

Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner

Chapter VIII The Mass



This is the continuation of [Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner Chapter VII Mary Part 2](#).

1 Definitions

"The Holy Eucharist: And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave it to his disciples, and said, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' And taking a cup, he gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'All of you drink this; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins'" (Confraternity Version, Matthew 26:26-28).

"Institution of the Eucharist: For I myself have received from the Lord (what I also delivered to you), that the Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said, 'This is my body which shall be given up for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In like manner also the cup, after he had supped, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood: do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes'" (Confraternity Version, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

In the New York Catechism we read: "Jesus Christ gave us the sacrifice of the Mass to leave to His Church a visible sacrifice which continues His sacrifice on the cross until the end of time. *The Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross* [italics ours]. Holy Communion is the receiving of the body and blood of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine."

The Creed of Pope Pius IV, which is one of the official creeds of the Roman Church, says: "I profess that in the Mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice [that is, a sacrifice which satisfies the justice of God and so offsets the penalty for sin] for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation."

The Council of Trent declared: "The sacrifice [in the Mass] is identical with the sacrifice of the Cross, inasmuch as Jesus Christ is a priest and victim

both. The only difference lies in the manner of offering, which is bloody upon the cross and bloodless on our altars."

A Roman Catholic, John A. O'Brien, whose books are widely read, says: "The Mass with its colorful vestments and vivid ceremonies is a dramatic re-enactment in an unbloody manner of the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary" (*The Faith of Millions*, p. 382).

2 The Nature of the Mass

The words of Matthew 26:26-28 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, particularly the words, "This is my body," and "This is my blood," may seem to be quite simple and easy to understand. But the fact is that they probably are the most controverted words in the history of theological doctrine, and probably have caused more division within the church than any others.

It is surprising how many Protestants do not understand the significance of the Roman Catholic mass. Some think of it as merely a church ritual and dismiss it as just another form of the Lord's Supper or holy communion. But that is far from being the case. For Protestants and Roman Catholics alike, the Lord's Supper or holy communion is a sacrament. For Protestants it is a means of spiritual blessing and a memorial service, recalling to mind the glorious person of Christ and the great service that He rendered for us on Calvary. But for Roman Catholics it is something quite different. For them it is also a sacrifice, performed by a priest. And its sacrificial element is by far the most important. In fact the sacrifice of the mass is the central point in their worship, while even the preaching of the Gospel is assigned a subordinate role and is not even held to be an essential of the priestly office.

In the Roman Church this further distinction should be noted between the two parts of the mass—the mass proper, and holy communion. In the mass the so-called sacrifice is offered only by the priest and only he partakes of both the bread and the wine. In holy communion the people partake of the bread but not of the wine and have no other active part in the service.

According to Roman teaching, in the sacrifice of the mass the bread and wine are changed by the power of the priest at the time of consecration into the actual body and blood of Christ. The bread, in the form of thin, round wafers, hundreds of which may be consecrated simultaneously, is contained in a golden dish. The wine is in a golden cup. The supposed body and blood of Christ are then raised before the altar by the hands of the priest and offered up to God for the sins both of the living and the dead. During this part of the ceremony the people are little more than spectators to a religious drama. Practically everything is done by the priest, or by the priest and his helpers. The audience does not sing, nor are there any spontaneous prayers either on the part of the priest or the people. The liturgy is so rigid that it can be carried out mechanically, almost without thought.

In the observance of holy communion the priest partakes of a large wafer, then he drinks the wine in behalf of the congregation. The lay members go to

the front of the church and kneel before a railing, with closed eyes, and open mouths into which the priest places a small wafer. Roman Catholic theology holds that the complete body and blood of Christ are in both the bread and the wine. At this point one is tempted to ask, If the priest can partake of the wine for the congregation, why may he not also partake of the bread for the congregation?

Formerly it was required that anyone partaking of the mass must have abstained from any form of food or drink, even water, since midnight—hence the need for early mass. That, however, caused many to become indifferent. Now one has to abstain from solid food for only one hour before receiving communion, and he does not have to abstain from water at all. Yet the New Testament tells us that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper immediately after He and the disciples had eaten the Passover feast. If Christ had no objection to the bread being mixed with other food, why should the Roman Church object?

The elaborate ritual of the mass is really an extended pageant, designed to re-enact the experiences of Christ from the supper in the upper room, through the agony in the garden, the betrayal, trial, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. It is a drama crowding the detailed events of many days into the space of one hour or less. For its proper performance the priest in seminary goes through long periods of training and needs a marvelous memory. Witness the following: he makes the sign of the cross sixteen times, turns toward the congregation six times, lifts his eyes to heaven eleven times, kisses the altar eight times, folds his hands four times, strikes his breast ten times, bows his head twenty-one times, genuflects eight times, bows his shoulders seven times, blesses the altar with the sign of the cross thirty times, lays his hands flat on the altar twenty-nine times, prays secretly eleven times, prays aloud thirteen times, takes the bread and wine and turns it into the body and blood of Christ, covers and uncovers the chalice ten times, goes to and fro twenty times, and in addition performs numerous other acts.¹ His bowings and genuflections are imitations of Christ in His agony and suffering. The various articles of clothing worn by the priest at different stages of the drama represent those worn by Christ—the seamless robe, the purple coat, the veil with which His face was covered in the house of Caiaphas, a girdle representing the cords with which He was bound in the garden, the cords which bound Him to the cross, etc. If the priest forgets even one element of the drama he commits a great sin and technically may invalidate the mass. Add to the above the highly colored robes of the clergy, the candles, bells, incense, music, special church architecture of the chancel often in gleaming white, and the fact that the mass is said or sung in an unknown tongue, Latin, which is not understood by the people, and you see something of the complexity of the program. Surely there was much truth in Voltaire's remark concerning the mass as practiced in the cathedrals of France in his day, that it was "the grand opera of the poor."

¹ The liturgy of the mass was considerably simplified in 1965, and can now be said in the colloquial language.

But what a miserable form of play-acting is all of that! What a poor substitute for the Gospel do the people depend on for eternal life! In

contrast how simple was the scene in the upper room as Christ instituted the Lord's Supper! In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, in just four verses, Paul outlines the whole simple service: The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; He gave thanks; He broke the bread; and He gave it to them as a memorial of His body which was to be broken for them. Just four simple actions concerning the bread. Then two actions are recorded concerning the wine: He took the cup, and He gave it to them as symbolical of His blood which was to be shed for them. All that we are asked to remember is that He died to save sinners and that we are so to commemorate His death until He returns. But this simple event the Church of Rome has magnified into the glaring, elaborate, showy pageantry and drama of the mass!

