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THE CALL TO CHRISTIAN UNITY

WILLIAM THOMAS MANNING  
*Bishop of New York*

*THROUGHOUT the present year the FORUM will publish, as it did in 1886, the first year of its existence, the confessions of faith of eminent clergymen and laymen of the more prominent Christian sects, as well as the confession of one well-known unbeliever. In no case is the writer speaking officially for his sect, but giving expression to the personal convictions and urges that led him to embrace one faith rather than another. The first paper, contributed by Mr. Chester-ton, follows Bishop Manning's appeal to Christians of all denominations, which is to be read as a general preface to the whole series.*

**T**HE Christian Church has to-day the greatest opportunity in all its history. Never since Christ came to this earth has the world been so ready to receive His message. All over the world men's hearts are stirred with a new longing for fellowship and for that realization of justice and brotherhood in all human relations which Christianity alone has power to accomplish.

But in the face of this present unprecedented opportunity the Church stands with her life enfeebled, her witness weakened, her message in part discredited by her own differences and divisions. The practical evils resulting from the divisions in the Church are serious enough, — the waste, the rivalries, the squandering of energy and resources, — but the spiritual consequences of our divisions are infinitely more serious. The faith of the whole body of Christians is weakened and impaired by them. Amid the controversies of the Churches men cannot hear the divine message of the Church. Great numbers of those who were brought up in the different religious communions are adrift without clear religious belief or definite conviction. Many whose parents were earnest Christians, and whose family names have long been on the records of the Church are to be found in the ranks of the apparently indifferent. In the battle against the evil that is in human life, against the anti-Christian forces at work in the intellectual

world, against the spirit of paganism now evident in our literature, in our art, in the present lack of high standards in our social life, we need the testimony and the power of a united Christianity.

Our divisions are giving the forces of evil and unbelief a terrible advantage. If Christ cannot bring His own followers together in fellowship and brotherhood, how can men believe in His power? If Christians are unable to agree among themselves as to the essential truth of the Gospel, is it surprising if the world is unconvinced, or if men conclude that all questions of belief are unimportant?

The time has come for the Churches to repent of their schisms and divisions and to find the way to fellowship and reunion. It is time for Christians of all names, — Catholics and Protestants, — to resolve that the present situation shall not continue, but that through the promised help of the Holy Spirit the way shall be found for the healing of our divisions, and for the manifestation to the world of our fellowship in Jesus Christ.

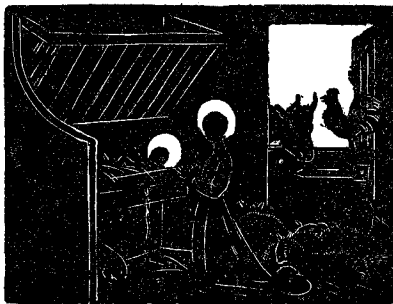
The question which the world is now asking is not as to any secondary or minor matter, but as to whether Christianity is from above, as to whether Jesus Christ still lives among us, and whether He has power to save the world. It is this question which must be answered with the full power of a united testimony.

What is needed now is a Reunited Church so faithful to the Gospel, so free in the exercise of Christian liberty, so filled with the spirit of love and fellowship that in it the presence and glory of Christ shall be made manifest. We shall find the way to union not by surrender, or compromise of Christian Truth, but by emphasis on Christian Brotherhood. What we all need is closer fellowship with Christ. This is the path which will lead us to unity. It is lack of holiness in the lives of Christians which is the chief obstacle to the unity of the Church. If all of us were truly converted to Christ, the way to unity would speedily be found. Our faith in Christ, if it is real, will draw us into fellowship not only with our fellow Christians of all names but with men of all faiths and all races, realizing that we are all the children of the one Father Who is in Heaven.

We may not compromise our convictions or sacrifice what we believe to be essential to Christ's Gospel. No true Christian

would want another to do that. But we Christians, of all names, must emphasize more the fact of our brotherhood in Christ. We must keep more in view the things in which we are at one. This attitude and spirit shown by all of us will do much to hasten the day of our reunion. It will soften our prejudices, enlarge our hearts, widen our outlook and strengthen in us the spirit of brotherhood. Let us realize that the things which unite us are greater than the things which divide us. We are one in the life that joins us to Christ, and, more fully than we recognize, we are one in our faith in Him. We believe that it was God Himself Who came in the Person of Jesus Christ to dwell among men, and that He still ministers to us in His Church on earth, still saves and blesses us with His living touch. Catholics and Protestants, Easterns and Anglicans, — we are all one in this. And this is the heart of the Christian Gospel. From this follows all else that we believe. With this in common, it must be possible for us to find the way to full and visible fellowship. The whole situation in the world is calling upon us to heal our differences and make manifest our fellowship in Christ.

