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The "Weaknesses" Of The Catholic Church. I.

Mr. John F. Moore, of the International Y.M.C.A., discussed "The Strength and Weaknesses of the Catholic Church" before the Springfield Y. College on October 20. The strength of Catholicism, he said, lies very largely in its age and traditions. With 20 centuries behind it, the Catholic Church has outlasted empires, kingdoms and republics. "With one head, the Pope, with infallibility in matters of faith and doctrine invested in him, it is the greatest organization the world has ever known." Other elements of strength he mentioned were "the self-sacrificing spirit of the priests working in the mission field and the watchfulness of the Church over its adherents." So far, so good. On the alleged weaknesses we must spend more time, analyzing each one as it appears.

"With the interest of the Church centering upon the strengthening of its own field rather than the extension of the kingdom of God has come a self-centered outlook."

Reply.- Missionary activity has never been lacking in the Church, but the Church keeps ever in mind the injunction of her Founder to his disciples not to waste too much time, on those who will not hear her; she does not hesitate to 'shake the dust from her feet as a testimony against' those who will not hear her voice. If attention to her own for the fostering of the higher spiritual life is strengthening her position, she is but carrying out the Mission Christ gave her.

"This narrowing of outlook is also contributed to by the way in which the Church stands apart from other faiths, which means a loss of the breadth of understanding that comes from contact with those of other beliefs."

Reply.- If Christ told us what to believe and how to worship Him, we are turning our backs on Him if we admit other beliefs and other worships on an equal footing with His doctrine. He Himself warned us of those who rejected the authority of His Church: "If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." This does not excuse us from the duty of charity and helpfulness for those who are in error; but it certainly does exclude us from making common cause with them in faith and worship.

"The monopoly of the Church, in giving all power to the priest, means that the layman, always obeying, has a tendency to lose ideals, ambitions, and qualities of leadership."

Reply.- If Christ had wanted to vest the power of the Church in laymen, He would certainly have done so. If Mr. Moore will read the prayer of Christ for His disciples (Chap. 17 of St. John's Gospel), He will certainly understand that the Church is but carrying out the order Christ established for her.

"The highest type of mind cannot be developed if freedom of thinking is not allowed."

Reply.- We are distinctly of the opinion that the highest type of mind has been developed within the Catholic Church - but Mr. Moore's definition of the highest type of mind may differ from ours. Let Mr. Moore bring on his Augustines, his Aquinases, his Michelangelos, his Petrarchs, his Dantes, his Newman's, his Pasteurs, and we will talk business with him. The Catholic has not the liberty to question God's existence, he has not the liberty to say infanticide is not murder, he has not the liberty to put asunder what God hath joined together, he has not the liberty to say that Christ was a good man, but not God....., but he has the greater liberty to leave these settled questions where they belong and devote his mind to truths which God has not revealed but has left for the free exercise of reason.

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PRAYERS: Ray Kane underwent an operation for appendicitis last night - a serious case. Prof. Terley is ill in the hospital. Three students ask prayers for deceased friends. Mass Thursday: 6:25, Sorin, for Wm. Langenbahn's mother, deceased (For. Comm. Club). Leo Beaulaurier's maternal grandmother is reported dying. A cousin of Jack Werner died this morning. Jos. Scannell, of Holy Cross Seminary in 1927, died recently. Four special intentions.