

THE FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTED FROM THE APPENDIX OF THE BOOK "THE SINCERE CHRISTIAN" BY THE RIGHT REV. DR. GEORGE HAY. IT IS ABOUT INVINCIBLE IGNORANCE AND SALVATION.

save him? The scripture assures us that "there is no other name given to men under heaven, by which we can be saved," but the name of Jesus only; and, "he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God remaineth on him." All the various sects which have been separated from the true church, in every age, have uniformly and constantly calumniated and slandered her, and spoken evil of the way of truth professed by her, and were persuaded in their consciences, that it was lawful and meritorious to do so, so as even to oblige their teachers, from time to time, to preach all the evil they could say against her to their people from their pulpits. Will calumnies and slanders against the spouse of Jesus Christ save them, because their conscience approves them? The word of God declares, "That the nation and the kingdom that will not serve her, shall perish"; and "there shall be lying teachers who shall bring in damnable heresies, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.....through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of," 2 Pet. ii. In all these, in such like cases, their conscience is their greatest crime, and shows to what a pitch of impiety our conscience and reason can lead us, when under the influence of pride, passion, prejudice, and self-love; and therefore, that these alone, can never be guides to salvation, unless enlightened and directed by the sacred beams of revealed truths.

Q. 7. But suppose a person to be *invincibly ignorant* of the faith of Jesus Christ and his church, will not this *invincible ignorance* save him?

A. This is also a very specious proposition, and I am afraid for want of being properly sifted and considered, serves as an occasion of some dangerous mistakes in this matter; we shall, therefore, endeavour to examine it thoroughly. And here we must observe, that two different questions are commonly blended together in one, when people speak of *invincible ignorance*; the first is, *will a person who is invincibly ignorant of the true faith or church of Christ be condemned precisely on account of that ignorance?* That is, *will that ignorance be imputed to him as a crime?* or will this *his invincible ignorance excuse him from the guilt of not believing?* To this I reply, that, as no man can be guilty of a sin for not doing what it is absolutely out of his power to do, therefore, a person who is *invincibly ignorant* of the true faith and church of Christ, will not be condemned precisely on account of that ignorance; such ignorance will not be imputed to him as a crime; but will undoubtedly

excuse him from the guilt of not believing. In this all divines agree without the least doubt or hesitation; so that a Heathen, for example, that never heard of Jesus Christ, will not be condemned as a criminal, precisely for want of faith in him; a heretic that never had any knowledge of the true church of Christ will not be condemned as guilty for not being joined in communion with that church. And so far the first question admits of no dispute. The second question is this, *Can a person invincibly ignorant of the true faith or church of Jesus, and living and dying in that state, be saved?* This is a very different question from the former, and of the highest importance, though it is too commonly confounded with the former, and from this arises the mistake that many are apt to fall into in this matter. Now, to answer this question clearly and distinctly, we must consider two different cases; first, with regard to those Turks, Jews, and Heathens, who, having never heard of Jesus Christ, nor of his religion, are invincibly ignorant of it, many of whom there are in the world; and, secondly, with regard to all those different sects of Christians who are separated from the true church of Christ by heresy.

Q. 8. What then is to be said of all those Turks, Jews, and Heathens, who having never heard of Jesus Christ, or of his religion, are, therefore, invincibly ignorant of both; can they be saved, if they live and die in that state?