The celebration of the mass is the chief duty of the Roman priesthood. Yet the New Testament gives no instruction as to how to offer mass, and in fact there is not so much as one line on the subject in Scripture. Christ sent the apostles to teach and to baptize, not to say mass. His final instructions to the church were: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them... teaching them..." (Matthew 28:19). Search the Gospels, the book of Acts, and the Epistles, and you find many admonitions to prayer, praise, preaching the Gospel, but not one word about the mass. Paul gave many instructions and exhortations concerning the government and duties of the churches, but he says nothing about the sacrifice of the mass. For centuries the sacrificing priesthood of the Old Testament era had been typical of the one true Priest who was to come. But after He had come and had accomplished His work there was no further need to continue the empty forms. So the priesthood, having served its purpose, was abolished, and Christ made no provision for His apostles and ministers to continue any kind of sacrifice. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has much to say about the endless repetition and futility of the ancient sacrifices. He shows that their only value was to symbolize and point forward to the one true sacrifice that was to be made by Christ. "We have been sanctified," he said, "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which can never take away sins; but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sin for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (10:10-14). The New Testament, therefore, announces the termination of all sacrifices, declaring that Christ alone is our true sacrifice, and that He offered Himself "once for all," thus forever ending all other sacrifices.

It staggers the imagination to realize that a merely human pantomime so absurd and so contradictory to Holy Scripture could be accepted and slavishly attended day after day and week after week by thinking men and women. Since the New Testament gives no instructions at all about the continuation of the Old Testament sacrifices, it was necessary for the Roman priesthood to invent a new kind of sacrifice. This they did by making a frivolous distinction between the "bloody" sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and the "unbloody" sacrifice which they pretend to offer in the mass. A priest, of course, must have a sacrifice, for that is the distinguishing mark of his profession. A priest without a sacrifice is simply no priest at all.

In the true observance of the Lord's Supper the symbolism is found in the bread and wine. But in the Roman ceremony no place is left for that symbolism, for the bread and wine become the actual flesh and blood of Christ so that He is literally present. The newly developed symbolism in the Roman ceremony centers in the priest at the altar—his consecration of the host, his vestments, and his various movements which constitute "the drama of the mass." Rome destroys the symbolism of the elements, which recalls the sacrifice on Calvary, and substitutes the symbolism of the one who administers the sacrament.

Concerning the altar at which the priest ministers, Dr. Harris says:

"It was probably the invention of the priesthood which brought in the altar. The early churches had no altar. The Jewish altar, done away in Christ, was a massive structure of brass on which a constantly burning fire consumed the Jewish offerings. It was a type, of course, of the cross on which Christ 'once for all' (Hebrews 9:26) offered Himself. An altar without fire is a contradiction in terms, just as an 'unbloody sacrifice of the mass' is a contradiction of the clear teaching of Scripture that 'without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness' (Hebrews 9:22), and, 'we are justified by his blood' (Romans 5:9, Confraternity ed.). The altar, as now used, is a Roman Catholic invention" (*Fundamental Protestant Doctrines*, II, p. 5).

The Protestant views concerning the elements in the Lord's Supper can be stated very simply. They differ somewhat in regard to the symbolic significance of the bread and wine, but in regard to the event memorialized they agree that in the one sacrifice on Calvary Christ offered Himself once for all for the sins of His people. The following summary of Protestant views is given in the *Christian Heritage Series*, Book No. 1, pages 52 and 53:

"The Lutheran Church rejects the doctrine of transubstantiation and teaches that the elements are figurative. They insist, however, upon the real presence of Christ at the Supper; that is, He is present as the soul is in the body or magnetism is in the magnet. Theologians call this consubstantiation." [Luther expressed this by saying that Christ is "in, with, and under" the elements.]

"Reformed [and Presbyterian] congregations understand the words of Christ *metaphorically*. 'This is (that is, signifies) my body.' Along with this metaphorical understanding of the elements, however, is the idea that Christ is present virtually, or as Dr. Hodge puts it: 'the virtues and effects of the sacrifice of the body of the Redeemer on the cross are made present and are actually conveyed in the sacrament to the worthy receiver by the power of the Holy Ghost, who uses the sacrament as His instrument according to His sovereign will.'

"All other Protestant churches hold that the bread and wine are mere symbols of the body and blood of Christ, nothing more. The observance is a memorial only of His death for our sins, to be commemorated until He comes again."

3 The Mass the Same Sacrifice as on Calvary?

In a Roman Catholic Catechism of Christian Doctrine the question is asked: "Is the Holy Mass one and the same sacrifice with that of the Cross?" (Question 278). And the answer is given:

"The Holy Mass is one and the same sacrifice with that of the Cross, inasmuch as Christ, who offered Himself, a bleeding victim, on the Cross to His Heavenly Father, continues to offer Himself in an unbloody manner on the altar, through the ministry of His priests."

The Church of Rome holds that the mass is a continuation of the sacrifice that Christ made on Calvary, that it is in reality a re-crucifixion of our Lord over and over again, in an unbloody manner. It also holds that this sacrifice is just as efficacious to take away sin as was the sacrifice on Calvary. Christ supposedly is offered in sacrifice every time the mass is celebrated, that is, daily, in thousands of Roman Catholic churches throughout the world. The mass, therefore, is not a memorial, but a ritual in which the bread and wine are transformed into the literal flesh and blood of Christ, which is then offered as a true sacrifice. The only difference is the manner in which the two are made. Rome thus claims to continue an act which the Scriptures say was completed nearly two thousand years ago.

In the sacrifice of the mass the Roman priest becomes an "*Alter Christus*," that is, "Another Christ," in that he sacrifices the real Christ upon the altar and presents Him for the salvation of the faithful and for the deliverance of souls in purgatory. The Roman Church teaches that Christ, in the form of the "host" (the consecrated wafer), is in reality upon the altar, and that the priests have Him in their power, that they hold Him in their hands, and carry Him from place to place.

We must, of course, take strong exception to such pretended sacrifice. We cannot regard it as anything other than a deception, a mockery, and an abomination before God. The so-called sacrifice in the mass certainly is not identical with that on Calvary, regardless of what the priests may say. There is in the mass no real Christ, no suffering, and no bleeding. And a bloodless sacrifice is ineffectual. The writer of the book of Hebrews says that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" of sin (9:22); and John says, "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Since admittedly there is no blood in the mass, it simply cannot be a sacrifice for sin.

In the New Testament the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is always presented as a sacrament, never as a sacrifice. Furthermore according to the Levitical law a sin offering was *never to be eaten* and all eating of blood, even animal blood, and much more the eating of human blood, was strictly forbidden. The fact that in the Lord's Supper the elements are eaten is proof in itself that it was never intended to be a sacrifice.