It is the duty of every Christian to do what he can in this cause. For the call to unity is from Christ Himself. It is Christ's will that is being thwarted, it is Christ's power that is being weakened, it is Christ's promises that are being discredited by the present divided condition of His Church.



*From a woodcut by Clare Leighton*

# THE ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY

## *A Compendium of Significant Facts and Figures*

**T**HE Roman Catholic Church is that branch of the Christian Church which acknowledges the Pope, or Bishop of Rome, as its head. It claims to be the only legitimate inheritance by an unbroken tradition of twenty centuries of the commission and powers conferred by Christ upon the Apostles. It may be divided historically into two periods, the first beginning before the Council of Trent (1545-1563), with an assembly which initiated a fresh attack on the Pope's authority, and extending from about 1431 to 1789; the second reaching from the French Revolution to the present.

After the Reformation in the sixteenth century the Central European nations which had separated themselves from the central unity of the Church prospered materially. The mercantile freedom acquired by Holland, the waning power of Venice and Genoa, the colonial enterprise of Protestant England, the growth of Russia (ultimately involving destruction of the Catholic Kingdom of Poland), the rise of Prussia as a great Protestant State by the side of Catholic Austria, — all these causes tended to restrict the influence of the Roman See.

The seventeenth century saw forces at work within the Church. The number of students in Jesuit colleges alone increased before 1700 to nearly 200,000. The first half of the nineteenth century saw a gradual disappearance of bitter prejudice. In England, removal of legal disabilities was the prelude to restoration of the English hierarchy in 1850. In Germany, Catholic revival has been marked. In 1905 the French Government repudiated the Concordat made in 1801 by Pius VII and Napoleon.

At the head of the Roman Catholic Church is the supreme Pontiff Pius XI, Achille Ratti, formerly Archbishop of Milan, elected as successor to Benedict XV and crowned February 12, 1922. The College of Cardinals, made up of seventy members, is the Senate of the Roman Church.

There are at present four American Cardinals: William O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston, Dennis J. Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia, Patrick J. Hayes, Archbishop of New York, George W. Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago. There are 17 Archbishops in the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of the United States, 98 Catholic Bishops, and 23,159 Priests. Other American Catholic statistics are as follows: churches, 17,146; seminaries, 105; colleges for men, 218; academies for girls, 716; parish schools, 6,388 with 1,988,376 pupils; orphan asylums, 316; homes for the aged, 121. In the World War 814,768 American Catholics were in service, of whom over 16,000 were killed.

The estimated total Catholic population in the United States is 18,559,787. It is of interest to contrast this figure with the totals in other countries as shown in the following table compiled by the *Atlas Hierarchicus* of Streit in 1913:

Catholic population of Europe . . . . .	186,196,342
“ “ “ America . . . . .	86,855,997
“ “ “ Asia and Africa . . . . .	13,279,811
“ “ “ Australia . . . . .	1,313,610
Total . . . . .	267,644,860

At present the Catholic population of the world is estimated as 324,328,408.

# WHY I AM A CATHOLIC

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

## *Confessions of Faith—I*

**T**HE difficulty of explaining “why I am a Catholic” is that there are ten thousand reasons all amounting to one reason: that Catholicism is true. I could fill all my space with separate sentences each beginning with the words, “It is the only thing that . . .” As, for instance, (1) It is the only thing that really prevents a sin from being a secret. (2) It is the only thing in which the superior cannot be superior; in the sense of supercilious. (3) It is the only thing that frees a man from the degrading slavery of being a child of his age. (4) It is the only thing that talks as if it were the truth; as if it were a real messenger refusing to tamper with a real message. (5) It is the only type of Christianity that really contains every type of man; even the respectable man. (6) It is the only large attempt to change the world from the inside; working through wills and not laws; and so on.

Or I might treat the matter personally and describe my own conversion; but I happen to have a strong feeling that this method makes the business look much smaller than it really is. Numbers of much better men have been sincerely converted to much worse religions. I would much prefer to attempt to say here of the Catholic Church precisely the things that cannot be said even of its very respectable rivals. In short, I would say chiefly of the Catholic Church that it is catholic. I would rather try to suggest that it is not only larger than me, but larger than anything in the world; that it is indeed larger than the world. But since in this short space I can only take a section, I will consider it in its capacity of a guardian of the truth.

The other day a well-known writer, otherwise quite well-informed, said that the Catholic Church is always the enemy of new ideas. It probably did not occur to him that his own remark was not exactly in the nature of a new idea. It is one of the notions that Catholics have to be continually refuting, because it is such a very old idea. Indeed, those who complain that