A. The plain answer to this is, that they cannot be saved, that not one of these "can enter into the kingdom of God." It is true, as we have seen above, they will not be condemned as criminal, precisely because they have not the faith of Christ, of which they are invincibly ignorant. But the faith of Christ, though an essential condition of salvation, is but one condition; others are also required. And though invincible ignorance will certainly save a man from sin, in wanting that of which he is invincibly ignorant, yet it is plainly impossible and childish to suppose, that this invincible ignorance in one point will make up for the want of all other conditions required. Now all those we here speak of are in the state of original sin, "aliens from God, and children of wrath," as the scripture calls all such, and unbaptised; and it is a constant article of the Christian faith, that, except original sin be washed away by the grace of baptism, there is no salvation; for Christ himself expressly declares, "Amen, amen, I say to thee, Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John iii. 5. And, indeed, if even the children

of Christian parents, who die without baptism, cannot go to heaven, how much less can those go there, who, besides being never baptised, are supposed, in the present case, to live and die in ignorance of the true God, or of Jesus Christ and his faith, and, on that account, must also be supposed to have committed many actual sins themselves. Nay, to suppose that Heathens, Turks, or Jews who live and die in that state, can be saved, is to suppose that worshippers of idols, and of Mahomet, and blasphemers of Jesus Christ, can be saved in the guilt of original sin, as well as of all those actual crimes by their ignorance; which is putting them upon a better footing, by far, than even Christians themselves and their children. The fate of all such the scripture decides as follows, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with the angel of his power, in a flame of fire, yielding vengeance to them who know not God and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction, from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his power," 2 Thess. i. 7. This is precise, indeed, and a clear and decisive answer to the present question.

Q. 9. What judgment does the scripture make of all those various sects of Christians who are separated from the church by heresy? Can they be saved if they be in invincible ignorance and live and die in their state of separation from the true church of Christ?

A. These are certainly in a very different state from the Turks, Jews, and Heathens, provided they have true baptism among them; for if they either have no baptism at all, or have altered the way of giving it from what Christ ordained, then they are in no better state as to their possibility of salvation than the Turks, Jews, or Heathens themselves, however much they may boast of the name of Christians. But if they have true baptism among them, then they are, by baptism, made true members of the church of Christ, and as many of them as die young, in their baptismal innocence, will undoubtedly be saved. But as for those among them who come to the years of discretion, and being educated in a false faith, live and die in a state of separation from the communion of the church of Christ, to give a clear and distinct answer to the question with regard to them, we also must distinguish two different cases; the *first* is of those who either live among Catholics, or have Catholics living in the same country among them, who know there are such people, and often hear about them: the *second* regards

those who have no such acquaintance of Catholics, who have no opportunity of such acquaintance, and who seldom or never hear about them, except in a false and odious light.

Q. 10. What is to be said of those who live among Catholics? If they be in invincible ignorance, and die in their state of separation, can they be saved?

A. It is next to impossible for any one in this class to be in invincible ignorance; for, to be in invincible ignorance, three things are necessarily required, *first*, that a person have a real and sincere desire of knowing the truth; for if he be cold and indifferent about an affair of so great concern as that of his eternal salvation; if he be careless whether he be in a right way or not; if being enslaved to this present life, he take no concern about the next, it is manifest, that an ignorance arising from this disposition is a *voluntary ignorance*, and therefore highly culpable in the sight of God. It will be still worse, if a person be positively unwilling to seek after the truth, from the fear of worldly inconveniences, and, therefore, industriously avoid every opportunity he may have of knowing it; of such as these the scripture says, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell; who have said to God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," Job. xxi. 13. *Secondly*, For one to be in invincible ignorance, it is required, *That he be sincerely resolved to embrace the truth wherever he may find it and whatever it may cost him.* For if he be not fully resolved to follow the will of God, wherever it shall appear to him, in all things necessary to salvation; if, on the contrary, he be so disposed, that he would rather neglect his duty, and hazard his soul, than correct an ill custom, or disoblige his friends, or expose himself to some temporal loss or disadvantage, such a disposition must be highly displeasing to God, and an ignorance arising from it, can never excuse him before his Creator; of this our Saviour says, "He that loveth father or mother, or son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me," Matt. x. 37. The *third* thing necessary for a person to be in invincible ignorance is, *That he sincerely use his best endeavours to know his duty, and particularly that he recommend the matter earnestly to Almighty God, and pray for light and direction from him.* For, whatever desire he may pretend to have of knowing the truth, if he do not use the proper means for finding it, it is manifest that his ignorance is *not invincible*, but *voluntary*; for ignorance is only there invincible, when a person has a sincere desire to know the truth, with a full