4 Transubstantiation

The word "transubstantiation" means a *change of substance*. The Church of Rome

teaches that the whole substance of the bread and wine is changed into the literal physical body and blood of Christ. A Catechism of Christian Doctrine asks the question: "What is the Holy Mass?" and the answer is given:

"The Holy Mass is the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, really present on the altar under the appearance of bread and wine, and offered to God for the living and the dead."

The doctrine of transubstantiation and the power of the priests is clearly stated by Liguori in the following words:

"With regard to the power of the priests over the real body of Christ, it is of faith that when they pronounce the words of consecration, the incarnate God has obliged Himself to obey and come into their hands under the sacramental appearance of bread and wine. We are struck with wonder when we find that in obedience to the words of His priests— *Hoc est corpus meum* (This is my body)—God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes whenever they call Him, and as often as they call Him, and places Himself in their hands, even though they should be His enemies. And after having come He remains, entirely at their disposal and they move Him as they please from one place to another. They may, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the church; they may, if they choose, eat his flesh, and give Him for the food of others. Besides, the power of the priest surpasses that of the Blessed Virgin because she cannot absolve a Catholic from even the smallest sin" (*The Dignity and Duties of the Priest*).

The priest supposedly is endowed with power by the bishop at the time of his ordination to change the bread and wine into the literal living body and blood of Christ, which is then known as the "host," and to bring Him down upon the altar. And that body is said to be complete in all its parts, down to the last eyelash and toenail! How it can exist in thousands of places and in its full proportions, even in a small piece of bread, is not explained, but is taken on faith as a miracle.

It must not be supposed for a minute that modern Roman Catholics do not literally believe this jumble of medieval superstition. They have been taught it from infancy, and they do believe it. It is the very finest doctrine of their church. It is one of the chief doctrines, if indeed it is not the chief doctrine, upon which their church rests. The priests preach it literally and emphatically several times a year, and Roman Catholic laymen do not dare express any doubt about it.

After the adoration of the consecrated "host," the uplifted hands of the priest pretend to offer to God the very body and blood of Christ as a sacrifice for the living and the dead. Then, in the observance of the eucharist he pretends to eat Him alive, in the presence of the people, also to give Him to the people under the appearance of bread, to be eaten by them.

This doctrine of the mass, of course, is based on the assumption that the words of Christ, "This is my body," and "This is my blood" (Matthew 6:26-28), must be taken literally. The accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper, both in the Gospels and in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, make it

perfectly clear that He spoke in figurative terms. Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). And Paul quotes Jesus as saying: "This is the new covenant in my blood. ... or as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:25-26). In these words He used a double figure of speech. The cup is put for the wine, and the wine is called the new covenant. The cup was not literally the new covenant, although it is declared to be so as definitely as the bread is declared to be His body. They did not literally drink the cup, nor did they literally drink the new covenant. How ridiculous to say that they did! Nor was the bread literally His body, or the wine His blood. After giving the wine to the disciples Jesus said, "I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come" (Luke 22:18). So the wine, even as He gave it to them, and after He had given it to them, remained "the fruit of the vine"! Paul too says that the bread remains bread: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner. ... But let each man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:27-28). No change had taken place in the elements. This was after the prayer of consecration, when the Church of Rome supposes the change took place, and Jesus and Paul both declare that the elements still are bread and wine.

Another and more important proof that the bread and wine are not changed into the literal and actual flesh and blood of Christ is this: the literal interpretation makes the sacrament a form of *cannibalism*. For that is precisely what cannibalism is—the eating of human flesh. Rome attempts to deny this, but not with much logic. Clearly there is a contradiction in the Romanist explanation somewhere.

Indeed, how can Christ's words, "This is my body," and, "This is my blood," be taken in a literal sense? At the time those words were spoken, the bread and wine were on the table before Him, and in His body He was sitting at the table a living man. The crucifixion had not taken place. They ate the Lord's Supper before the crucifixion took place. Furthermore, we do not, and cannot memorialize someone who is present, as the Romanists say Christ is present in the mass. But in the future, in His absence, these things would symbolize His broken body and shed blood. They would then call to mind His sacrifice, and would then be taken in remembrance" of Him (1 Corinthians 11:25).

Jesus' words, "This do in remembrance of me," show that the Lord's Supper was not some kind of magical operation, but primarily a memorial, instituted to call Christians throughout the ages to remember the wondrous cross of the crucified Lord and all its marvelous benefits and lessons for us. A memorial does not present the reality, in this case His true body and blood, but something quite different, which serves only as a reminder of the real thing.

We often show a friend a photograph and say, "This is my wife"; "This is my son"; "This is my daughter." Such language is readily understood in ordinary conversation. Nobody takes such words literally. The Bible is written in the language of the common people. Hence it is perfectly obvious to any observant reader that the Lord's Supper was intended primarily as a simple memorial feast, in no sense a literal reincarnation of Christ.

We believe that the real meaning of Christ's words can be seen when they are compared with similar figurative language which He used in John 4:13-14. There, speaking to the woman at Jacob's well, He said: "Every one that drinketh this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."

On other occasions He used similar language. He said, "I am the door" (John 10:7), but of course He did not mean that He was a literal wooden door with lock and hinges. He said, "I am the vine" (John 15:5), but no one understood Him to mean that He was a grapevine. When He said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14), He did not mean that He was actually a shepherd. When He said, "Ye must be born again," (John 3:7), He referred not to a physical birth but to a spiritual birth. When He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19), he meant His body, not the structure of wood and stone. When He said, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life" (John 6:54), He was speaking of a spiritual relationship between Himself and His people in terms of the Old Testament type, that is, eating the Passover lamb and drinking the Passover wine; but His Jewish hearers, being literalists, as are the Roman Catholics, misunderstood His words. He said, "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13), and "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). He spoke of "the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matthew 16:6). James said, "The tongue is a fire" (3:6); and again, "Ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (4:14). Moses spoke of "the bread of affliction" (Deuteronomy 16:3), and Isaiah spoke of "the bread of adversity and the water of affliction" (30:20). None of these statements is true if taken literally. The disciples had no trouble understanding Jesus' figures of speech. Similarly, the expressions, "This is my body," and "This is my blood," are clear enough for all except those who will not see, or those who merely follow medieval theologians. It is unreasonable in the extreme to take these two expressions literally while taking the others figuratively.

