not consistent with their faith, holding that we owe that much at least to family and religious tradition. We are all so strongly coloured by the religious opinions and feelings of our parental home and of our fellow believers, that something of the dye remains, no matter how often we may have bathed in the waters of an irreligious daily life.

- *This force of habit is the greatest enemy of truth in all fields and particularly in that of religion.*

It not only discouraging people from seeking the truth by their *own* efforts, but driving them instinctively to reject *without further investigation* anything that may conflict with their previous ideas.

For this there is only one remedy: *It is a personal experiencing of the truth.*

My own experience with respect to the truths related in this book was not very different.

My religion had taught me that there is a God and a spirit world, and of this much I was convinced, but the fact that communication *perceptible* to the human senses could be established with that spirit world conflicted with the doctrine of my church, and I therefore regarded any such idea as folly.

Consequently, when I was called upon one day *to investigate* what were allegedly spirit messages, I was inwardly convinced that I would easily be able to expose the whole matter as a fraud. Of course, I realized that any such investigation could be conclusive only if conducted on the same scientific principles as those that must be applied in all fields if the truth is to be discovered. These are the laws of cause and effect, which are generally valid and admit of no exception. An effect without a corresponding cause is unthinkable in any field. Thus, wherever thoughts are uttered clearly and distinctly, there must be a bearer of these thoughts, a thinking "Ego".

If a human being utters thoughts that are and always have been *unfamiliar to him*, *he speaks and writes in foreign languages* whose very sound he has never before heard, then it *cannot* be that person's own "Ego" that is the cause of the effect produced. This is all even more true, if the speaking or writing are done during a state of utter unconsciousness, it being contrary to all reason to believe that a person in that condition can speak rationally for hours on the most difficult subjects and answer and discuss all questions and side issues in an intelligent manner. Still less would an unconscious person be able to speak and to write in a language he had never heard or studied.

In a case of this kind, we cannot accept the "Ego" of the person in question as the bearer of such messages and are driven to assume the presence of some *other thinking entity* that *employs* the unconscious person's body as an instrument for speech and writing.

This conclusion is inescapable, even if we apply the principles of the exact sciences.

If, furthermore, these thinking entities, invisible to our eyes, assure us again and again that they are discarnate spirits, and if they explain to us the laws enabling them to communicate with mankind, we have the means of *testing* the truth of their statements. We need only to fulfill the conditions that are, according to the spirit world, required for them to communicate with us.

If it then develops that, subject to the observance of the said conditions, communication with the spirits actually does occur, and, what is more, *everywhere* and *in every case* – then spirit communication is as undeniable as the fact that by the observance of the laws of radio transmission we can receive radio messages from points at a far distance from us. The validity of the laws is the same in both instances. The laws governing transmission by radio were not created today; they are as old as the universe, but they have been *discovered only recently*.

- *So, too, the laws governing communication between the spirit world and mankind have always existed. They are not even a recent discovery, but people of every country and of every age have known these laws and used them for communicating with the Beyond.*

My own experiences in this field, and the experiences of a thousand others, among whom were numerous scientific investigators, are not illusions, hallucinations or similar deceptions of the senses. They are purely objective events.

I was in full possession of my senses while observing and testing the things I witnessed. I have no mediumistic gifts, being neither clairvoyant, clairaudient, nor a sensitive in any way. I know nothing of trance states in myself. Blessed with good health and steady nerves, I observed these things at the age of 50, after 25 years of service as a Catholic priest had familiarized me with the highs and lows of human life. I had seen innumerable cases of hysteria, extreme nervousness, insanity, epilepsy, and similar mental conditions in the daily discharge of my clerical duties, but what I saw in connection with spirit communication as related in this book was something *utterly different*. It did not bear even the remotest resemblance to abnormal occurrences in the domain of the psyche.

The reflection that I had everything at stake was in itself enough to compel me to conduct my observations with the utmost seriousness and conscientiousness. As a clergyman, I held a position that relieved me of all worldly care for the rest of my life, and obviously no one surrenders such a position to face the world without a means of support except for reasons of the weightiest kind. But surrender it I *must*, if the things that I had learned through what I took to be communication with the spirit world should prove to be true, for these were *in conflict* with the doctrines that I, as a Catholic priest, was called upon to preach to my fellow Catholics, and to apply in ministering to their souls.

- *If the messages brought to me by the spirit world were based upon the truth, I would have to relinquish my position as a Catholic clergyman.*

There is one more thing I wish to say to the reader of this book.

In answer to the question of whether it is imperative that *everyone must* strive to enter into communication with God's spirit world in the manner described in this book. The answer is: "Yes and No." – For whoever believes in God and trusts in Him, whoever obeys God's will according to the best of his knowledge, will reach God. This end can be achieved without a perceptible communication with God's spirit world.

However, anyone who harbors *doubts* as to God's existence, who wishes to obtain clarity about whether or not the doctrines of his religion are true or false, who seeks *enlightenment* about the great questions involving the Here and the Hereafter can learn the truth only in one way:

Communication with the good spirit world.

To arrive at a *firm* conviction regarding his relationship to God and the Hereafter *is the duty* of every human being, according to the words of the Apostle Paul:

Romans 14: 22-23: 'You may come to your own conclusions in your own way. When you have your own convictions, hold onto them before God. *For anything that is done without a firm conviction of its lawfulness is a sin.*'

For the sincere truth seeker, truth is the treasure of which Christ says in a parable:

Matthew 13: 44: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which someone found [and buried again,] and, rejoicing in his find, went home and sold everything that he had, and bought that field.'

* * * * * The End * * * * *