resolution to embrace it, but either has no possible means for knowing it, or after using his best endeavours to know it, yet cannot find it. And, therefore, if a person be deficient in using his endeavours to know his duty, his ignorance is not invincible, it is by his own fault that he does not see it; and, if inattention, indifference, unconcernedness, worldly motives, or unjust prejudices influence his judgment, and suffer it to yield to the bias of a perverse education, he has neither *invincible ignorance* nor *the fear of God*. Now it is inconsistent with the goodness and promises of God, that a person brought up in a false religion, but who is disposed as these three conditions require, and uses his best endeavours to know the truth, should be left in an invincible ignorance of it; and if, from his attachment to the world, and to sensual or other selfish objects, he be not so disposed, and neglect to use the proper means for coming at the truth, then his ignorance is *voluntary and culpable*, and therefore not *invincible*.

Q. 11. But what if the doubt never rise in his mind about the matter, and he go on, *bona fide*, in the way he was brought up in?

A. It is a great mistake to suppose that a formal doubt, concerning any branch of duty, is necessary to make one's ignorance of his duty voluntary and culpable; it is enough to make his ignorance blameable, that there be sufficient reasons for doubting, though from his unjust prejudices, from folly, precipitation, and rashness, from obstinacy and pride, or other such depravations of the heart, he hinder these reasons from exciting a formal doubt in the mind. Saul had no doubt of his doing well when he offered sacrifice before the prophet Samuel came; on the contrary, he was persuaded he had the strongest reasons for doing so, and yet he was condemned for that very action, and himself and family rejected by Almighty God. The Jews had no doubt but that they were acting well when they put our Saviour to death; nay, their high-priest declared in full council, that it was expedient for the good and safety of the nation that they should do so. They were grossly mistaken, indeed, and sadly ignorant of their duty; but their ignorance was most blameable, and they were severely condemned for what they did, though they did it out of ignorance. And, indeed, all those who act out of a false and erroneous conscience, are highly blameable for having such a conscience, though they never had any formal doubt about it. Nay, their not having such a doubt, when they have just and solid grounds for

doubting, rather makes them in some degree the more guilty, because it shows the greater corruption of the heart, and their depraved dispositions. Now, a person brought up in a false faith, which the scripture calls *sects of perdition, doctrines of devils, perverse things, lies and hypocrisy*; and who has heard of the true church of Christ, which condemns all these sects, and sees the divisions and dissensions which they constantly have among themselves, has always before his eyes the most cogent reasons to doubt of the way he is in; and if any due attention and examination be made with sincere dispositions of his heart, it must convince him that he is in the wrong, and the more he examines, the more he will see it; for this plain reason, that it is simply impossible, that *false doctrine, lies and hypocrisy* should ever be supported by any solid arguments sufficient to satisfy any reasonable person, who sincerely seeks the truth, and begs light from God to direct him in the search of it. Hence, if such a person never doubt, but go on, as is supposed, *bona fide*, in his own way, notwithstanding the strong grounds of doubt which he has daily before his eyes; this evidently shows either a most supine negligence in the concerns of his soul, or that his heart is totally blinded by passion and prejudice. There were many such people among the Jews and Heathens in the time of the apostles, who, notwithstanding the splendid light of the truth which these holy preachers every where displayed, and which was the most powerful reason that can be conceived for making them doubt of their own superstitions, yet were so far from having such doubts, that they thought, by killing the apostles, they did God a service. Whence did this arise? St. Paul himself shall inform us: "We renounce," says he, "the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor adulterating the word of God, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Here he describes the glaring light of the truth which he preached, yet this light was hid to great numbers, and he immediately gives the reason: "And if our gospel be also hid," says he, "it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of unbelievers, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine upon them," 2 Cor. iv. 2. Behold the real cause of their incredulity; they are so much enslaved to the things of this world by the depravity of their own heart, that the devil, by this means, blinds them, that they should not see the light; but an ignorance which arises from such

depraved dispositions is a guilty ignorance, a voluntary ignorance, and therefore can never excuse them.