The actual eating of human flesh and blood is repulsive, abhorrent to all right minded people, and it was especially so to the Jews. Such practice is contrary to Scripture and to common sense. "And whatsoever man there be... that eateth any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people," was the word of God through Moses (Leviticus 17:10); "Ye shall not eat the blood" (Deuteronomy 12:16); etc. In Jewish law a stern penalty was enacted against eating blood. In Peter's vision (Acts 10) when he was told to arise, kill and eat, he promptly protested that he had never eaten anything unclean. A little later the Jerusalem Council, legislating for the Christian dispensation, ratified a provision against the eating of blood: "...that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood" (Acts 15:29). It is impossible to believe that when the apostles thus set forth the law of God they were themselves partakers, not merely of animal blood, but of human blood—as they would have been if in the Lord's Supper they regularly ate the literal flesh and blood of Christ.

The Roman Church acknowledges that in the mass there is no visible change in

the bread and wine, that they continue to have the same properties: the same taste, color, smell, weight, and dimensions. It should be sufficient to refute this doctrine to point out that it involves an impossibility. It is impossible that the attributes or sensible properties of bread and wine should remain if the substance has been changed. It is self-evident that if the attributes of flesh and blood are not there, the actual flesh and blood are not there. When Jesus changed the water into wine at Cana of Galilee, there was no question but that it was wine. It had the properties of wine. But since the bread and wine in the eucharist do not have the attributes of flesh and blood, it is absurd to say that any such change has taken place. That which contradicts our reason must be pronounced irrational. Yet the adherents of Rome, under threat of eternal condemnation, are forced to believe what their church tells them, even though it contradicts their senses. The effect cannot be other than detrimental when men are forced to accept as true that which they know to be false. Says Henry M. Woods:

"If men think at all, they know that what the papal church requires them to believe in the eucharist, under penalty of an eternal curse, is a monstrous untruth. They know they are eating bread, not human flesh: and they know that no human priest can offer a real atoning sacrifice for sin" (*Our Priceless Heritage*, p. 107).

When the Roman priest consecrates the wafer it is then called the "host," and they worship it as God. But if the doctrine of transubstantiation is false, then the "host" is no more the body of Christ than is any other piece of bread. And if the soul and divinity of Christ are not present, then the worship of it is sheer idolatry, of the same kind as that of pagan tribes who worship fetishes.

A curious and interesting item in connection with the doctrine of the Church of Rome is that the efficiency of a priest's action in performing any sacrament depends upon his "intention," and that if he does not have the right intention in doing what he professes to do the sacrament is invalid. The Council of Trent declared: "If anyone shall say that intention, at least of doing what the church does, is not required in ministers while performing and administering the sacraments, let him be anathema" (Sess. VII, Can. 11). The Creed of Pope Pius IV says:

"If there is a defect in any of these: namely, the due matter, the form with intention, or the sacerdotal order of the celebrant, it nullifies the sacrament."

And cardinal Bellarmine, who is considered one of the foremost authorities, says:

"No one can be certain, with the certainty of faith, that he has received a true sacrament, since no sacrament is performed without the intention of the ministers, and no one can see the intention of another" (Works, Vol. I, p. 488).

Hence in the administration of the mass, baptism, or any of the other sacraments, if the right intention is lacking on the part of the priest,

either through lack of attention to what he is doing, ill feeling toward the person before him, spite at his superiors, physical or mental distresses which distract him, etc., the sacrament is null and void. If at the time the priest is administering the mass, the bread and wine undergo no change, then when he elevates the "host" and the people bow down and worship it they are worshipping a mere creature, acknowledged by the Church of Rome to be such. And that, of course, is sheer idolatry. How often that occurs we have no way of knowing. If one cannot be certain that he is partaking of a true sacrament, he cannot be sure that he is not worshipping mere bread and wine. In view of the fact that so many priests eventually leave the priesthood—some say as many as one fourth or one third—it surely is reasonable to assume that many of those, for considerable periods of time before they leave and while they are in a state of doubt and uncertainty, are often lacking in sincere intention in performing the sacraments. It would indeed be interesting to know what proportion of the members of the Roman Church, according to Rome's own doctrine, have received invalid baptisms, ordinations, marriages, absolutions, etc. Undoubtedly it is considerable. It would also be interesting, if it were possible, to know who those individuals are. No doubt there would be many surprises as some of her most distinguished and ardent supporters were revealed as not legitimately ordained priests, nor even members of the Roman Church.

Dr. Joseph Zacchello, a former priest and editor of *The Convert*, points out that this doctrine of the intention of the priest undermines the doctrinal basis of the Roman Church. He says:

"This teaching implies that no Roman Catholic, be he priest or laymen, can ever be sure that he has been properly baptized, confirmed, absolved in confession, married, received holy communion or extreme unction. ... Suppose a child is baptized by a priest who lacks the proper intention. The baptism is then of no avail, and the child grows up a pagan. If he should enter a seminary and be ordained a priest, his ordination will be invalid. All the thousands of masses he says, all the sacraments he performs, will likewise be invalid. If he becomes a bishop, the priests he ordains and the other bishops he consecrates will have no such power. If by chance he should become pope, the Roman Catholic Church would then have as 'Vicar of Christ' and 'infallible' head a man who was not even a Christian to start with!" (*Secrets of Romanism*, p. 110).

5 The Cup Withheld from the Laity

Another serious error of the Church of Rome is that in the eucharist, or holy communion, she withholds the wine from the laity. She thus deprives believers of half of the benefits of the sacrament. That decision was made without any command from the New Testament, there being no suggestion of any such distinction between clergy and laity.

Even in the Confraternity Version Christ's command that all believers partake of the cup is clear and unequivocal: "All of you drink this" (Matthew 26:27). And Mark says: "And they all drank of it" (14:23). Christ said, "This is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Corinthians 11:25). Since all believers are in that covenant, and since all Christians should remember Christ's atoning

death which was made for them, all should partake of the cup which is one of the seals of that covenant and one of the reminders of that death.

In Paul's directions for the observance of the Lord's Supper it is clear that the laity partook of both the bread and the wine. Writing to the church at Corinth he even found it necessary to admonish the people against gluttony and drunkenness. We read: "When ye come together in the church. ... When therefore ye assemble yourselves together. ..."; then follows the admonition: "...one is hungry, and another is drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?... Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:18-27). How could anyone be guilty of drinking the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner if the cup were not given to him? This is clearly one more instance in which the Church of Rome has taken it upon herself to alter the commands of the Gospel.

In the early church the people partook of both the bread and the wine, and that practice was continued through the first eleven centuries. Then the practice of permitting the priest to drink the wine for both himself and the congregation began to creep in. In 1415 the Council of Constance officially denied the cup to the people. That decision was confirmed by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), and that practice has been continued to the present day.

