

~~xxxxxxx~~ A, its existence, then, is clearly proven in Scripture. There is a visible church as distinct from the church universal. Not distinct in the sense, there is the visible church and ~~the~~ here is the church universal. I think that the Westminster Confession's statement is very good, that the universal church is sometimes more and sometimes less visible. I doubt if there is an organization anywhere which reads the Scripture and holds to the great cardinal doctrines of the Bible which does not have some individuals in it ~~who~~ who are saved. The reading of the Scripture in the service might save a Roman Catholic. He would probably be an ignorant one, rather than an intelligent one, because a person of intelligence would soon see, in most cases, how different what he ~~is~~ was drawing from the Scripture was from the official teaching of the church. Nevertheless, I imagine that there are a great many who are humble believers, in the Roman Catholic Church, who are truly believing in Christ and are saved. But who are doing it in connection with an ignorance of or an indifference to many of the basic teachings of the ~~the~~ church. On the other hand, I do not imagine that there has ever been in the history of the world a group of Christians which has continued for as much as twenty years a ~~group~~ group of any size, containing as much as twenty years in which there has never come into its membership one who was not saved. ~~There~~

?x Every group which has gone ~~on~~ on for as much as twenty years has found situations developing within it which have given pretty clear proof that some of its members were definitely not saved. God has not given to us the power to know who is in the church invisible, with certainty, and who is not. But He has given us an obligation to try to make our visible church correspond in general to the invisible church. That is, we certainly have an obligation to try to exclude from the membership of any true visible ~~the~~ church those who are not sincere believers in Christ. And on the other hand, we would certainly seem to have an obligation to receive into our fellowship those who are true believers in Christ, even if we might differ from them on certain points of interpretation. Those whom Christ has received, how can we reject them. The communion of saints is a very real teaching of the Scriptures. ~~Which~~