Q. 12. Are not those, also, who are members of the church of Christ, obliged, when they come to an age capable of it, to examine whether they be in the right way or not, as well as those who are brought up in any sect separated from the true church?

A. There is nothing which the church of Christ has more at heart, than that her children should be thoroughly instructed in their religion, and in the grounds of it, as far as they are capable. For this end she strictly commands her pastors to be assiduous in the duty of instructing their people from their earliest years, and uses every other possible means for the same purpose, well knowing, that the more they know of their religion, the more they must be attached to it. The true church of Christ is the work of God, the doctrine she teaches contains the truths of God; now, the more attentively truth is examined, the more illustrious it must appear; and Almighty God has given such splendid testimony to the truth of his true religion, that the more it is examined with sincerity the more it convinces and delights. Here, then, lies the great difference, that, when a member of the church of Christ considers his religion, he cannot possibly have any reasonable grounds for doubt concerning it, and the more he examines, the more convinced he must be of the truth of it. But one who is brought up in a false religion, if he think at all, cannot fail to see the strongest grounds of doubt; and the more he examines, the more its falsehood must appear; for falsehood can never bear the light of unbiassed and impartial examination.

Q. 13. But how comes it that we see many good men, and men of great learning, among all sects of Christians, some of which must undoubtedly be false, as they contradict one another, and condemn one another?

A. To understand this, we must observe, that the word of God expressly declares, that God wills "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim. ii. 4. In consequence of this sincere desire which God has for the salvation of all, he never fails to give to all such outward helps, and inward graces, as he sees sufficient to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, if they co-operate on their part, with these graces; but, if they shut their eyes against his light, if, from the corruption of their heart, they pay no regard to the helps and graces he gives them, then they must remain in their

ignorance; but their ignorance is voluntary in its cause, and a just punishment of their own fault. Now, although many of those who are brought up in false religions may live very good lives, as to moral honesty, in the eyes of the world, yet this does not say but they may be very blameable in the sight of God, and by their secret passions and attachments to the things of this life, put an effectual stop to the designs of his mercy of bringing them to the knowledge of his truth. The proud Pharisee was an exceeding good man in the eyes of the world, and yet was condemned by Almighty God, for the secret pride of his heart. And as for those men of learning who are to be found in a false religion, their learning does not exempt them from pride and passion; nay, the word of God assures us, "that knowledge puffeth up," 1 Cor. viii. 1; and generally speaking, where there are not true humility, and the love of God, the more learning, the more pride, and the more self-conceit, the more desire of glory, and of praise for men, and the more obstinacy of heart, and, consequently, the more opposition to faith; for Jesus Christ himself says to the Jews, whose hard hearts resisted all the splendour of his doctrine and miracles, "How can ye believe who receive glory from one another, and the glory which is from God alone ye do not seek?" John v. 44. There were no doubt many learned people both among the Jews and Gentiles, when the gospel was first preached by the apostles, and yet, notwithstanding the numberless miracles which they wrought, in proof of its being from God, St. Paul expressly tell us, that it was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness," 1 Cor. i. 23; because, notwithstanding all their learning, their pride, passions, and prejudices, *blinded their minds, that the light of the gospel should not shine upon them.* So that it needs be no surprise to see learned men in a false religion, especially as their learning is commonly of a worldly kind; for, *faith is a gift of God,* and it is not the knowledge of the head, but the humility and sincerity of the heart, which disposes a soul to receive that gift from him; yea, Christ himself expressly says, "That God hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them to little ones," Matt. xi 25. Upon the whole, then, we must conclude, that, among those who are brought up in a false religion, and separated from the church of Christ, but who know there is a church which declares herself to be the only true church of Christ, who have an opportunity of hearing about her, and of being acquainted with those of her communion, it is

scarce to be supposed, and highly improbable, that *invincible ignorance* should have any place at all. But, after all, if any should really be found among them who are in invincible ignorance, they will be in the same state with those who never had an opportunity of knowing any other way but the false religion they are in.