The reasons given by the priests for withholding the cup from the laity are: (1) that someone might spill a drop (since the wine allegedly has been transformed into the literal blood of Christ, that indeed would be a great tragedy)—the disciples too might have spilled some, but Jesus did not withhold it from them for any such flimsy reason; and (2) that the body of Christ, the flesh and the blood, is contained complete in either the bread or the wine—but there is no suggestion of that in Scripture.

O'Brien acknowledges that "It was the common custom for the first twelve centuries to give communion under both kinds," and that "The Present law of giving communion to the laity only under the form of bread dates from the Council of Constance in 1415" (The Faith of Millions, p. 223).

6 The Finality of Christ's Sacrifice

That Christ's sacrifice on Calvary was complete in that one offering, and that it was never to be repeated, is set forth in Hebrews, chapters 7, 9, and 10. There we read:

"Who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did *once* for all, when he offered up himself' (7:27).

"...through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (9:12).

"Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. ... Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must he often have suffered since the

foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ... Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him unto salvation" (9:22-29).

"By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*. And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins: but he, when he had offered *one sacrifice* for sins *for ever*, sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For by *one offering* he hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified" (10:10-14).

Notice that throughout these verses occurs the statement "once for all," which has in it the idea of completeness, or finality, and which precludes repetition. Christ's work on the cross was perfect and decisive. It constituted one historic event which need never be repeated and which in fact cannot be repeated. The language is perfectly clear: "He offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (10:12). Paul says that "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more" (Romans 6:9); and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (10:14).

Christ's priesthood is contrasted with that of the Old Testament priests, and we are told that the ancient priesthood has ceased and that the priesthood of Christ has taken its place. We are told that Christ has sat down as token that His work is finished. Depend upon it, He never descends from that exalted place to be a further sacrifice upon Rome's altars or on any other; for of such sacrifice there is no need. The verses just quoted completely contradict all that Rome has to say about the mass. Thank God that we can look back to what our Lord did on Calvary and know that He completed the sacrifice for sins once for all, and that our salvation is not dependent on the whim or arbitrary decree of any priest or church. Any pretense at a continuous offering for sin is worse than vain, for it is a denial of the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice of Christ on Calvary.

Where there is a continual offering for sin, as when the sacrament of the mass is offered daily, it means that sins are really never taken away, and that those who are called priests pretend to continue the unfinished work of Christ. When on Memorial Day we lay a wreath on the tomb of a soldier we may speak of the sacrifice that he made to save his country. But his sacrifice cannot be renewed. He died once and his sacrifice was complete. So it is with the sacrifice of Christ. He died once, as the Scriptures so emphatically and repeatedly state; and since He was deity incarnate, He was a person of infinite value and dignity and His work therefore was fully efficacious and complete for the accomplishing of what He intended, namely, the redemption of those for whom He died. When Paul said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26), he did not say that we repeat the Lord's death, or supplement it, or make it finally effective, but that we proclaim it, that is, memorialize it.

Roman Catholics who take their church membership seriously and who in most

cases have had it drilled into them from infancy that in the mass a daily sacrifice is offered for them, find it hard to leave the Roman Church precisely because in the Protestant church they find no mass, and they fear that without the mass they will lose their salvation. A devout Roman Catholic regards this matter of salvation through the mass far more seriously than most Protestants realize. And the hierarchy has been quick to realize that its main hold on the minds and hearts of the people through the centuries has been the mass, which is a visible re-enactment, by the use of symbols, of the suffering and death of Christ. Only when one begins to read the Bible thoughtfully and prayerfully does he discover that the only sacrifice necessary for his salvation was made for him by Christ on Calvary, and that the mass cannot possibly be a continuing sacrifice. Once he sees this point it becomes easy for him to accept the other doctrines of the Protestant faith.

The obligation that rests on a Roman Catholic to attend mass is a far different thing from the freedom that Protestants enjoy in the matter of church attendance. The Baltimore Catechism says:

“It is a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or a holyday of obligation, unless we are excused for a serious reason. They also commit sin mortal who, having others under their charge, hinder them from hearing Mass without a sufficient reason” (Answer, 390).

The Roman Catholic, according to this authoritative standard, is obliged to attend mass every Sunday, and in the United States there are six special holydays. The mass is the most important ceremony of the Roman Church, the central and supreme act of worship. Everything else hinges on this. It becomes, therefore, the rule of discipline for all Roman Catholics, a mighty instrument in the hands of the clergy for the supervision of the laity.

Judged by outward appearances, Roman Catholics are quite faithful in attending Sunday mass, although on the acknowledgment of some there is nothing in the performance of a pleasing nature. But the Romanist, believing in the efficacy of good works, looks upon church attendance as a means of gaining merit for himself in the other world and as an offset to the evil charged against him. Attendance at mass gives him a sense of having fulfilled his duty. He has met the requirement. Regardless of how wicked a person he may be, if he continues to acknowledge the authority of the church by regular attendance at mass and by going to confession as required at least once a year, he remains a member “in good standing”—witness, for instance, the large number of gangsters and crooked politicians in the big cities who have maintained their standing in this church while continuing uninterruptedly their evil practices.

With the sagacity characteristic of her long career, the Roman Church takes advantage of that weakness in human nature which seeks some visible and outward object of worship. In the consecrated “host” she presents to her people a god whom they can see and feel. And it is generally accepted that Romanists, having been to mass, especially on Sunday, can do about as they please the remainder of the day. Rome is more concerned about the observance of a ceremony and the mark of allegiance which it implies than she is about

holy living or about keeping a day holy to the Lord.

Another feature of the mass is that it is conducted in Latin,² a language not spoken by the people in the Medieval church nor understood by people today unless they use a translation. Latin has been a dead language for centuries. Paul said: "Howbeit in the church, I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Corinthians 14:19). In response to the criticism that at mass the worshipper is not a participant, not able to understand what is said, but merely an observer, the Roman Church in some places conducts the services in the vernacular, or makes translations available so that the people can participate intelligently, at least to the extent of knowing what is said. But such is not the general practice. In fact the Council of Trent directed one of its anathemas against those who say "that the mass ought to be celebrated in the vulgar tongue only." But the prayers of the Jews in Old Testament times were always offered in the Hebrew vernacular; and we read that the members of the early church, when they met for worship, "lifted up their voices to God with one accord" (Acts 4:24). Yet, as C. Stanley Lowell has appropriately observed: "It is not essential [in the mass] that they understand. Ideas are not integral to the mass, may even defeat its purpose. The objective here is to produce through the medium of the miracle allegedly performed by the priest an emotional ecstasy in which thoughts or ideas become superfluous" (Article, ^{Protestant and Papal Infallibility}).

² In the "New Mass," introduced in 1965, Latin is no longer compulsory.

7 The Mass and Money

One very prominent feature of the mass as conducted in the Roman Church is the financial support which it brings in. It is by all odds the largest income producing ceremony in the church. An elaborate system has been worked out. In the United States low mass, for the benefit of a soul in purgatory, read by the priest in a low tone of voice and without music, costs a minimum of one dollar. The high mass, on Sundays and holydays, sung by the priest in a loud voice, with music and choir, costs a minimum of ten dollars. The usual price for high mass is twenty-five to thirty-five dollars. The high requiem mass (at funerals), and the high nuptial mass (at weddings), may cost much more, even hundreds of dollars, depending on the number and rank of the priests taking part, the display of flowers, the music, candles, etc. Prices vary in the different dioceses and according to the ability of the parishioners to pay. No masses are said without money. The Irish have a saying: *High money, high mass; low money, low mass; no money, no mass.*

In regard to the various kinds of masses, there are (1) votive masses, made for various purposes, such as relief of one suffering in purgatory, recovery from sickness, success in a business venture, a safe journey, protection against storms, floods, droughts, etc; (2) requiem or funeral masses, in behalf of the dead; (3) nuptial masses, at marriages; and (4) pontifical masses, conducted by a bishop or other dignitary. Each of these is available in high or low mass, and at various prices.

On Purgatory Day, November 2 of each year, three masses are said, for the

souls in purgatory and one for the "intentions" of the pope—which "intentions," we may assume, are directed for the good of the offerer. Every member of the church is urged to attend on that day. The priest of a church of 500 members may reasonably expect to take in from \$500 to \$5,000 on that day.

The most popular mass is that to alleviate or terminate the suffering of souls in purgatory. The more masses said for an agonizing soul the better. Sometimes ads are placed in church papers in which multiple or repeated masses are offered for a price. Purgatorial societies and mass leagues offer blanket masses recited for beneficiaries en masse, in which anyone who sends, say, \$10, can secure for a departed soul a certain number of high masses celebrated daily for a month, or longer.

The present writer, who lives in Missouri, has for the past two Christmases received solicitations by mail from a priest and church in Maryland for a thousand masses, euphemistically called "spiritual bouquets," for the apparently reasonable price of \$10. The need for such large numbers of masses, continued over long periods of time, surely casts doubt on the claim that the mass is of such high value in matters of salvation. One consequence of this system is that the poor are left to burn in purgatory longer, while the rich can have more and higher grade masses said and so escape more quickly. People with property are sometimes urged to leave thousands of dollars to provide for prayers and masses to be said perpetually for their souls. According to the teaching of the Church of Rome the great majority of those dying within the pale of the church go to purgatory where they remain in a state of suffering with no known termination date before the day of judgment. Those outside the Roman Church are, for the most part, said to be hopelessly lost and therefore beyond help.

One of the worst features about the mass system is that the priest can never give assurance that the soul for which he has said mass is out of purgatory. He admittedly has no criterion by which that can be known. Hence the offerings may be continued for years—as long as the deluded Romanist is willing to continue paying. Says Stephen L. Testa:

"It would not pay the priest to say that the soul for which he prayed is already out of purgatory and gone to heaven and needs no further masses. It would cut off a rich source of income. Like many unscrupulous physicians who would rather prolong the illness of a wealthy patient, so he could continue to need his treatments, a priest would never tell a bereaved mother that her daughter is 'with Jesus' in heaven and needs no more requiem masses. A Protestant minister would give that comforting assurance from the Word of God, but never a Catholic priest!" (*The Truth About Catholics, Protestants, and Jews*, p. 13).

Dr. Zacchello says:

"The only 'sacrifice' in the Roman Catholic mass is that of the money of the poor given to the priest to pay for the mysterious ceremonies he performs, in the belief that he will relieve the suffering of their beloved ones in the fires of purgatory" (*Secrets of Romanism*, p. 82).

And L. J. King points out that...

"Death doesn't end all with the Roman Church. A member cannot avoid his church dues by dying. His estate or friends have to pay on and on. Even the tax collector lets up on a dead man, but the Roman Church never. It retains its grip on its dupes long after their bodies are reduced to ashes. The priestly threat that the soul is suffering in the 'devouring flames' of purgatory and will remain there for a long, long time, will bring the last dollar from the sorrowing mother, whose only son or daughter is detained in that fiery prison."

Those who contribute money for masses fail to appreciate the fact that the gifts of God *cannot be bought with any amount of money*. That was precisely the sin of Simon the sorcerer, who attempted to buy the power of God with money. But he received Peter's stern rebuke: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast sought to obtain the gift of God with money" (Acts 8:20). The term "simony" has entered the dictionary, meaning "to make a profit out of sacred things," "the sin of buying or selling ecclesiastical benefices," etc.

8 Historical Development of the Doctrine

In view of the prominent place given the mass in the present day Roman Church, it is of particular interest to find that it was unknown in the early church, that it was first proposed by a Benedictine monk, Radbertus, in the ninth century, and that it did not become an official part of Romanist doctrine until so pronounced by the Lateran Council of 1215 under the direction of Pope Innocent III. It was reaffirmed by the Council of Trent in 1545. Transubstantiation is not mentioned in the Apostles' Creed, or in the Nicene or Athanasian creeds. Its first creedal mention is by Pope Pius IV, in the year 1564.

Only since the year 1415, by decree of the Council of Constance, has the Roman Church refused to give the cup to the laity. On various occasions in the earlier history of the church, popes have condemned as a sacrilege the serving of bread only in the holy communion. The decree that the bread only should be given to the laity was enacted on June 15, 1415, at a time when the Roman Church was without a head. For this same council had deposed Pope John XXIII on May 29, 1415, for crimes against the church and the state; and his successor, Martin V, was not elected until November 11, 1417.

The decree denying the cup to the laity contradicted Roman Canon Law of the preceding centuries. Pope Leo I, called the Great (440-461), said in his condemnation of the Manichaeans: "They receive Christ's body with unworthy mouth, and entirely refuse to take the blood of our redemption; therefore we give notice to you, holy brethren, that men of this kind, whose sacrilegious deceit has been detected, are to be expelled with priestly authority from the fellowship of the saints."

Pope Gelasius I (492-496), in a letter addressed to some bishops, said: "We have ascertained that certain persons having received a portion of the sacred body alone abstain from partaking of the chalice of the sacred blood. Let

such persons... either receive the sacrament in its entirety, or be repelled from the entire sacrament, because a division of one and the same mystery cannot take place without great sacrilege." The decree of the Council of Clermont, presided over by Pope Urban II, in 1095, and Pope Paschal II in 1118, also condemned the practice of giving the bread only in the sacrament. How can the Church of Rome claim to be catholic, apostolic, and unchanging when a council without a pope has deliberately overthrown the teaching of four popes concerning the matter of holy communion?