Q. 14. What, then, is to be said of those, who, being brought up in a false religion, have no opportunity of hearing about the true church and faith of Christ? or, of hearing of it only in a false and odious light? Can such as these be saved if they live and die in their separation from the communion of the church of Christ, and an invincible ignorance of the truth?

A. The learned author of the book called *Charity and Truth*, who seems willing to go as far as possible in favour of those who are not joined in the communion of the church of Christ, candidly owns, that it is quite uncertain if any such will be saved, even though in invincible ignorance; for, in laying down the true state of the question, he says, "The meaning is, that no one is saved unless he be in the Catholic communion, either actually or virtually, either in fact or in desire; and that we are not sure, generally speaking, that any one is saved out of the Catholic church, who is invincibly ignorant of the true church, and of the true religion," Ch. I. Q. 3. The fact is, there is not one single testimony of the holy scripture which gives reason to think that anyone will be saved out of that communion, but there are great numbers, as we have seen above, which very strongly declare the contrary. So that all the reasons which are brought in favour of those who are out of the church, are taken from the supposition of cases that perhaps never exist, and from our imperfect notions of the goodness of God, or from the idea which some frame to themselves of what is meant by being a member of the true church; and those people of whom we speak in the present question afford the principal grounds of these reasonings. For it is argued in this manner: Suppose a man born and baptized in a heretical sect, and afterwards, when he comes of age, to be in such circumstances as never to have an opportunity of hearing about the true religion, or, if he does it is always in such false and odious colours as serve only to make him detest it, and to make him more and more attached to his own way; and, on this account, to be in invincible ignorance of the truth. It is acknowledged by all, that this man, by his baptism, is made a member of the church of Christ,

and that if he die, before he come to the use of reason, he will certainly be saved in his baptismal innocence. Let us now suppose further, that, when he comes to age, he continues to live an innocent life, and by co-operating with the graces which God bestows upon him, perseveres in his innocency, and does his best, according to the knowledge he has, and would do better if he knew it; is it not inconsistent with the goodness of God to suppose that such a man, living and dying in this state, would be lost? Is he not always in the sight of God, a real member of the church of Christ, though not joined in her communion? And, if he die in his innocency, must he not be saved? Such is the argument proposed on this subject; and, to be sure, it has a dazzling appearance. But it must be observed, that there is the strongest reason to doubt that such a case as is there supposed ever was, or ever will be; for (1.) There is not the smallest ground in scripture to suppose it. (2.) As it is impossible for man, in his present fallen state, to preserve his baptismal innocence for any space of time, much less to persevere in it to the end of his life, without a special and extraordinary grace from God; and, as a grace of this kind is justly esteemed one of the most singular favours given by God to his faithful servants, who are members of his church, and enjoy all the powerful helps that are only to be found in her communion, to enable them to persevere in their baptismal innocence to their deaths; is it to be supposed that God will bestow this so singular a favour upon any one who is not in her communion, and deprived of all her helps? And if it be supposed that he loses his baptismal innocence by committing a mortal sin, but recovers the grace of justification by a sincere repentance, the difficulty still increases. For a repentance without the help of the sacraments sufficient to obtain the grace of justification, includes a perfect contrition, founded in a perfect love of God above all things; a favour so seldom granted to sinners, even in the church itself, that the sacrament of penance is appointed by Jesus Christ as the standing means of supplying our deficiency in that respect. Now, what likelihood is there that Almighty God will bestow so very singular a favour upon one who has lost his innocency, and is not in the communion of his church, and deprived of the helps she affords for recovering it? But, (3.) Let us suppose the case to happen as it is proposed, and that Almighty God gives this man these extraordinary graces by which he preserves his baptismal innocence to the last, dies in the grace of God, and goes to heaven; would not