We can only conclude that the mass is a medieval superstition, designed to throw a veil of mystery over the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and to impress ignorant people. From a simple memorial feast it became a miraculous re-enactment of the sacrifice on Calvary, through which Christ was constantly dying for His people. A similar effect was designed in the use of the Latin language in the liturgy—for which it certainly cannot be said that it was intended to make the Lord's Supper more intelligible to the people, for practically none of them could understand Latin. The purpose of each of those innovations was to exalt the hierarchy, to clothe it with an air of mystery, and, particularly as regards the mass, to make the priest appear to have supernatural powers.

9 Seven Sacraments

What is a sacrament? To this question the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Standards answers:

"A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers" (Answer, 92).

According to the New Testament, and according to the teaching of the Protestant churches, two sacraments, and only two, were instituted by Christ. These are baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the upper room during the last night with His disciples Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper when He said: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Baptism was practiced from the time of John the Baptist, and after His resurrection Christ specifically instituted it as a sacrament when He said: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ..." (Matthew 28:19).

To these two sacraments Rome has added five more, so that she now lists them as: (1) baptism, (2) confirmation, (3) eucharist (mass), (4) penance, (5) extreme unction, (6) marriage, and (7) orders (ordination of priests and consecration of nuns).

Rome holds that in the ordinary course of life, five of these—baptism, confirmation, mass, penance, and extreme unction—are indispensable to salvation, while marriage and orders are optional. But no church leaders nor any church council has the right to appoint sacraments. The church is Christ's church, and only He, as its Head, has that right. Furthermore, Rome has altered the form of the Eucharist, making it a sacrifice as well as a sacrament.

Rome can give no proof for the additional five sacraments, except that tradition holds them to be such. The number seven was arrived at only after centuries of drifting about. The early church fathers sometimes used the word in a broad sense, and spoke of the sacrament of prayer, the sacrament of the Scriptures, the sacrament of the Christian religion, the sacrament of weeping, etc., applying the term to various things that were regarded as in some way sacred or as designed to bring one closer to God, although it is evident from their writings that, strictly speaking, they recognized only two real sacraments. Peter Lombard (1100-1164), who published the famous book of "Sentences" from the writings of Augustine and other church leaders, which was regarded as a standard book on theology until the time of the Reformation, was the first to define the number as seven. It is important to notice that no author for more than a thousand years after Christ taught that there were seven sacraments. It was not until the Council of Florence, in the year 1439 that the seven sacraments were formally decreed. Later the Council of Trent declared: "If any one saith that the sacraments of the New Law were not instituted by Jesus Christ, our Lord; or that are more, or less, than seven, to wit, baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony; or even anyone of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament, let him be anathema."

What was the purpose of the Church of Rome in appointing seven sacraments? Probably in order that it might have complete control over the lives of its people from the cradle to the grave. This sacramental system is designed to give the priest control at the most important events of human life. From baptism as soon as possible after birth to the shadow of approaching death the laity is kept dependent on and under the control of the priests.

That the five sacraments added by the Church of Rome are spurious should be clear beyond doubt. Confirmation, penance, and extreme unction are not even mentioned in Scripture, and are therefore completely without authority. We shall discuss the seven in order.

1. *Baptism*. Rome has perverted the meaning of baptism so that instead of accepting it as a symbolical ordinance and an outward sign through which Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented and conveyed to the believer and received by faith, it is represented as working in a magical way to produce baptismal regeneration and securing automatically the forgiveness of all past sins, and as absolutely necessary to salvation. Rome teaches that it is not possible even for newly born infants to be saved so as to enjoy the delights of heaven unless they are baptized. To that end they have even invented a means of prenatal baptism. In the words of the Trent Catechism: "Infants, unless regenerated unto God through the grace of baptism, whether their parents be Christian or infidel, are born to eternal misery and perdition." But what a horrible doctrine that was! And what a contrast with the generally accepted Protestant doctrine that all those dying in infancy, whether baptized or unbaptized, are saved!

The Romish doctrine was so horrible and so unacceptable to the laity that it was found necessary to invent a third realm, the *Limbus Infantum*, to which unbaptized infants are sent, in which they are excluded from heaven but in which they suffer no positive pain. The ecumenical councils of Lyons and

Florence and the canons of the Council of Trent declare positively that unbaptized infants are confined to this realm. The primary purpose of the Church of Rome in excluding unbaptized infants from heaven is to force parents to commit their children to her as soon as possible. The long range design is to bring all people into subjection to her, to put her stamp of ownership on every person possible. And the pressure put on Roman Catholic parents to see to it that their children are baptized early is almost unbelievable—a commitment which once she receives she never relinquishes.

2. *Confirmation*. In the so-called sacrament of confirmation the bishop lays his hands on the head of a person who previously has been baptized, for the purpose of conveying to him the Holy Spirit. But no apostle or minister in the apostolic church performed that rite, and no man on earth has the Holy Spirit at his command. Roman theologians are uncertain as to the time when this so-called sacrament was instituted. The ritual leads those confirmed to think they have received the Holy Spirit, whereas all they have received is the word and ritual of fallible priests. Confirmation is also practiced in the Protestant Episcopal Church, but they regard it only as a church ordinance, not as an institution established by Christ.

3. *Eucharist* (the mass), discussed throughout this chapter.

4. *Penance*. What is penance? An authorized catechism says: "Penance is a sacrament in which the sins committed after baptism are forgiven by means of the absolution of the priest. ... The priest gives a penance after confession that we may satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to our sins. We must accept the penance which the priest gives to us."

The Word of God teaches that the sinner must truly repent from the heart for his sin. Otherwise there can be no forgiveness. But the Church of Rome to a considerable degree substitutes penance for Gospel repentance. Penance consists of outward acts, such as repeating certain prayers many times, e.g., the Hail Mary or the rosary, self-inflicted punishments, fastings, pilgrimages, etc. Penance represents a false hope, for it relates only to outward acts. True repentance involves genuine sorrow for sin, it is directed toward God, and the person voluntarily shows by his outward acts and conduct that he has forsaken his sin. Rome cannot point to any event in the Bible in which penance was instituted.

5. *Extreme Unction*. Extreme unction is described as "the anointing by the priest of those in danger of death by sickness with holy oil, accompanied with a special prayer. ... It is called Extreme because administered to sick persons when thought to be near the close of life." In this ritual the priest anoints the eyes, ears, nose, hands, and feet of the dying person with "holy oil," as he pronounces an accompanying Latin prayer formula which offsets the sin committed by those members of the body.³ But no matter how good the priest or his prayer, he still cannot assure the dying person of heaven. The best he can do is to get him into purgatory, there to suffer the pains of fire. From that point his loved ones are supposed to purchase numberless masses to secure his early release. But how different that is from the Protestant assurance that all true believers at death pass into the immediate presence of and into the joys of heaven! Christ said: "Verily, verily I say

unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, *hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment*, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). Christ gives liberty; the priest imposes bondage.

³ Since 1965 this ritual has been simplified.

This sacrament in its present form was not introduced into the church until the twelfth century. And again the Roman theologians are uncertain as to the time of its institution. It is entirely lacking in Scriptural warrant. There is no case in Scripture of any apostle anointing a man with oil. The case recorded in James 5:14-15 cannot be claimed, for the purpose there was to restore the sick one to health. But extreme unction is intended only for those who are expected to die, not for those who are expected to recover, and it is intended as a preparation for the next life.

6. *Orders*. The ordination of church officials was appointed by Christ, but not the specific orders adopted by the Church of Rome—priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and popes. Furthermore, no sacramental sign was appointed to accompany the appointment of church officials.

7. *Matrimony*. Matrimony, too, is a divine ordinance, but it was given no outwardly prescribed sign. It was in fact instituted thousands of years earlier, even before the fall, and therefore is not an institution of the new covenant. The Church of Rome admits her uncertainty about the time of its appointment as a sacrament.

Rome's error in making marriage a sacrament came about because of a mistranslation in the Vulgate, Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible, which the Council of Trent made the official inspired version for the Roman Church. The passage in question is Ephesians 5:31-32, which correctly translated reads: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great. ..." But the Vulgate translated: "This is a great sacrament. ..." Happily that error has been corrected in the new Confraternity Version, so that it reads: "This is a great mystery. ..." But even so, Rome continues to teach that marriage is a sacrament. But cardinal Cajetan, Luther's opponent at Augsburg, made the frank admission: "You have not from this place, O prudent reader—from Paul—that marriage was a sacrament; for he does not say that it was a great sacrament, but a great mystery."

Furthermore, for six or seven centuries after the establishment of the Christian church, the laity made no acknowledgment of any claim that the clergy alone could perform marriages, and they exercised the right of divorce on Scriptural grounds. It was through the influence of strong popes, such as Hildebrand, who, wishing to bring the laity under the more complete control of the clergy, at last secured for the church complete control over marriage. Such was the situation during the Middle Ages. As a "sacrament" the new type marriage could be performed only by a priest and was indissoluble. The low state of morals in countries where the Roman Church has been able to enforce its rule shows the result of that false doctrine. A fee, of course, has always been charged for the marriage ceremony. And where the fee has been excessive, as in some Latin American countries, the result has been an

abnormally large proportion of common law marriages, in some areas as high as 70 percent. Had the Roman clergy been truly Christian it would have modified its claims and practices when the practical results of those claims and practices became evident, and would have sought first of all to safeguard the honor of the church and the family. But instead it has held doggedly to its privileged position, refusing to give up anything.

In regard to the multiplying of sacraments, the words which God spoke to Moses regarding the laws of the Old Testament are particularly appropriate: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

The Church of Rome embodies further serious error in its doctrine of the sacraments in that it teaches that they confer divine grace automatically and mechanically, by their outward action, as fire burns by its heat or as medicine cures by its chemical properties. But the Word of God teaches just the opposite. The blessing is not inherent in the sacrament as such, nor in him who administers it, but is bestowed directly by the Holy Spirit, and it is received by the one who exercises true faith—"Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6). A sacrament is an outward visible sign of an inward invisible grace, through which the blessings of grace are conferred when appropriated by faith. As the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the pages of the Bible, yet warms the heart and enlightens the mind as we read, so grace does not reside intrinsically in the sacrament, but comes to the believer who receives it by faith.

10 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been our purpose to show that there is no transubstantiation in the mass and therefore no physical presence of Christ in the bread and wine, that there is no true sacrifice in the mass, and that the eucharist is instead primarily a means of spiritual blessing and a commemorative feast through which we are reminded of our Lord and what He has done for our salvation. We assert unqualifiedly that the mass as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church is a fraud and a deception—for the simple reason that it is the selling of non-existent values. The sale of masses to gullible people for various purposes has transformed the ministers of the Roman Church into sacrificing priests, and has been an effective means by which under false pretenses huge sums of money have been extracted from the people.

In all the pagan religions of the world it would be hard to find an invention more false and ridiculous than that of the mass. To assert that an egg is an elephant, or that black is white, would be no more absurd or childish than to assert that the bread and wine, which retain the properties of bread and wine, are actually and totally the body and blood, the deity and humanity, of Christ.

The Roman doctrine of the sacraments constitutes the most elaborate system of magic and ritual that any civilized religion ever invented, and from first to

last it is designed to enhance the power and prestige of the clergy. In its fundamental ideas it is as alien to the whole spirit of Christianity and as out of harmony with modern times as the Medieval science of astrology is out of harmony with astronomy, or alchemy with chemistry. Yet these are the beliefs to which the Roman Catholic people give allegiance, and to which they hope some day to convert the United States and the world. For these beliefs they are willing to overlook all the horrors of the Middle Ages and all the corruption of the popes and the papacy of that period—insofar as they know anything at all about the history of that period.

The fact that the elaborate ritual of the mass is totally unknown to Scripture, and that it is highly dishonoring to Christ in that it makes His work on the cross largely ineffective until it is supplemented by the work of the priest, does not impress the average Roman Catholic layman seriously, for the simple reason that he has practically no knowledge at all of what the Bible teaches concerning these things.

We ask in all seriousness: What is there in the Roman service of the mass that compares with the beauty and simplicity of the Lord's Supper as observed in Protestant churches? In the latter you have no pompous hierarchy separated from the laity and communing with themselves, partaking of the bread and wine while standing at the altar on a higher level and with their backs to the congregation, while the laity, like children, kneel before the clergy with closed eyes and open mouths and receive only the wafer which is dropped into their mouths. In the Protestant churches the minister comes from the pulpit and sits at the communion table on the same level with the people. Minister and people are a company of Christian brethren partaking together of the Lord's Supper as a simple memorial feast, each one eating of the bread and each one drinking of the cup as the rite was originally instituted. In the light of New Testament revelation surely the latter is right, and it alone.

(Continued in [Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner Chapter IX The Confessional](#).)

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