this be making God contradict himself, and act directly contrary to the whole tenor of his revealed will? All the testimonies of scripture above displayed concur to prove, that God has appointed true faith in Jesus Christ, and the being in communion with the church of Christ, as necessary conditions of salvation; and yet, in the present case, the person would be saved who had not the true faith in Jesus Christ, and was not in communion with his church, but lived and died in a heretical congregation. There is therefore the greatest reason to believe that such a case will never happen, but that a person brought up in heresy, and invincibly ignorant of the truth, being by that means deprived of all the helps and graces which are the consequences of the true faith, and which are only found in the true church, will not preserve his innocency, but continuing in his heresy, and dying in his sins, will be lost; not precisely because he had not the true faith, of which he is supposed to be invincibly ignorant, and therefore not culpable in wanting it, but for his other sins of which he dies guilty.

Q. 15. But can none who are in heresy, and in invincible ignorance of the truth, be saved?

A. God forbid we should say so! all the above reasons only prove that if they live and die in that state they will not be saved, and that according to the present providence they cannot be saved? but the great God is able to take them out of that state, to cure even their ignorance though invincible to them in their present situation, to bring them to the knowledge of the true faith, and to the communion of his holy church, and in consequence of that to salvation; and we further add, that if he be pleased, of his infinite mercy, to save any who are at present in invincible ignorance of the truth, in order to act consistently with himself, and with his holy word, he will undoubtedly bring them to the union of his holy church for that purpose, before they die.

Q. 16. Are there any grounds in scripture for this doctrine?

A. This doctrine is founded upon the strongest and most positive declarations of scripture. For the scripture lays down this fundamental truth, "The sure foundation of God standeth firm, having this seal; The Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii., 19. That is, God, from all eternity, perfectly well knows who those are, who, by co-operating with the graces he shall bestow upon them, will persevere to the end in his faith and love and be happy with him for ever. Now, let a person be,

at present, in whatever state you please, Heathen, Turk, Jew, or Heretic, in *vincible* or in *invincible* ignorance; to all mankind, without exception, God, through the merits of Christ, and for his sake, gives such graces as he sees proper for their present state, with a view to their eternal salvation; if they comply with what he gives, and co-operate with them, he will then give them more and greater, till he brings them at last to that happy end; but if they resist them, and abuse those they receive, this will put a stop to their getting more and greater graces, and they will be left to their own ways, as the just punishment of their ingratitude. Those, therefore, whom Almighty God foresees will continue to make a proper use of his graces, and be saved, those he ordains to eternal life; and all such the scripture assures us, he will in his own good time, and in the way and manner he sees proper, most undoubtedly bring to the knowledge of the true faith, and to the communion of his holy church. Thus, "the Lord daily added to the church such as should be saved," Acts ii. 47. Now, what the Lord daily did in the time of the apostles, he daily will continue to do to the end of the world; and as none could be saved who were not added to the church in those days, so neither could any afterwards; for there is no new revelation since the apostle's time, discovering a different road to salvation. Again the scripture says, that, "as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed," Acts xiii. 48; that is, were brought to the true faith which the apostles preached; the same then will be done for ever afterwards; for as none were ordained to eternal life who did not believe, then, neither will any afterwards; for the same reason as in the former case. And our Saviour himself decides this point in the clearest terms, when he says, "Other sheep I have who are not of this fold, them also I MUST BRING, and they SHALL hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd," John x. 16; here he manifestly speaks of those who had not as yet heard his voice, but were either Jews or Heathens, and not united in the fold of his apostles and other disciples; yet he calls them his sheep, because "The Lord knoweth who are his," and he foreknew who would co-operate with his grace, and follow his voice; now he expressly declares, "them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice." It was not enough for their salvation that they were ready in the disposition of their hearts to answer his call, and to do better if they knew better; it was necessary they should actually be brought to the communion of his own fold, "them also I must bring"; it was necessary they

should have the true faith of Christ, "and they shall hear my voice," in order to secure their salvation; for, as he says a little after, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall snatch them out of my hand," John x. 27.

This will still further appear from the account which St. Paul gives of the several steps the Divine Providence takes in the salvation of the elect, and of the principal graces bestowed upon them for that end; "for, whom he foreknew," says he "he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son; and whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 29. *First*, "he lays down the sure foundation of God," above mentioned, "which has this seal. The Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. God, from all eternity, foreknew who would improve the talents he should in time bestow upon them, and who, persevering to the end, should be his for ever. Now, says the apostle, "whom" he thus "foreknew he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son, that is, he preordained, that all his elect should resemble Jesus Christ, by 'putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new.....according to the image of him that created him,'" Col. iii. 9. To procure this conformity with Jesus Christ, the next step he takes is *to call them*, for, "whom he predestinated, them he also called," namely, to the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ, and to the communion of his holy church: that is, he gives them such internal graces, and so disposes all external circumstances as effectually to bring them to this great happiness; and *whom he thus called to the true faith, "them he also justified"*; that is, being brought to the true faith, "without which it is impossible to please God," he continues to bestow still further graces upon them, of fear, hope, love of God, and sorrow for their sins, with which they also co-operating, are brought by means of his holy sacraments to the grace of justification. In consequence of this, still greater and greater graces are bestowed upon them, and they persevering to the end in their co-operation, are received at last into eternal glory; for "whom he justified, them he also glorified"; where it is manifest, that our being called to the faith and church of Jesus Christ, is ordained by Almighty God as a most essential step in the affair of salvation, as a necessary condition to be performed, even before we can be

justified from the guilt of our sins, and consequently, that, without true faith, and out of the communion of the church of Christ, there is no possibility of salvation. It is no less manifest, that let a person be, at present, in any state whatsoever, Heathen, Turk, Jew, or Heretic; if Almighty God foreknows that this person will co-operate with those graces which from all eternity he had resolved to bestow upon him, and continue faithful to the end, and be saved; he will, by no means, permit him to live and die in his present state, but will order matters so, out of the treasures of his Divine wisdom, that he shall sooner or later be brought to the union of the church of Christ, out of which he has ordained that salvation cannot be found.

Q. 17. This is without doubt an unanswerable proof, if it be certain, that by our calling or vocation, mentioned in the above passage of St. Paul, is meant our vocation to the faith and church of Christ; but how can this be proved?

A. Nothing is more evident from the whole tenor of the New Testament; for, whenever the object of our calling or vocation is spoken of, it is always declared to be the faith and church of Christ. Thus St. Paul, speaking of his own vocation, says, "It pleased him, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son to me," Gal. i. 15. So exhorting us to walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called, by humility and charity, he immediately adds the object of our vocation, as a most powerful motive for us to do so, "One body," says he, "one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism," Eph. iv. 4. Again, "Let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also ye are called in one body," Col. iii. 15. Also, "We testified to every one of you that ye would walk worthy of God who hath called you to his kingdom and glory," 1 Thess. ii. 12; to his kingdom here, and to his glory hereafter. From all which it is manifest, that the object of our vocation is the *one faith* of Christ; the *body* of Christ, and the *kingdom* of Christ, which is his church. Hence the same holy apostle says in another place, "But ye are come to Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the church of the first-born who are written in heaven," Heb. xii. 22. See here the object of our vocation, the church of Christ; and St. Peter says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that ye may declare his virtues who hath called you out of darkness